

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 11:04 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Digital Education Project (S422B230049)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	23
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	29
Sub Total	100	97
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	109

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - AHC-NA - 6: 84.422B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Digital Education Project (S422B230049)

Questions

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:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

The proposed plan outlines various objectives for high school students to learn about civic engagement. The plan provides justification for why using evidence-based curriculum will enhance student learning of the content. The plan provides specifics on how teachers will have tailored professional development dealing with digital literacy.

(i) The proposed plan describes an inquiry-based instruction (pg. e14-e16) that provides teachers with evidence-based curriculum to strengthen the multitude of ways students will learn civic engagement.

(ii) The plan outlines how teachers from across the nation will develop evidence-based curriculum (pg. e16-e17) to serve a large high school student population to understand civic engagement through digital literacy.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)
- ii. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)
- iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)

Strengths:

The proposed plan describes a need for civic education based on the national and state assessment in various social studies classes. To provide an in-depth learning by student, the proposed plan addresses the need for action by schools to address lack of civic engagement.

- (i) The proposed plan provides a road map of how students (pg. e44-e45) will engage in learning about history from teachers that use cutting edge resources to assess student knowledge.
- (ii) The proposed plan outlines (pg. e46-49) various methods to address the students' weaknesses in learning US history using digital resources and evidence based lessons.
- (iii) The proposed plan describes how DEP will collaborate with various entities (pg. e50-e52) to identify students needing support based on socio-economic and various backgrounds to establish a well-rounded participant pool.

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

- i. 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. (13 points)**
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

The proposed plan describes Digital Education Project staff members that are versed in many initiatives that have created strong partnerships. The plan articulates multiple ways to gather feedback for decision making. The plan specifies a chart of the various roles and timeline, but it lacks description of how this will translate to teacher lesson development and student learning.

- (i) The plan depicts DEP staff members in various roles (pg. e52-57) that collaborate to develop curriculum, professional development, and gather data for analysis of the project. The plan gives clear descriptions of roles throughout the grant implementation to give further transparency.
- (ii) The plan addresses the need for continuous feedback (pg. e57-58) that all members of DEP will provide to ensure adequacy of teacher lesson development and creating curriculum resources for students to engage in civic life.

Weaknesses:

- (i)The proposed plan minimally depicts how teachers will be (pg. e52-e53) provided with feedback to modify their lessons and the support they will need as the grant is implemented.

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

- i. **The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)**
- ii. **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)**
- iii. **The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)**
- iv. **The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)**

Strengths:

The proposed plan depicts a partnership between education and local businesses that support the student's needs. The combination of finance and resources is large in this plan, and it is created to the benefit of the teachers and students. The sustainability plan allows for continuation of the project by ensuring staff is available to students and teachers. The budget plan proposed ensures personnel are proper for the project but there is a greater payment for the top personnel leaving little for future teacher development.

- (i) The proposed plan details the partnership of a university with a large corporation to support the development of curriculum based on research (pg. e58-e59) which will ensure the teachers have greater range of resource accessibility.
- (ii) The plan has a budget proposal that projects cost to be reasonable in this area (pg. e61-e62) to give a greater impact through curriculum development and sustainability.
- (iii) The plan depicts a commitment from DEP and its partners to ensure that staff is available to support the teacher's needs during and after grant completion (pg. e62-e63). This will ensure longer time students benefits from this partnership.
- (iv) The plan specifies a multitude of support from various local and national entities (pg. e63) to support various initiatives for teachers and students.

Weaknesses:

- (ii) The proposed plan has many people in the budget (pg. e59-61) that earn much of the grant funding. This might create an issue when teachers need more support through resources or professional development.

Reader's Score: 29

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

The proposed plan gives an in-depth description of how student will use teacher developed lesson plan to engage in social studies classes. The teacher will create research-based lesson to provide various topics for students to discuss and learn in social studies.

