

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/15/2023 05:13 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	30
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	70	70
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	5
<b>Total</b>	77	75

# Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - EIR Early-Phase - 15: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

## 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 factor:

Reader's Score: 20

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates clearly that the proposed project includes the use of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. This project will assess the effectiveness of Conscious Discipline with a focus on cultural relevance. The applicant clearly defines the impact of early childhood education both nationally and locally. The local and regional efforts include ongoing local evaluation efforts relating to early childhood education. These efforts will provide baseline data and direct the proposed project to interventions that work. (Pages e19-e27)

This proposed project is significant as there is a gap in research regarding early childhood education promoting children's social and emotional skills that will improve their behavioral and academic outcomes. This proposed project addresses these issues. (Page e27-e29)

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

#### Sub

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

The proposed project is appropriately supported by the conceptual framework that is evidence-based. The framework includes the application of Conscious Discipline, an evidence-based, trauma informed approach. The proposed project will use Conscious Discipline to address social and emotional learning in early childhood settings. (Page e30-e34)

The core components of Conscious Discipline that will be implemented will include professional development, job-embedded coaching and the use of Professional Learning Communities. These elements of the framework are supported by underlying research. (Pages e30-e34)

Black Boy Brilliance is also part of the framework that clearly supports the proposed project. That includes trained Black Boy Brilliance ambassadors that are integrated into Conscious Discipline within the classrooms. (Page e34)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a table that includes several goals, objectives and outcomes that are specific and measurable. For example, one the goals is to increase educator capacity and efficacy to amplify social and emotional skills within their academic curriculum. (Pages e35-e36)

The applicant clearly links measurable objectives to the goals of the proposed project. For example, to address the improvement of high-needs students' academic performance and engagement goal, an objective is stated as, "By December 31, 2028, 60% of children in Conscious Discipline classrooms will experience an increase in self-regulation and social-emotional skills." (Page e35-36)

The applicant clearly defines the outcomes for the proposed project that are linked to the objectives and performance measures that will be used. (Page e35)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly defines the needs of the target population. The collaborators and stakeholders of the agency have conducted and analyzed assessments that affect children. They found that of 20 children in the county served, 11 are economically disadvantaged and six are living in poverty. (Pages e19 and Pages e36)

The applicant has also used local assessments to determine a significant need of the proposed project based on

**Sub**

the gaps that are present in children demonstrating readiness for kindergarten between African American and White children enrolled Preschool Promise. (Page e24)

The applicant has designed the proposed project to provide intervention in those preschools that serve the highest needs. For example, schools that have a large proportion of students of color and/or high percentage of students living in low-income households will be served first. (Page e36-37)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

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

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant defines an employment policy that ensures that hiring and advancement of diverse personnel without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability conditions will occur. (Page e38)

The applicant clearly demonstrates that the diverse leadership team will be used to recruit new members from diverse backgrounds. (Page e38)

The applicant identifies key personnel for the proposed project. These individuals demonstrate relevant training and experience. For example, the Project Advisor has had experience in grant administration. (Page e39 and Pages e83-e85)

Several of the leadership positions are filled by individuals who have experiences and training in early childhood education. (Pages e88-e89)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

### Sub

1. (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.

#### Strengths:

The proposed management plan includes clearly outlined activities, milestones and timelines. The management plan also includes a linked individual or team who is responsible for the task's completion. The management plan includes activities for each of the five years of the project. The charting of these activities is a clear outline of the project milestones. These efforts will ensure that the proposed project will be completed on time and within budget. (Pages e44- e53)

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 10

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)**

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
- (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

#### Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates the project will be implemented by a partnership with Sinclair College, a community college, from the area. The Education Department Instructor will be an integral part of the advisory council. (Page e19 and e71-72 and MOU Page e163)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score:** 5

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

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

**Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning  
(up to 2 points)**

Projects that are designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, through adopting or expanding comprehensive, strategic career and compensation systems that provide competitive compensation and include opportunities for educators to serve as mentors and instructional coaches, or to take on additional leadership roles and responsibilities for which educators are compensated.

**Strengths:**

Did not apply.

**Weaknesses:**

Did not apply.

