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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Louisiana Children's Research Center for Development and Lea (S310A220027)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	16
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	12
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	20	20
Sub Total	80	73
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Total	89	82

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Louisiana Children's Research Center for Development and Lea (S310A220027)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **A. Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 points).**

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

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

   (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant has proposed a clear conceptual framework and logic model to undergird the project. To support the conceptual framework, the applicant has employed the Dual Capacity-Building Framework (e28, p6) and the Louisiana Department of Education's BE ENGAGED® Birth-12 Framework (e 29, p7).

   The applicant has also presented a sound research basis for the project and its interventions. In addition to the Dual Capacity and Be Engaged frameworks, the project will utilize Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (e34, p12), an evidence-based model for addressing the social-emotional needs of students. The applicant will also utilize FASTalk, a family engagement tool promoting equity and partnership building between teachers and historically underserved families. The tool will send text messages, which can be automatically translated into over 100 languages, to families sharing engaging, at-home learning activities in each family's home language (e39, p17). A Stanford study found that sending weekly early literacy activities by text message to parents increased parental involvement at home leading to significant early literacy gains for preschool students (e38, p16). Statewide resources for educators and families will also include lists and resources related to evidence-based practices and interventions supporting effective family engagement (e24, p8). Three family engagement specialists will also complete professional development in three evidence-based interventions that support students through family-school partnerships.

   Multiple tools and methods will be used to build capacity. Design of the proposed project is one that is likely to build the capacity of families and educators and yield results that are sustainable. One tool will be a website including at-home activity ideas and evidence-based/driven solutions that can be implemented at home (e24, p8) and ultimately equip parents and families to engage in policy making at the school, local, state, and federal levels. This project will increase visibility of resources by disseminating flyers and select printed versions of resources through schools, school districts, library systems, PTICs, local businesses, and community organization (e31, p9). Providing parents with tools that can be implemented at home will continue to support family engagement beyond the duration of the project.

   The project will also include workshops and presentations throughout the state to support child and adult literacy at home, understanding the annual school report card, parent advocacy, and evidence-based interventions and best practices that engage educators and family members in supporting student success (e25, p 9). Building this expanded program upon the existing framework used by the Louisiana Department of Education will support continuity and longevity (e39, p17).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. B. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 20 points).

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

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

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(4) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(5) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

Strengths:

With the design of the project are multiple means for collecting ongoing feedback for progress monitoring and continuous improvement. Focus groups, and interviews throughout the grant period will inform implementation decisions to ensure fidelity in delivery of grant activities. Bi-monthly (every other month) planning meetings and quarterly advisory board meetings will also serve as opportunities to review progress and brainstorm ideas to overcome barriers or improve the quality of grant activities (e41, p19). The use of FASTalk (text system) will also provide real time feedback loops which include dashboards and weekly reports of engagement analytics by school, grade, teachers, and language; and the Family Engagement Lab conducts parent and teacher surveys throughout the year to measure attitudes, knowledge, and behavior (e42, p20).

The applicant has a track record of past success (e.g., in the last three years, The Center has served 64 different school districts/LEAs and over 250 schools in Louisiana, e43, p21) with similar projects that will support the likelihood of success with the proposed project, including high quality services. In addition, the organization has 32 full-time staff with expertise in early childhood development, early literacy, dyslexia intervention, family engagement, public policy, and evaluation, all of which are relevant to the proposed project (e43, p21).

Time commitments of the project director and key personnel are both adequate and appropriate. The project director, project coordinator and three family engagement specialists will all serve fulltime on the project to facilitate implementation.

To ensure diverse perspectives in the project, the applicant will work with a 15-member advisory board with representation from families of students (8 members), educators (2 members), students (2 members), and other community stakeholders (3 members), (e25, p3). Through its partners, the applicant will recruit parents, families, students, educators, community leaders, and business leaders to participate in the Advisory Board (e47, p25). In supporting equity in participation, up to three translators will be at each advisory board meeting; meetings will be provided virtually for those

who cannot attend in person; and staff will volunteer time to provide childcare on site. Funds have also been allocated for travel in the form of mileage reimbursement or for transportation service from their home to the meeting site (e47, p25).