The proposed plan describes the lessons teachers will create using evidence-based instructional material (pg. e37-e38) to create hands on civic activities for students to learn US history. The plan provides activities the students will engage in to understand various topic important to their daily routine such as social inequality and climate change.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)**

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

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs(6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) 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 civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The proposed plan promotes educational equity for students to engage in civic conversation and digital literacy. The plan outlines the use of state data for student selection purposes to ensure an eclectic sample is identified. The plan promotes rigorous approaches to learning by student and in collaboration with teachers immersed in the evidence-based curriculum.

The proposed plan describes how state assessments scores (pg. e40-e41) will be used to identify high school students for project participation. The plan details how students from low socio-economic (pg. e41-e42) class will be selected to participate in rigorous scaffolding method to learning about wide range of topic on civic life. The plan addresses the need

for developing curriculum that is embedded in digital literacy instruction (pg. e42-e43) to ensure students have a lesson that are aligned to the state curriculum.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 7

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 11:04 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 09:46 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Digital Education Project (S422B230049)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	23
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	30
Sub Total	100	98
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	110

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - AHC-NA - 6: 84.422B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Digital Education Project (S422B230049)

Questions

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:

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

The application demonstrates a strong quality of the project design in exceptional ways. It identifies a proposed project that demonstrates a rationale, and it identifies a proposed project that represents an exceptional approach to the priorities established for the competition.

(i) The proposed project demonstrates an adequate rationale. With the drop in the National Assessment for Education Progress history and civics exams, teachers are being asked to implement instructional practices, but that they lack curricular materials and professional development needed for the implementation (page e14). Additionally, the applicant notes research from Breakstone et al. (2021) shows that students struggle to differentiate fact from fiction, which is alarming since many students learn about the past and present on their phones (page e14). Furthermore, the applicant presents a logic model that describes the relationship between the inputs, activities, outputs, and student outcomes of the proposed project (page e79). For example, funding will allow for synchronous online summer workshops for teachers, which will allow for teachers to implement instructional practices resulting in students increased critical thinking skills (page e79).

(ii) The proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities established for the competition. The proposed project will develop 30 Reading Like a Historian (RLH) lessons with formative assessment and digital literacy instruction embedded (page e18). This will also include a suite of professional development offerings to support teachers (page e18). This should be impactful because the RLH lessons are the only historical thinking approach that has been validated with a large-scale quasi-experimental design (page e18). The applicant is building upon a foundation already created. The approach is innovative because the formative assessments and digital literacy are embedded within history and civics curriculum (page e19). The proposed project is scalable the materials developed through the proposed project will be made available for free on the applicant's website, and the applicant has buy-in from 41 state departments of education that recommend similar programs of the applicant (page e17). The proposed project also focuses on underserved student populations because within the project partnerships, the applicant will prioritize working with districts and schools with significant population of students living in poverty or are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty, students of color, and English learners (page e19).

Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses noted.

(ii) No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - ii. **The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)**
 - iii. **The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The application demonstrates the need for the project in exceptional ways. It identifies the magnitude of the problem and four specific gaps in educational infrastructure that will be addressed by the proposed project. Additionally, the application identifies the extent to which the services provided by the proposed project are focused on those with the greatest needs.

(i) The applicant describes the magnitude of the problem that will be addressed by the proposed project. The applicant states that the U.S. history and civics National Assessment of Educational Progress 2022 exam scores declined significantly for both subjects since 2018 (page e44). Due to the state of history and civics education, policymakers have emphasized inquiry-driven, document-based instruction in history and civics, but resources are limited for history teachers and not well suited for formative assessment since most assessments provide little feedback for teachers to adjust (pages e44-45). Furthermore, to add to the need for the proposed project, research has proven that although half of today's young people report being online almost constantly, they have difficulty distinguishing if sources are credible (page e46). Through these justifications, the applicant demonstrates a strong need for the project.