**Reader's Score:** 0

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/15/2023 05:13 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/15/2023 05:05 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	30
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	70	70
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	5
<b>Total</b>	77	75



# Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - EIR Early-Phase - 15: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

## 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 factor:

Reader's Score: 20

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant provided a descriptive summary of the national and local significance of the implementation of Conscious Discipline® (CD) by conducting an impact study to determine its effectiveness with a focus on cultural relevance (p. e11, e19 - e20) and also to determine the impact of the emerging innovative strategy, the Black Boy Ambassador program. While the curriculum has been implemented in classrooms throughout the nation, there have been no studies that meet the What Works Clearinghouse Standards With or Without Reservations and NO comparative studies that incorporate and evaluate the emerging Black Boy Brilliance practices. And No studies or reports of either the curriculum or Black Boy Brilliance have been published or distributed (p. e12).

The early childhood years (birth to age 5) are well-supported as the most critical period in brain development. Research has also shown that those preschoolers who participate in early childhood education programs achieve better academic and life outcomes, with a significant impact on children from low-income underserved children (p. e20). In addition, the pandemic exacerbated the impact of social isolation, creating still unknown long-term effects in the disruption of academic and social engagement. This supports the need for, and importance of research and programming as identified in the proposed project.

In addition, local evidence supports the need for the proposed project. Data indicates that for every 20 children in Montgomery County, 11 are economically disadvantaged, including six living in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2021) (p. e23) . An additional relevant factor is the significant differences in learning readiness between African American and White children enrolled in Preschool Promise programs. For example, 33% of White children showed kindergarten academic readiness while only 13% of African American children indicated kindergarten readiness.

There is also a significant gap in research to document successful school-based initiatives to address student social and emotional learning. This is due to the limited resources of schools to effectively address areas other than the cognitive development of students (pp. e26 - e29). Expansion of research through the proposed project, the Conscious Discipline® Impact Study, that also includes a vigorous evaluation process, should address the program and research gaps to facilitate the knowledge of appropriate evidence-based and promising strategies in the areas of social emotional learning for underserved preschool children.

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

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

**Reader's Score: 30**

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a sound description of the underlying conceptual framework of the proposed project, an impact study of Conscious Discipline®, an evidence-based, trauma informed approach. The project has several critical parts that are scientifically and practically designed for success. Components of the model are successfully being implemented in school districts throughout the nation (p. e29). The core components of the curriculum include professional development, classroom technical assistance, individual teacher coaching, and representation of people of color in the development team (p. e33). The project will implement a “quasi-experimental” design to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum with a focus on cultural relevance (p. e11).

As a supportive framework, the applicant will institute Black Boy Brilliance, an initiative that recruits Black male mentors as role models for Black preschool students. The mentors will be trained in the CD curriculum and actively interact with the preschool students through participation in games, reading, or skill instruction. The effectiveness of the interaction will be evaluated to determine the impact of the strategy (p.e34).

The selected primary project framework, Conscious Discipline®, supported by Black Boy Brilliance, with appropriate flexibility for student age and abilities, should provide a solid foundation for project implementation supported by ongoing monitoring of goals, objectives, and milestones to achieve successful outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a concise summary and a description of precise and measurable goals, objectives, outcomes, and performance measures for the proposed project. The project has two primary goals, supported by measurable objectives focused on teacher and child outcomes, that will be impacting approximately 50 teachers

**Sub**

and 500 students in the target area of Montgomery County, Ohio. As documentation, two tables were presented in the project's Abstract and Project Design description (pp. e11 - e12, pp. e34 - e36). An example of the specificity of the goals, objectives, and outcomes includes the following: Goal 1 – Increase educator capacity and efficacy to amplify social and emotional skills within their academic curriculum; Objective 1.1 – By December 31, 2028, 90% of teachers will improve self-efficacy, pedagogical content knowledge, and attitudes towards teaching social emotional learning; Outcome – By May 2026 and May 2027, teachers' focus on children's social-emotional skills. Tool: CD Fidelity Rubric; and Performance Measure – At the end of the second implementation year, teachers will average 2.5 on the overall CD Fidelity Rubric (again on a scale from 1 to 4) (p. e35).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a comprehensive summary of strategies to ensure that the project meets the needs of the target population. The project will prioritize serving schools with classrooms of underserved and high needs students (i.e., at least 50% students of color, those living in low-income households -- earning 200% below Federal Poverty Level), those who are performing below grade/level expectations, and those in the foster care system (p. e36 - e37). In addition, treatment classrooms that will be selected (with school administration permission and support) to participate in the Black Boy Brilliance Ambassador program will include those classrooms with at least three Black preschool students (p. e37). Strategies will focus on the provision of resources specifically designed to meet the needs of the above identified underserved population and include a focus on resiliency and cultural competence.

