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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)
Reader #1:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	69
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
Sub Total	7	5
Total	77	74

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)

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 project will effectively build on and deliver a new Reading Program called Reading Reimagined that will combine three critical components of developing foundational skills in literacy instruction, language variation with culturally responsive practices for divers and classroom-based coaching (pages e18-e23). Foundational literacy instruction for teachers has been found to be effective in promoting student literacy and will be appropriately the first element of the project and this professional development will be made accessible to teachers in a hybrid model. The other important element of instructing students to dialect awareness and situation shifting empowers the students to shift language styles without inculcating discriminatory values attached between the General American English (GAE) and African American English (AAE). The final component of coaching is significant to provide teachers job-embedded coaching to help implement newly learned instructional practices demonstrating a better approach to teacher learning. For each of the components, the applicant has provided research and a combination of these interventions have the potential to increase reading levels for underperforming African American students.

   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

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 has provided a strong conceptual framework for the project (pages e23-e27, e96, e142). The logic model captures the project processes in a structured manner with clearly outlined inputs, activities, teacher, and student outcomes. The logic model provides a good progression of project elements, and the teacher outcomes are related to student outcomes. The applicant has provided empirical studies to establish the efficacy of teaching of the three major elements of the Reading Reimagined model: foundational literacy instruction, language variation training, and professional coaching. The project design accommodates the challenges the teachers may face to participate in the program. The underlying project theory of Dialect Awareness has been found to be effective in improving reading comprehension (page e142).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

    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 project has provided some measurable goals and objectives. The applicant has discussed three project goals that appropriately cover the project purpose of improving teacher capacity to support AAE students' literacy, improve reading comprehension of the African American speakers grades 2-5 in the use of GAE, and refine and test the Reading Reimagined program for a wider adoption (pages e28-e29, e127-e132). The goals are broken down into objectives that indicate some performance measures. For example, the project component of improved teacher capacity will be assessed by valid instruments and seeks to have 50% more of teachers demonstrating improved teaching efficacy.

    Weaknesses:

    Some of the project goals do not have outcome measures (pages e127-e132). For example, the applicant has not provided performance measures for increased student use of GAE in writing and academic work. Similarly, the applicant has not discussed the teachers' skill levels in improved pedagogy associated with AAE and GAE.

    Reader's Score: 4

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 successfully identified the educational needs of the partner schools (pages e30-e33). The applicant has cited national data that establishes greater struggle for AAE student speakers. The meta-analysis on this population has demonstrated a need for higher reading instruction. The project will address this gap by placing the program to support AAE speakers in a culturally responsive instruction. The applicant has indicated that the project will collect baseline data from the target schools and create appropriate groups for research-based comparisons.

Sub

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 applicant has stipulated a persistent effort to target predominantly Black elementary students. The applicant uses a focus on equity and commitment to hire staff who represent historically underserved groups. While the current applicant staff have a high representation of such groups, the applicant has also stipulated strategies such as recruitment from school districts and outreach for these groups (page e33-e34).

   The applicant has identified strong qualifications for key project staff (pages e33-e35). The director and program manager are both qualified and experienced to lead the project. Similarly, the co-PI is an associate professor with several years of educational research in curriculum and instruction. The applicant has stipulated the minimum required qualification to hire qualified staff. For example, the coaching specialists are expected to have a master's degree and at least five years' educational administrative/teaching experience.

   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**

Sub

project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a detailed and comprehensive management plan to implement the project in a timebound manner and within budget (pages e36-e40). The applicant has stipulated the roles of each of the project staff such as the project manager and coaching specialists. The project will have a partnership board and staff to ensure compliance. The project staff structure and reporting are clarified, especially in fiscal and administrative matters. The project timeline is clearly delineated into three phases of pilot testing, implementation, and delayed treatment. The applicant has also discussed a detailed timeline with milestones and project staff involved. The strength of the project management plan is the process of continuous improvement.

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 successfully addressed competitive priority # 1. The project will be implemented in partnership with the University of California, Irvine, which is classified as a minority-serving institution (page e18). The letter of support from the university specifies that one of the principal investigators is an associate professor in the school of education (page e89). The partnership is integral to project implementation.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

Not Applicable.

Weaknesses:

Not Applicable.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/14/2023 08:00 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/15/2023 09:23 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)
Reader #2:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - EIR Early-Phase - 2: 84.411C

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

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)

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 proposal states that the project aims to improve elementary literacy skills for Black students (p. e19). The project offers promising new strategies that build on existing evidence-based literacy interventions to support teachers in improving literacy instruction for Black students (p. e19). First, the project acknowledges that African American English is a dialect of General American English, which is a rule-governed language system with its own phonology, vocabulary, and morphosyntactic features (p. e19). This is important to note, since approximately 90% African American students growing up in poverty speak this dialect when they enter school (p. e19). The project will integrate three promising strategies into a new professional learning program for second through fifth grade teachers. This program will address foundational skills in literacy instruction premised on the science of reading; language variation and literacy with culturally responsive practices for diverse readers; and classroom-based coaching (p. e20).