(ii) The applicant clearly identifies four gaps in the educational infrastructure that will be addressed by the proposed project. Those gaps include a lack of inquiry-based history and civics curriculum and assessments, curriculum-embedded digital literacy instruction, scalable professional learning, and evidence of efficacy of new curricular resources (pages e46-47). The applicant provides ways it will address each of the gaps. To address some of these gaps, the project will produce evidence-based, inquiry-driven history and civics lessons and research-validated formative assessments for educators as well as evidence-based, curriculum-embedded digital literacy tools for history classrooms (pages e47-49). The gaps the applicant identifies are significant, but fortunately, the applicant has a plan to address each of the gaps.

(iii) The proposed project is fully committed to providing services that are focused on those with the greatest needs. The proposed project will address the needs of disadvantaged individuals through the populations of teachers and students it serves, the content of the curriculum developed, providing maximal accessibility to the curriculum developed, and promoting equitable access to quality information (page e50). To reach disadvantaged teachers and students, the applicant has carefully selected its partners for collaboration. Additionally, the applicant will offer all lessons and assessments developed from the project free on its website, which can reach countless disadvantaged individuals beyond the partnerships (page e51).

Weaknesses:

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

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

- i. 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. (13 points)**
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

The application demonstrates the-quality management plan in adequate ways. It identifies procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. However, it identifies a management plan with limited information to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget.

(i) The applicant provides a management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. The applicant defines responsibilities of some of the key personnel, such as the project director and principal investigator will provide conceptual oversight for the project, lead professional development workshops, serve as the primary point of contact for partners, and ensure compliance with all grant requirements (pages e54-57). Additionally, the applicant provides a minimal timeline that includes the milestones and when they will occur during the project period (pages e53-54). Furthermore, the applicant will create an advisory group from the project's core stakeholders that will meet quarterly and monitor the project's progress to monitor the timeline and milestone (page e53).

(ii) The applicant presents a strong plan for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement of the proposed project. Feedback will be gathered through teacher surveys on new materials and professional development, student surveys on new material, coaching sessions with teachers, and quarterly meetings with stakeholders (pages e57-58). The advisory group will adjust project plans based on feedback from the multi-faceted feedback system (page e53). The applicant's feedback procedures will ensure feedback from a variety of stakeholders that will form the best approach for where to make adjustments to the project.

Weaknesses:

(i) The applicant lacks details for the qualifications for the personnel that are to be hired (page e55). This information will ensure that those personnel that have not be identified will have the qualifications need to accomplish assigned tasks. Additionally, the timeline lacks detailed activities and information on the personnel responsible for ensuring milestones are achieved (pages e53-54).

(ii) No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

- i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources,**

from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)

ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)

iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)

iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)

Strengths:

The application demonstrates adequacy of resources in exceptional ways. It identifies excellent support, including facilities, equipment, supplies and other resources, and it presents costs that are reasonable to support the objectives, design, and potential significance of the project. Additionally, the application clearly demonstrates that it has the resources to operate beyond the length of the grant, including financial contributions and stakeholder support. It also identifies demonstrated commitments from partners through letters of support.

(i) The applicant's organization fully supports the proposed project through facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources. The applicant will provide facilities through the furnishing of home offices with broadband Internet access and all necessities for all staff members (page e61). Additionally, the applicant provides equipment and supplies in the form of state-of-the-art computer and conference communication, software, and hardware (page e60). Furthermore, the applicant will provide a bank of popular research-backed lessons and assessments (page e59). These commitments of resources demonstrate the applicant's support of the project.

(ii) The costs presented in the budget of \$2,953,756 are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the budget (page e259). This budget will support 350 teachers through line items such as personnel, travel, and supplies (page e61 & e259). Additionally, the applicant provides teacher stipends of \$1,000 per teacher per 20-hour professional learning sequence (page e248). This is a reasonable cost to ensure necessary teacher participation in the proposed project.