To meet the needs of the target population, a key component of the project is the inclusion of and active involvement of the community Advisory Council in the project's implementation. The Advisory Council will be composed of national and local early childhood education experts. Along with a Parent Council of parents of young children, it will provide input on implementation strategies to ensure feasibility and appropriateness in meeting the needs of the target population. The applicant also included a commitment from the initial members of the Advisory Council with a signed Memorandum of Understanding (pp. e162 - e163). Additional members (one from each preschool) of the Advisory Council will be identified from participating preschools through distribution and completion of Interest Forms. Members will also be compensated with an annual stipend for their participation in the proposed project. The applicant identified sound and appropriate strategies to successfully address the needs of the identified target population

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant provided a thorough and documented project personnel plan that included the assurance of current applicant internal policies that "promote the hiring and advancement of diverse personnel without regard to race, religion, color, national originality, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disabling conditions" (p. e38). These assurances are inherent throughout the project and also include diversity in the seven-member Preschool Promise Advisory Board, four members of which are Black. In addition, the applicant's diverse leadership will encourage and solicit team members from diverse backgrounds and communities.

A documented description and summary of the roles, experiences, and expertise of key project staff was also included, supported by resumes. For example, the applicant's Senior Manager for Preschool Promise will serve as the Project Manager to manage project timelines, deliverables, and outcomes. Her relevant experiences include grant and project management. In addition, the critical key position of Black Boy Brilliance Lead will be the Senior Project Manager for Preschool Promise. He is also the Senior Program Manager for Black Boy Brilliance. A resume was included that supported his experience in the important expertise areas of cultural competence, partnership building, community advocacy and youth development (pp. e94 - e95).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

### Sub

1. (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,

**Sub**

**and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided an exhaustive, extensive, and highly detailed management plan to support achievement of project outcomes. The plan indicated that the applicant has extensive experience in management of similar initiatives and will be responsible for all activities (oversight, monitoring, supervision, quality assurance, and fiscal management) of the proposed project (pp. e42 - e43). Additional experience of the applicant to successfully manage the proposed projects is its seven year history of implementing the selected model, Conscious Discipline® (CD), its relationship with Loving Guidance, the parent company of CD, and its experience in managing projects of comparable size and funding (p. e43).

The management plan was presented in a well-defined table that identified specific activities, milestones, responsibilities, and timelines (presented monthly) for each year of the proposed project (pp. e44 - e53). For example, for Year 2 (January 2025 - December 2025), the applicant provided the following information: Activity – Recruit and select Classrooms/Teachers for Year 1 Implementation Cohort; Milestones – 50 Treatment and 50 Comparison Classrooms/Teacher Selected Cohort 1; Responsible – Project Manager; and Timeline – March-May 2025 (p. e46).

The applicant also provided relevant and supportive Letters of Commitment and Memoranda of Understanding to support the efficacy of the Management Plan. Letters of Commitment were included from such notable individuals as the Mayor of City of Dayton (pp. e134 - e135), a United States Congressman from Ohio (p. e136), and the Superintendent of Montgomery County Educational Service Center (p. e143). An MOU was also included from the Preschool Promise EIR Grant – Conscious Discipline® Impact Study Advisory Council (pp. e162 - e163) and an MOU signed by 62 agencies representing early learning and childcare programs throughout Montgomery County, Ohio (pp. e147 - e150).