       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: 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 conceptual framework that guides the project is firmly based on three components: foundational literacy instruction, language variation, and classroom coaching (p. e23). These components are supported by research, which demonstrate that each of these components lead to improvement in literacy instruction by teachers, including specifically improved perception and pedagogy regarding the use of African American English, increased use of culturally relevant instructional techniques, and increased teaching self-efficacy, as well as improved literacy and reading comprehension outcomes for students (p. e23). In addition, the proposal provides the project logic model, which clearly communicates the relationship between the inputs, project activities and outcomes (p. e96). The outcomes address both student and teacher impacts (p. e96).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   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 proposal fully shows that the goals, objectives and outcomes for the project are specific and measurable. For example, the proposal first clarifies that valid baseline data for teacher and student outcomes and performance measures discussed below will be established at the beginning of school years in which the pilot cohorts (fall 2024, fall 2025) and impact study (fall 2026) are conducted based on recruitment efforts (p. e27). This shows that the project will be able to measure change in student and teacher outcomes based on their involvement in the project. Moreover, the proposal states that the project will address five goals (p. e28-e29). Each of these goals are specified with objectives and performance measures which operationalize the objectives (p. e28-e29). For example, one way that teacher capacity building will be measured is by 50% or more of teachers show improved teaching efficacy as measured through a 12-item Self-Efficacy Scale (p. e28).

   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 proposal clearly communicates that the project is appropriate to the needs of the target population. For example, the project targets classroom teachers in majority Black schools with an ultimate target of high-need African American English (AAE) speakers in grades 2-5 who are below grade level in reading and test as moderate to high-density AAE speakers based on assessments at the beginning of the school year (p. e30). Multiple research studies have shown that a higher dialect density by students who are AAE speakers can lead to greater struggles with literacy acquisition due to linguistic mismatch (p. e30). The project will partner with 40 school districts that serve majorities of Black students and that commit to selecting schools with a minimum of 51% socioeconomically disadvantaged students and at least 51% Black students (p. e30-e31). And the project cites the need for teachers to build their capacity in literacy instruction. A survey in Ohio (Diehm & Hendricks, 2021) indicates that only one-third of classroom teachers reported that their school provided them with resources to support cultural and linguistic

teaching features (p. e32).

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 proposal appropriately shows that the applicant will encourage applications from people from historically underrepresented groups. The applicant uses their focus on equity and commitment to disrupting patterns of implicit bias, privilege, and racism to seek out and hire a diverse and committed staff well represented by historically underserved groups (p. e33). The applicant recruits extensively from school districts and higher education partners and publicize open positions on job boards to attract a broad range of qualified candidates (p. e33). The applicant will leverage their outreach network and process in place to encourage these applications (p. e33).

The proposal clearly shows that the project personnel possess the necessary research and experience to carry out this project. For example, the CVs for the key project personnel show that they have experience managing large projects, implementing professional development projects and carrying out rigorous evaluations (p. e59-e88). In addition, for the staff roles that have yet to be hired, the proposal describes the amount of experience and education needed to carry out that position (p. e34-e35). For instance, the program manager will need to have 3-5 years of education programmatic experience with a master's degree in education or related field (p. e34).

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 proposal provides a high-quality management plan for the project. For example, the management plan lists the project activities necessary for implementing the project as intended (p. e37-e39). In addition, project personnel responsible for each project activity are mentioned in the management plan (p. e37-e39). This conveys a level of accountability for completing each of the project activities. Moreover, milestones are provided for each of the project activities (p. e37-e39). These milestones show when the project activities are sufficiently completed. Altogether, these elements show evidence of a high-quality management plan.

    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 proposal demonstrates that the project will be implemented in partnership with a minority-serving institution. In particular, the applicant will partner with the University of California-Irvine, a minority serving institution, to provide professional development and coaching for teachers in partnering elementary schools (p. e18). Moreover, the applicant collaborated with a professor at the University of California-Irvine to develop this project, which draws on the professor's applied research on language variation, style shifting, and literacy outcomes for African American English-speaking students (p. e23).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

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 address this priority.

Weaknesses:

Did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/15/2023 09:23 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)
Reader #3:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)

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 is appropriately proposing the innovative Reading Reimagined (RR) project, which builds on pull-out interventions to help students who use African American English (AAE) to "style shift" to General American English (GAE). The promising strategy will focus on improving literacy achievement and attainment for students in grades 2-5 who are assessed as AAE speakers with below-grade proficiency (p. e18). A reasonable rationale is supported by 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data, which found that Black students in fourth grade saw a five-point drop in reading compared to 2020 (p. e18). Declining scores continue into middle school, according to 2023 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). For example, reading assessments of 13-year-old students showed a seven-point decline in scores for Black students. Compellingly, this was greater than the numerical decline of Hispanic, White, Asian, and Native American students (p. e19). RR will build on a six-day comprehensive elementary literacy training that their partner, Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education (CORE) developed, by adding to the research base for the science of reading (p. e20). This serves as a potentially promising strategy that will possibly improve reading performance and lead to educationally meaningful outcomes (p. e22).