(iii) The applicant clearly demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. The curricular resources developed through the grant will be made available to educators through their website, and this addition of curriculum to the applicant's existing digital platform will not require additional financial resources (page e62). This will allow for the long-term sustainability of educator's access to the materials. Additionally, the applicant will continue to provide the asynchronous online professional development course on its site (page e62). Furthermore, the applicant will provide the necessary small amount of staff time to moderate course discussion boards, and these expenses will be absorbed into the applicant's annual operating expenses (page e62). Furthermore, the applicant has broad support from stakeholders as evidenced through more than 440,000 educators that are registered to access lessons online and 41 state departments of education that include the applicant's resources in lists of recommended materials (page e62).

(iv) The applicant thoroughly demonstrates the commitment of partners to the implementation and success of the project. The applicant provides evidence of partners' commitments through letters of support from various entities, including state departments of education, school districts, and local educational agencies (pages e207-214). These partnerships are vital to the success of the project through evaluation of the project and implementation of the project.

Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses noted.

(ii) No weaknesses noted.

(iii) No weaknesses noted.

(iv) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

The application demonstrates innovative activities for civic engagement in exceptional ways. It identifies evidence-based strategies that will encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development programs for teachers. Also, it identifies that the project will benefit low-income students and underserved populations through hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and education of students on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The proposed project utilizes evidence-based strategies using research from Reisman (2012) and Wineburg et al. (2022) to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development programs for teachers that promote hands-on civic engagement for teachers and students and educate about the history and principles of the U. S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights (page e37). The proposed project will prioritize working with schools and districts who serve populations that exceed the national average of students who are economically disadvantaged, students of color, and English learners (page e37). Hands-on civic engagement activities will provide teachers the curricular materials to provide students with opportunities to learn research-backed fact-checking strategies to evaluate and discuss online information (page e38). Teachers will be able to incorporate these civic engagement activities into history courses. Additionally, the applicant provides ten curricular units and the topics from the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights that will be utilized for instruction (pages e39-40). The applicant's innovative approach and the capacity to provide the professional development will make this an impactful project with far reach beyond the project period.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project

designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—
a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs (6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) 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 civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The application demonstrates how the project will promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities in exceptional ways. It identifies rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded approaches that are inclusive and prepare students for college, career, and civic life. Additionally, it improves the engagement of underserved community members in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice, and it provides them with access to opportunities for leadership.

The proposed project will thoroughly promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities in high school settings (page e14). The proposed project will provide rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded approaches to learning that are inclusive by employing scaffolds, which make texts more accessible to match student reading levels (page e41). Additionally, materials will be translated for English Learners (page e41). Additionally, the proposed project's curriculum will be reflected in the diversity of the students using the resources and will address topics that have been historically underrepresented (page e42). The rigorous, engaging, well-rounded learning approaches are evidenced in the project's wide-range of sources and building analysis argumentation skills necessary for success in college, career, and civic life (page e41). These opportunities will be provided through opportunities to engage and analyze diverse media sources, such as art, photographs, video, and audio (page e41). Furthermore, the proposed project improves the engagement of underserved community members by supporting instruction that improves students' and community members' digital literacy skills (page e42). While the resources will support students in using digital literacy skills, it also embeds curricular resources that support students in teaching digital literacy skills to their families, which provide underserved students the opportunity for leadership (page e42). This innovative approach teaches students how to think, not what to think. Through this project students and community members will be empowered and more informed, which will lead to more civic engagement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 7

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 09:46 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2023 09:30 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Digital Education Project (S422B230049)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	21
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	30
Sub Total	100	96
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	108

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - AHC-NA - 6: 84.422B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Digital Education Project (S422B230049)

Questions

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:

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents a high-quality project design. A logic model is provided that highlights the inputs/resources, specific activities, and relevant outcomes. The proposed project clearly addresses the priorities for the competition.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

i. The applicant clearly indicates that the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. The applicant provides a clear logic model that details an overall picture of the inputs/resources, activities, outputs, and student outcomes. For example, the applicant intends to utilize funding, curricular resources, professional development (PD) resources, and PD developers and coaches to develop synchronous online summer workshops for teachers, online asynchronous PD courses, and implementation of lessons, which are expected to result in improved instructional practices for teachers, increased digital literacy for teachers, and improved historical thinking, civic online reasoning, and critical thinking in students. Project objectives and activities are clearly stated. (e11, e14-16, e79)

ii. The applicant clearly demonstrates that the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority established for the competition. Specifically, the applicant will employ their evidence-based curriculum that has been recommended by 40+ State Education Agencies (SEAs) and validated by a large-scale quasi-experiment. Additionally, they will develop 30 new Reading Like a Historian lessons that include Civic Online Reasoning (COR) strategies, 30 document-based performance tasks to assess student learning, and an online PD program for educators. The applicant expects to serve 350 teachers across six states and 17,500 students indirectly via the trained teachers. In further support of fulfillment of the priorities, the applicant will prioritize collaborating with districts that have high numbers of students living in poverty, students of color, and English language learners. An extensive PD plan is provided that details the type of PD, length of each session, timeframe of occurrence, and the topics of focus. Furthermore, the applicant will contract the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a randomized controlled trial study that meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards, thus, adding to the educational evaluation database. (e16-37)

Weaknesses:

i. No weaknesses noted.

ii. No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - ii. **The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)**
 - iii. **The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant cites appropriate research to identify the needs for the proposed project. Clear evidence is provided that indicates the applicant will direct the project resources to those with the greatest needs.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

- i. The applicant thoroughly describes the severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. The applicant cites relevant research that indicates multiple choice tests do not typically support higher order aspects of historical thinking. Additional research found that students struggle with evaluating digital sources related to politics and social issues. DBQs as tools for consistent classroom assessment is not realistic given the time required to evaluate them, and there is widespread acceptance that schools are ideal for providing civics education. Lastly, 25% of teachers report receiving no PD on using curriculum and 33% of teachers report receiving only 1-5 hours of PD in one school year. (e43-46, e49)
- ii. The applicant fully explains the specific gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure, and opportunities that will be addressed by the proposed project. Specific gaps include a lack of inquiry-based history and civics curriculum and assessments, digital literacy instruction, and limited scalable PD on history and civics education. Thus, the project will address each of the aforementioned gaps through evidence-based RHL and COR curriculums and extensive PD for teachers. (e46-50)
- iii. The applicant clearly documents how the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with the greatest needs. The applicant clearly indicates that they will focus project efforts on supporting teachers who serve historically disadvantaged populations, including economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and English language learners. Open access to the curriculum will increase equity as other districts and teachers will be able to access it even if they are not a part of the proposed project. (e50-52)

Weaknesses:

- i. No weaknesses noted.
- ii. No weaknesses noted.
- iii. No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

- i. 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. (13 points)**
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

An adequate management plan is presented and will support the implementation of the proposed activities. Key personnel are clearly identified. An extensive evaluation plan is provided. Qualifications for the new positions, persons responsible for carrying out the activities in the Gantt Chart, and milestones linked to tasks in the Gantt Chart need to be provided.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

- i. The applicant provides an appropriate management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. Key personnel are identified and resumes confirm their relevant training and experience. The applicant organization's Executive Director will serve as the Project Director; he has appropriate grant management experience. Quarterly meetings by the Advisory Group will support monitoring of project activities. Figure 4 generally identifies project tasks and indicates the quarter(s) in which they are expected to occur across three years of the grant. AIR will be contracted to carry out an extensive evaluation, including a RCT that meets WWC standards. (e52-57)
- ii. The applicant provides a clear plan to ensure feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. Feedback and continuous improvement will be supported through diverse data collection methods, project team and Advisory meetings, meetings with school districts, statewide networks, and state departments of education, and evaluation results and reports from the contracted External Evaluator, AIR. (e57-58, e30-37)

Weaknesses:

- i. Job qualifications for the to-be-hired (TBH) positions are not provided. The Gantt Chart management timeline needs to identify persons responsible for ensuring each task is fulfilled. Milestones need to be linked to the tasks indicated in the Gantt Chart. Activities need to be more narrowly defined. (e53-55)
- ii. No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

- i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources,**

from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)

ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)

iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)

iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)

Strengths:

The applicant documents necessary resources to carry out the proposed project as described. Multiple partners and collaborators are identified and confirmed via letters of commitment.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

i. The applicant indicates comprehensive support, facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources to carry out the proposed project. DEP staff are recognized as international leaders in history and civics education, as the organization was derived from the Stanford History Education Group that provided free materials in social studies to educators and state departments of education. Partnerships across six states indicate extensive support for the proposed project. (e58-61)

ii. The costs appear entirely reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. This is especially true because the applicant expects to serve 350 teachers through extensive PD and reach 17,500 students. Personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, contractual, indirect costs, and training stipends are clearly identified in the budget and appear reasonable. (e61, e231-252)

iii. The applicant fully demonstrates that it has the appropriate resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. The applicant will continue to utilize its digital platform to share open source curriculums and curricular resources and for professional trainings. The applicant maintains a massive following of educators (440,000) that are registered for RHL and COR lessons online. (e62-63)

iv. The indicated partners thoroughly demonstrate commitment to the implementation and success of the proposed project. Required letters of commitment are provided from all partners. Partner contributions are clearly stated. (e63, e207-214)

Weaknesses:

i. No weaknesses noted.

ii. No weaknesses noted.

iii. No weaknesses noted.

iv. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly describes several innovative activities for civic engagement that teachers and students will participate in. These hands-on activities are expected to increase teachers' and students' knowledge of U.S. history, the Constitution, and civics education.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

a. The applicant clearly documents that the proposed project includes hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students. PD for teachers will focus on the Reading Like a Historian curriculum, modeling historical thinking, infusing COR into the history classroom, instructional methods, and check-in and coaching related to lessons implemented. Teachers will receive 20+ hours of PD. Students will engage in fact-checking strategies to assess and produce online information. (e37-39)

b. The applicant clearly specifies that the proposed project provides programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights. Relevant topics include Reconstruction Amendments; Jim Crow, Gilded Age, and American Imperialism; the Progressive Era; WWI and 1920s; Great Depression and WWII; Cold War, Red Scare, and the Fifties; Civil Rights Movement; 1960s and 1970s; 1980s and 1990s; and 9/11 to the present. (e39-40)

Weaknesses:

a. No weaknesses noted.

b. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—
a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2)

Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs(6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) 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 civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant will clearly promote educational equity to resources and opportunities by prioritizing underserved students and engaging teachers and students through a variety of activities to increase knowledge and skills in democratic processes and to increase participation in civic engagement.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

a. The applicant clearly specifies that the proposed project will promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students including students from poverty-stricken or low-income households, students of color, and English language learners. (e40-43)

b. The proposed project is expected to examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy. For example, the applicant will analyze district and state standardized test data disaggregated by demographics to identify specific indicators of inequity. (e40-43)

c. The proposed project thoroughly documents rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded 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 civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices. The applicant clearly indicates that they will prioritize working with districts and schools with high populations of students living in poverty, students of color, and English learners. Use of the RLH and COR lessons will provide opportunities for students to collaborate through small group work, scaffolded discussion, and active inquiry. Students will be charged with analyzing a variety of media, including art, photographs, and audio. Literacy scaffolding of lessons will support English language learners, while diverse topics in the curriculum will address underrepresented populations. (e19, e40-43, e262-263)

d. The proposed project will establish, expand, and improve the engagement of underserved community members in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, and/or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership. Specifically, the inclusion of the COR curriculum will support students in differentiating accurate information from inaccurate information and will include skills training in digital literacy. (e40-43)

Weaknesses:

- a. No weaknesses noted.
- b. No weaknesses noted.
- c. No weaknesses noted.
- d. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **7**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/07/2023 09:30 AM