The well-defined, inclusive, and documented management plan should facilitate and provide guidance to support the successful achievement of identified project outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)**

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:**

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**
- (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**
- (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**
- (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant will partner with Sinclair College, an NIA designated community college in Dayton, Ohio to implement the proposed project. An Education Department Instructor, who has extensive experience in early childhood education and culturally relevant teaching (including the selected Black Boy Brilliance curriculum) will serve as a member of the applicant's Advisory Council. Another instructor at Sinclair will also serve as a member of the Advisory Council and will facilitate integration of learning from the project into the college's early childhood program.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

**Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning (up to 2 points)**

Projects that are designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, through adopting or expanding comprehensive, strategic career and compensation systems that provide competitive compensation and include opportunities for educators to serve as mentors and instructional coaches, or to take on additional leadership roles and responsibilities for which educators are compensated.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/15/2023 05:05 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/15/2023 05:09 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	29
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	70	69
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	4
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	4
<b>Total</b>	77	73

# Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - EIR Early-Phase - 15: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

## 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 factor:

Reader's Score: 20

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant establishes the significance of the proposed project, Conscious Discipline Impact Study, by citing existing early childhood developmental research that identifies a link between mastery of social-emotional competencies in early childhood and improved outcomes in well-being and student performance. Research is also included that indicates that failure to achieve competency can lead to personal, social and academic difficulties (e28).

The applicant notes that racial and socioeconomic inequity has created barriers to children obtaining quality education in their early years, which is an impactful time for the development of habits that will last throughout their lives (p. e21). While Preschool Promise has evidence that their current interventions are correlated with higher kindergarten readiness (p. e24), the applicant also noted that racial disparity in outcomes still exists. As the applicant notes, "there is a profound differential in the percent demonstrating readiness between African American and White children enrolled in Preschool Promise. Specifically, although 33% of White children were demonstrating readiness, only 13% of African American children demonstrated readiness" (p. e 24).

The applicant's proposal includes building upon the Conscious Discipline (CD) model to determine the beneficial outcomes from the implementation of CD. CD is a trauma-informed, evidence-based social-emotional learning program which is implemented in many educational settings across the United States (p. e17). The applicant explains that while CD has some evidence indicating that scores on the CD Fidelity rubric are correlated with changes in children's executive function and academic skills, there is minimal research to substantiate the program's impact (p. e17).

The additional component the applicant proposes is the inclusion of the Black Boy Brilliance enhancements as one of the experimental conditions of the project. The project will evaluate if there are increased benefits with the combined CD framework and Black Boy Brilliance, which has not yet been researched. The applicant proposes that there is both national and local significance to establishing further evidence in the efficacy of the CD program. Research from Harvard University demonstrates that skills learned in early childhood can be critical to the long term personal and professional success (e20). Furthermore, the consistency of lower performance measures for minority students indicates the compelling need to address the inequities in how students of color are supported in school settings (p. e21). Of local significance, the population of Montgomery County has a large number of students who



**Sub**

are impacted by racial or economic inequity. For example, 11 of 20 preschool students are economically disadvantaged and a considerably smaller percentage of Black students are in classrooms with Black teachers than their White counterparts (p. e23).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

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

**Reader's Score: 29**

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant indicates that the proposed project is based on the conceptual framework of Conscious Discipline® (CD) which is identified as “an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach that encompasses multiple components, each of which are scientifically and practically designed for success”(p. e29). The applicant hypothesizes that implementing CD in a classroom will impact school readiness in several ways, such as improved classroom climate and attendance, and a decrease in staff turnover and lost instructional time due to classroom interruptions and unsafe behaviors.

The applicant indicates that one of the key components of the CD framework is the focus on the Brain State Model, which is based in neuroscience research. “The Brain State Model is a highly simplified conceptual framework that suggests individuals have 3 hierarchical needs: safety, connection, and problem-solving” (Bailey, 2000, 2014: pp. e30, e301-331).

**Weaknesses:**

Black Boy Brilliance is identified by the applicant as a program developed by Preschool Promise through the guidance of prominent Montgomery County leaders and stakeholders, which has resulted in an innovative strategy to enhance learning environments for children of color, focusing on the needs of Black boys. Although Black Boy Brilliance is one of two strategies the applicant will be evaluating, there is minimal information included in the proposal about how the program was designed and what outcomes, if any, have been found with its implementation.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has included an exhaustive list about what data will be collected, and the instruments that will be employed to measure their proposed objectives. Table 11 indicates the construct that each instrument will measure, as well as rationale for the usage of each instrument. For example, “MEFS: a nationally normed, standardized assessment of children’s executive functioning skills that is both reliable and valid” (p. e57).