Weaknesses:

Limited information on the plan to manage the project has been provided. The applicant has provided high level information on the responsibilities of each key personnel and partner but has not detailed timelines or milestones for management. Without this information, it less likely that the project will be completed on time and within budget.
The applicant has also indicated that the principal investigator will dedicate one summer month to the project. Without contextual information (e.g., timing and length of randomized control trial) it is difficult to ascertain whether one summer month will be sufficient to "direct all aspects related to research design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination of the Randomized Clinical Trial (RCT), while supervising the graduate research assistants…and maintain[ing] fiscal responsibility. Without such contextual information, it seems one summer month is not sufficient to execute the enumerated responsibilities.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **C. Project Personnel (up to 15 points).**

   The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors--

   (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

   (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

   (3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

   Strengths:

   The relevant experience and training of key personnel and project consultants are relevant and specific to the proposed project. For example, Family Engagement Specialists will have a minimum of 3 years of experience in education or family-focused program areas. and a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in counseling, teaching, psychology, sociology, social work, or related field (e49, p27); and the Director of Evaluation and Data, who will evaluate ethe project's process and outcomes, is a researcher and evaluator with over 8 years' experience working on a variety of federal grants and state-level contracts that address housing disparities in Louisiana, mental health access in public schools, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and workforce training (e51, p29).

   Weaknesses:

   Limited information on the required training and experience of the project director was provided. Instead, the applicant writes only that the selected project director must at least 5 years of family-school engagement experience (e40, p18), with no mention of required training or any additional relevant experiences. It is also not clear from the information provide, how the applicant will encourage applications for project staff from diverse populations who have traditionally been underrepresented.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 20 points).

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant has proposed strong and relevant commitments from partners to the project through letters of support/ preliminary letters of understanding (e125). The provided budget is also thorough and detailed (e146). Costs associated with the budget appear both adequate and reasonable to attain the proposed objectives and for the number of persons served.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) and the educators who serve them, through one or more of the following priority areas:

(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.

(b) Providing resources and supports to meet the basic, fundamental, health and safety needs of students and educators.

(c) Addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic need through approaches that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status.

Strengths:

The applicant has elected to address students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic need through approaches that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status through this project. Family engagement specialists will receive training in Youth Mental Health First Aid and RULER, both of which are evidence-based programs designed for educators, families, and community members in advancing a trauma-informed approach and social emotional learning, respectively (e40, p18). The project will also utilize PBIS, a model supporting students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs through approaches that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status, in 4 schools (e33, p11).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

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

   Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it 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-school-time settings.

   (7) Alternative schools and programs.

   (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities; and

   (9) Adult learning.

   (b) That is designed to examine the sources of inequities related to, and implement responses through, one or more of the following:

   (1) 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 and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives)).

   (2) Increasing student racial or socioeconomic diversity, through developing or implementing

evidence-based policies or strategies that include one or more of the following:

(i) Ongoing, robust family and community involvement.

(ii) Intra- or inter-district or regional coordination.

(iii) Cross-agency collaboration, such as with housing or transportation authorities.

(iv) Alignment with an existing public diversity plan or diversity needs assessment.

Strengths:

Through the proposed project, the applicant will establish, expand, or improve engagement of underserved community members in elementary and middle schools and have a special focus on advancing family-school engagement to support students of color, English learners, and migrant students (e20, p2). Family engagement workshops will be focused on reaching communities with high concentrations of disadvantaged students, including students who are English learners, minorities, students with disabilities, homeless children and youth, children and youth in foster care, and migrant students. These 45-minute workshops will provide effective family supports for literacy development and distribute 300 book bundles annually (e32, p10).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 4--Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change (up to 3 points).**

   Projects that are designed to take a systemic approach to improving outcomes for underserved students in the following priority area:

   (a) Establishing cross-agency partnerships, or community-based partnerships with local nonprofit organizations, businesses, philanthropic organizations, or others, to meet family well-being needs.

   Strengths:

   The applicant has established cross-agency and community-based partnerships to support this project. The Center has developed partnerships with schools, LEAs, organizations serving families, and institutions of higher education, including with LSU, that facilitate coordination among state entities while also operating on a local level (e28, P6).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/05/2022 08:50 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Louisiana Children's Research Center for Development and Lea (S310A220027)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	25
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		20	17
Quality of Project Personnel			
1. Project Personnel		15	13
Adequacy of Resources			
1. Adequacy of Resources		20	20
	Sub Total	80	75
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority 2			
Competitive Preference Priority 2			
1. CPP2		3	3
	Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 3			
Competitive Preference Priority 3			
1. CPP3		3	3
	Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 4			
Competitive Preference Priority 4			
1. CPP4		3	3
	Sub Total	3	3
	Total	89	84

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - SFEC Tier 1 Panel - 2: 84.310A

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

Applicant: Louisiana Children's Research Center for Development and Lea (S310A220027)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. A. Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 points).

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

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

(2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

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

Strengths:

The project is aligned with the Louisiana Department of Education's existing framework (e17), which is aligned with the Dual Capacity-Building Framework (e22). In addition to the dual capacity-building framework, the intervention will be based on PBIS and FASTalk (evidence-informed) research and practices (e29). The project aims to support all students in the state and includes an evidence-based emerging best practice to add capacity in the long-term by scaling the program (p1).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. B. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 20 points).