The applicant’s proposal is comprehensive in the use of assessments that will measure student achievement, (such as the Woodcock-Johnson IV), fidelity of implementation from teacher self-assessments, and academic and social emotional outcomes using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the state Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) (e18).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has clearly identified and defined the target population. The applicant defines schools as underserved when there are a large proportion of students of color, defined as 50% or greater; or a high percentage of students, defined as 50% or greater, living in low-income households earning 200% or below the Federal Poverty Level. The applicant defines a high-need student as a child who is performing below grade/age expectations, are involved in the foster care system, and/or considered part of an underserved population” (p. e36).

The applicant has included Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) from multiple school districts, as well as the regional Head Start provider, to verify the commitment that the schools have made to participate in the project. The applicant has already been implementing programming in the participating schools with some degree of success at increasing kindergarten readiness, as evidenced by the graph on p. e24. The letters of support and MOUs include support from both school districts as well as from the local and state government, i.e., the Mayor of Dayton and the Director of the Governor’s Children’s Initiative, and local experts in children’s healthcare (Dayton Children’s Hospital) (p. e123-143).

The applicant demonstrates its commitment to be accountable to the need of the local community through its advisory council, which will include a Parent Council, ensuring that the parents participating are representative of the “children’s parents or caregivers directly associated with schools involved in the project” (p. e 38). The applicant’s expert advisory council members will include faculty from two Ohio universities, including local Sinclair Community College.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

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

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

The extent to which the applicant actively encourages employment applications from persons who are members of groups who are traditionally underrepresented is well documented in their project proposal. The applicant affirms its commitment to promote “the hiring and advancement of diverse personnel.” This commitment is reflected in the leadership of their board of directors, “3 members are White and 4 are Black, with the Vice Chair position held by a Black woman.” Preschool Promise will utilize its diverse leadership team and staff to recruit members from diverse backgrounds and communities to apply for open positions” (p. e38).

The applicant provides a comprehensive list and summary of the relevant qualifications of the project staff in the form of both a detailed summary, curriculum vitae (CV) and resumes. The project team brings considerable expertise, training and experience in the areas of early childhood education, non-profit management, developmental psychology, program evaluation and educational policy (e83-e121). For example, one team member’s past successes include the development of “the early childhood initiative, Ready Set Soar, which resulted in the creation of Preschool Promise, which has grown to be a \$10 million per year organization and serves as a leading model in Ohio and around the country...” (p. e39).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub**

- 1. (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.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided an exhaustive list of milestones, project objectives and responsible personnel. Table 8a (p.e44), establishes the timeline of tasks for each year, broken down into both monthly, quarterly and annual benchmarks. The budget is detailed and clear, with appropriate time allocated for task completion.

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)**

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
- (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

**Strengths:**

The applicant has an established partnership with Sinclair Community College through the participation of two professors on the advisory council. Both professors will have opportunity to inform the project in their areas of expertise. One is affiliated with Sinclair College's newly instituted trauma-informed certificate program and will also serve as an Advisor for the Black Boy Brilliance portion of the initiative, supporting the work of the Black Boy Brilliance Leader through design and recruitment of ambassadors. A second professor's Advisory Council role will enable her to integrate learning from the project into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) associate degree program (p. e71-e72).

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant clearly describes representation of Sinclair faculty in the project, the proposal does not indicate to what extent the ambassadors will be recruited from the student body, or to what extent the project learning will be integrated into the ECE degree program.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

**Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning (up to 2 points)**

Projects that are designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, through adopting or expanding comprehensive, strategic career and compensation systems that provide competitive compensation and include opportunities for educators to serve as mentors and instructional coaches, or to take on additional leadership roles and responsibilities for which educators are compensated.

**Strengths:**

CCP2 not addressed.

**Weaknesses:**

CCP2 not addressed.

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

---

**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   09/15/2023 05:09 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/09/2023 01:16 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	18
<b>Sub Total</b>	30	18
<b>Total</b>	30	18

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Early-phase Tier II Panel - 5: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 18

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant's evaluation plan includes a focus on establishing baseline equivalency evaluation, a requirement for a quasi-experiment to meet WWC standards with reservations (page e55). A positive feature is that the baseline measures are identical to the outcome measures, thereby meeting WWC standard that a baseline measure should be highly correlated with a study's outcome measure (page e55).

Another strength of the proposed evaluation is the plan to use a blocking variable while matching the treatment and control classrooms (page e64). The evaluation plan to try to ensure that an equal number of treatment and control conditions are present in each school, which would help ensure that the evaluation meets WWC standards with reservations.

The applicants identify a set of sound metrics to use outcome measures (pages e69-e70). In general, these measures are robust with well-established psychometric properties. The evaluation plan includes a wide range of sources direct, standardized student assessment data to classroom observation data, which is a strength. The applicant's documentation for the proposed impact analysis is detailed and easy to understand (page e63). Overall, the proposed impact analysis is sound and consistent with best practices in educational evaluation.

The application contains detailed power analyses (pages e67-e69). These analyses clearly identify the target minimally detectable effect size (MDES) of 0.20. The applicant's power analyses include all of the parameters needed to validate the analysis, which is appreciated.

#### Weaknesses:

The power analysis would benefit from a clear justification for the input values (pages e67-e68). For instance, it is unclear what justified the statement that "classroom characteristics explain 65% of the between classroom variation" (page e67). It would be helpful to know how each parameter estimate was derived. Both power analyses suggest that the evaluation will include five covariates that will account for 45% of the classroom-level variation in outcome but the covariates are not clearly described and a justification for this assumption is not articulated or justified empirically (page e67).

## Sub

It is not clear how the evaluation is designed to empirically examine research question #6 in table E-15 (page e63). The applicant proposes to examine the outcomes for multiage (3- and 4-year-olds) children that participate in one of two versions of the intervention (CD alone or CD with Black Boy Brilliance) or a comparison group (page e56). What aspect of the evaluation's design would allow the applicant to determine the additive effects of the inclusion of Black Boy Brilliance with CD?

A stronger proposal would include monitoring attrition and joiners in the evaluation design. While not a requirement for non-RCTs according to WWC standards, they are important variables to document in any longitudinal field study. The stronger evaluation plan would acknowledge how these variables will be tracked and reported to enable other researchers to evaluate them as potential threats to internal validity. It is also important to report them to support future replication.

**Reader's Score: 14**

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

#### Strengths:

A strength of the evaluation is the proposed use of wide range of FOI measures including CD fidelity rubric, attendance logs, and teachers' perception of their self-regulatory practices (page e63).

Table E-10 (pages e56-e57) lists a series of baseline and target values for the various metrics that will be collected during the proposed formative and summative evaluations, a level of detail that is consistent with the goal of establishing WWC standards with reservations.

#### Weaknesses:

While Table E-10 (pages e56-e57) provide baseline values for both treatment and control conditions, many of them values are not justified. For instance, for the first entry in Table E-10 (page 356), it is unclear why the value of "2.22" is identified as a baseline value for CD fidelity measure. A stronger proposal would clearly describe how each of these threshold values were established.

Several of the tables in the evaluation plan are not mentioned in the body of the application (pages e56-e60). They clearly contain important information relevant to the evaluation, but they are not explicitly referenced in the evaluation plan so it is unclear how they inform the proposed evaluation. The application could be strengthened by ensuring that all of the tables included in the plan are clearly connected to the proposed evaluation.

The application does not identify how the collection of the FOI data will be used to periodically assess the proposed project's progress toward achieving its intended outcomes. A stronger proposal would clearly state what will happen if target goals listed in E-10 are not met during the study (page 56-e57).

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

#### Strengths:

Table E-16 includes a well-articulated list of the key project components, their indicators and data sources, as well as their measurable threshold for acceptable implementation (pages e69-e70).



**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

A stronger proposal would include clearly identify potential moderating and mediating variables.

It is unclear why some of the indicators in Table E-16 are presented as statements and some as questions (page e69-e70). A stronger proposal would present these indicators as clear statements rather than suggesting they are questions to avoid any potential confusion about their purpose.

Table E-14 (page e63) treats the implementation and impact evaluations as the key project components rather than features of the intervention itself. This appears to confound the dependent variables with the independent variable. This is particularly problematic given that the application states that the program's key components are based on the program's logic model (page e65).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

**Reader's Score: 2**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 10/09/2023 01:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/09/2023 11:06 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	27
<b>Sub Total</b>	30	27
<b>Total</b>	30	27

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Early-phase Tier II Panel - 5: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Preschool Promise (S411C230051)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 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 with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)

#### Strengths:

The proposed quasi-experimental (QED) study will compare outcomes for 3- and 4-year-olds attending Preschool Promise classrooms with and without the implementation of the Conscious Discipline (CD) program (e18). Selected programs will also include both CD and Black Boy Brilliance modules, and compared to classrooms without either. Instructional quality will also be compared across the control and treatment classrooms.