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

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

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(4) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(5) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

Strengths:

There is a clear plan for hiring and the management responsibilities of the SFEC staff (e34-35), and Appendices A and C outline the logic model and timelines for the projects proposed. The SFEC will have progress monitoring meetings at a minimum every two months (e34) to approve continuously. They also plan on using an evaluation plan, dashboard, and quarterly grant reports, which will include items such as focus groups and interviews. The advisory board will also review progress (e35). The applicant has previous experience managing projects in literacy and learning and highlights their extensive organizational capacity. They outline several examples of how they have ensured high-quality projects and services in the past, including a previous partnership with the LDE (e37-38). The center plans on hiring a full-time project director, project coordinator, and three family engagement specialists (one who will speak Spanish) (e34), which is evidence of adequate time allocated to the project. Additionally, the applicant plans on working with a diverse advisory board that includes families, educators, students, and community stakeholders. They outline several examples of how they will ensure participation by board members, including translators, childcare, and transportation support (e19, 35, 41).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant presented a timeline and milestones, these did not include sufficient detail. Also, it's unclear how the milestones are connected to the project objectives. Additionally, there was an implementation plan and timeline for the intervention, but not the overall statewide approach and activities of the SFEC (e46-48).

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. C. Project Personnel (up to 15 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors--

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

The qualifications for the new roles for the SFEC are extensive and require applicants to have multiple years of experience with family and community engagement (e43-44). The staff from The Center also come from education backgrounds and will provide significant expertise to the project (e42 – 45). DeJunne Jackson will be the primary lead for the project, and she has a wide variety of backgrounds in parent organizing, teaching, and parent training and

development (e42). The family engagement specialist's responsibilities are relevant to the project, and the applicant provides requirements (such as a minimum of three years working in family engagement) for those roles (e43-44). Lastly, Dr. Carolin Purser, the evaluation lead, has extensive experience and training related to progress monitoring and evaluation (e45).

Weaknesses:

There is minimal evidence that the applicant will ensure the diversity of applicants for the open roles in the SFECs. Additionally, the application had minimal evidence for the training required for the project director.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 20 points).

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

Appendix F provides letters of support from the key partners for the SFEC, including LDE, LSU, the Family Engagement Lab, and the two districts that will participate in the evidence-based program (e82-102). These letters are both from community partners and potential future partners for expanding the project in the future. The budget narrative adequately outlines the salaries and non-payroll expenses for the entirety of the SFEC programming (pdf p. 1-26). The applicant will also support families engaging on the advisory board, including childcare, mileage, translators, etc. (e7, 34-35). For evidence that the costs are reasonable, the applicant describes how it will provide students across the state with its comprehensive supports and target emerging practices to a select few LEAs (p.1). Specifically, they will allocate over 80% of the funds to the targeted student populations across the state (e22). Both the statewide and evidence-based models stand to serve a significant amount of the student population in LA (e46-47, pdf p.1).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 20

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) and the educators who serve them, through one or more of the following priority areas:

(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.

(b) Providing resources and supports to meet the basic, fundamental, health and safety needs of students and educators.

(c) Addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic need through approaches that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status.

Strengths:

The applicant aims to support students' social, emotional, and mental health due to the impacts of COVID-19 and natural disasters (p2). The applicant notes it will use the PBIS integration to support the social, emotional, and academic needs of students. They also will conduct needs assessments (e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

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

   Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it 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-school-time settings.

   (7) Alternative schools and programs.

   (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities; and

   (9) Adult learning.

(b) That is designed to examine the sources of inequities related to, and implement responses through, one or more of the following:

(1) 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 and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives)).

(2) Increasing student racial or socioeconomic diversity, through developing or implementing evidence-based policies or strategies that include one or more of the following:

(i) Ongoing, robust family and community involvement.

(ii) Intra- or inter-district or regional coordination.

(iii) Cross-agency collaboration, such as with housing or transportation authorities.

(iv) Alignment with an existing public diversity plan or diversity needs assessment.

Strengths:

The applicant designed the SFEC to serve several subgroups of students and their families, including students of color, English learners, and migrant students (p.2). The evidence-based interventions will occur in elementary and middle school settings (e21). Additionally, they intend for their design to increase community members' engagement by building their skills for informing and engaging with decision-making at the local and state level (e22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 4--Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change (up to 3 points).**

   Projects that are designed to take a systemic approach to improving outcomes for underserved students in the following priority area:

   (a) Establishing cross-agency partnerships, or community-based partnerships with local nonprofit organizations, businesses, philanthropic organizations, or others, to meet family well-being needs.

   Strengths:

   The applicant provides evidence of establishing new partnerships and leveraging other long-standing relationships with various agencies and organizations, as well as LSU and the state education agency (e22).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/06/2022 05:13 PM