The sample population is well-defined. The applicant has identified selection criteria to ensure preschools with the greatest needs are included in the project. Participating schools, for a total of 100 classrooms, will be selected that have 50%+ students of color, and 50%+ students living in poverty (e36). All 100 classrooms will meet the project's eligibility criteria, a state licensed as a child care center, and actively engaged as a Preschool Promise site (e36).

Baseline data will be collected to control for biasing the outcome of the intervention and will use baseline measures that are identical to the outcome measures, in accordance with the WWC baseline equivalence standard (e55).

Goals, objectives, outcomes and performance measures are clearly defined, measurable and timebound (e35). Multiple outcome measures will be utilized to assess preschoolers' academic, social-emotional, and classroom quality outcomes, including standardized, nationally norm-referenced achievement tests for students, in addition to teacher self-assessment on fidelity of implementation, and the nationally acknowledged CLASS and state KRA (measure of Kindergarten readiness) (e18). The selected measurement tools align with the outcomes they are intended to evaluate (face validity).

The academic measures selected are nationally normed (MEFS- to measure executive functioning; WJIV- to measure language, literacy, and number sense) and meet the WWC standard for validity and reliability. For those not nationally normed, baseline studies have been previously conducted by the program to establish reasonable measurement targets, and will be conducted for the study to establish student baselines (e58-e60).

The lead research consultant has experience evaluating federally funded projects, and experience specific to early childhood programming, as does the evaluation lead (e41).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The impact of the Black Boy Brilliance program will be measured on a subset of 8-10 classrooms. The classrooms will be selected based on having at least three black male students, and having support from the teacher/administrators for having an ambassador in the room. By selecting classrooms with inherent support for the program, this will likely skew their ability to detect the impact of implicit bias by teachers in regard to black male students.

**Reader's Score: 19**

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

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan includes a 2-year impact study and a 2-year implementation study (e55). The timeline clearly identifies periods of data collection and quality control. Bi-weekly evaluation meetings will be held with the project team. Annual evaluation meetings will be held with the TA provider to discuss progress. Quarterly updates will be sent to the advisory council and other stakeholders.

In year 3, preliminary outcome data will be statistically analyzed for cohort 1 to assess impact and for performance feedback (e50). An interim evaluation will be produced at the end of year 3 (e50). In year 4, implementation data will be analyzed to assess the fidelity of implementation (e52). A final evaluation will be produced in year 5 to summarize the impact of CD on kindergarten readiness (e52).

**Weaknesses:**

Bi-weekly evaluation meetings will be held with the project team, but the purpose and participants of these meetings are unclear. The intended content of the quarterly updates to the advisory council is also undefined.

An interim evaluation will be produced at the end of year 3 (e50), but it is unclear what, if any, actions will be taken based on that evaluation.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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

**Strengths:**

The proposal clearly defines key components- summer professional development, classroom technical assistance, coaching, PLCs, representation of people of color on the development team, and resource distribution (e65). Thresholds for fidelity have been defined (e66).

All 100 classrooms will meet the project's eligibility criteria, a state-licensed as a child care center, actively engaged as a Preschool Promise site (e36). Including only sites that meet this criterion will control for effect mediation. The project will also create 4 blocks of classrooms based on provider type (Head Start, Ohio Public Preschool, Licensed Center-Based Care, Other), with comparison classrooms being matched on characteristics (staff demographics, years as a Preschool Promise partner, demographics of children/families served) (e64).

A baseline analysis of kindergarten readiness has been conducted of Preschool Promise students compared to kindergartners attending other preschool programs and across demographic groups (e24). Likewise, the program has previously evaluated classroom effectiveness using CLASS (e25). Two of the assessment tools (WJ-IV ECAD and MEFS) are designed for a range of abilities and developmental delays (e34).

**Sub**

The proposal also recognizes the implicit bias by teachers that often results in disproportionate discipline rates for Black boys (e26), and will explore the impact of including Black males as ambassadors in classrooms, who are trained in CD (e34).

An implementation evaluation will assesses fidelity of implementation in both years of the program and observes the relationship of implementation to outcomes (e18)

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

**Reader's Score: 5**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 10/09/2023 11:06 AM