Weaknesses:

None 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: 30

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 cites suitable research (Craig & Washington, 2006), showing that approximately 90% of Black/African American students growing up in poverty will be speakers of African American English (AAE) when they enter school (p. e19). To provide context, another study (Diehm & Hendricks 2021) is referenced (p. e19), reporting that only 28% of teachers agreed they were knowledgeable about how to teach Black students to shift to GAE when writing General American English (GAE). The rationale for the proposed project is sound, indicating that supportive and effective language and literacy instruction can help bi-dialectal students do well in school (Terry et al., 2018). Cited research substantially supports the rationale for the proposed project, and serves as a strong conceptual framework underlying the proposed research and informs the promising strategy to merge three thoughtful strategies into a new professional learning program for second through fifth grade teachers: 1) foundational skills in literacy instruction, premised on the science of reading; 2) language variation and literacy with culturally responsive practices for diverse readers; and 3) classroom-based coaching (p. e20). This marks an astute approach to addressing the language idiosyncrasies of students who are struggling with literacy, due to dialectical speech patterns (AAE). The logic model includes the aforementioned components of the framework and is a fitting graphical representation (p. e96). The applicant describes a practical plan for scalability to bring virtual professional development (PD) activities for teachers to additional school districts. This will enable them to serve more districts than would be possible in-person, due to travel and other associated costs, especially for rural districts. A study for a randomized experiment (Fishman et al, 2013) on curriculum implementation is cites, which found that online PD can produce a similar impact on measures of teacher beliefs, classroom practices, and student learning as face-to-face PD (p. e27).

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

   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 specified goals that strongly align with the stated needs and rationale for the proposed project. For example, goal 1 anticipates improving reading comprehension and literacy achievement in General American English (GAE) for African American English (AAE) speakers in grades 2-5. The corresponding objective for students to improve their ability to style shift between AAE/GAE supports an expected, measurable outcome for 50% of students below grade level at baseline show improvements in reading levels after teacher support services." Other goals, objectives, and outcomes are specific, measurable, and suitable for proposed project activities (pp. e28-29).

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

   Reader's Score: 5

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides ample demonstration of ways in which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population, namely classroom teachers in majority Black schools with an ultimate target of high-need African American English (AAE) speakers in grades 2-5 who are below grade level in reading and test as moderate to high-density AAE speaker. This student profile has been shown to be at high risk for academic failure (p. e30). The method for addressing the identified needs is based on a broad literature review that includes a range of research and studies, which is a rational approach. For example, the applicant cites multiple studies (Byrd & Brown, 2021; Charity et al., 2004; Craig & Washington, 2006; Washington et al., 2018) that have shown that a higher dialect density by students who are AAE speakers can lead to greater struggles with literacy acquisition due to linguistic mismatch (p. e30). Mindful of their needs, the proposed RR project will empower the students as they gain an understanding of how use of AAE is a strength that can support improvements in reading and writing (p. e30). To more specifically address their needs, baseline literacy assessments and state standardized test results will to identify the percent of students below proficiency, after which teachers will administer the Diagnostic Evaluation of English Variation- Screening (DELV-S) test for language variation Part I, which identifies each student's language variation (GAE or AAE) and other pertinent information needed to identify and address their individualized needs. For example, mid- to high-density AAE speakers are RR's high need student population, and need more support, according to research by Washington et al. in 2023 (p. e30).

Weaknesses:

None 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 applicant describes solid strategies for encouraging applications for employment from persons who are members of the target population. For example, they recruit extensively from school districts, which enroll at least 51% of students who are eligible for free/reduced-price meals and enroll at least 51% Black students (p. e139). The applicant also publicizes open positions on job boards to attract a broad range of qualified candidates. In addition, candidates must have a deep understanding of institutional and structural racism and bias, and how inequities impact equitable outcomes for students most underserved by the education system. They also seek to hire staff who reflect the ethnic/cultural/linguistic backgrounds of the educators and students served. For example, more than a third (34%) of current UE employees identify as Black and well over half (59%) identify as people of color (p. e33). Such strategies constitute meaningful commitment to hiring members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

The applicant describes key personnel who have exceptional qualifications, including relevant training and experience. Credentials are described, as well as job descriptions for staff, including the Project Director and Program Manager, which will both be federally funded positions, and the CEO and Co-Investigator, whose positions will be leveraged (p. e34). Resumes are also included that document relevant experience, appropriate education, and leadership, demonstrating that quality personnel will staff the proposed project. For example, the Project Director has served as the organization's Director of Education Programs since 2022. His job duties include managing a portfolio of projects that support the systems of assessment, instruction, intervention, and support for every student in service of equitable student outcomes. He holds a Master's Degree in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University where he earned a GPA of 3.92 (p. e59)

Weaknesses:

None 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 provides a strong management plan that describes project oversight (p. e35-36), compliance p. e125), fiscal, and administrative controls (p. e40), reporting (p. e40), and leadership (p. e35). For example, a consultant will receive $60,000 in each of Years 1-5 to provide federal compliance support and training for UnboundEd to successfully implement federal funding with complete adherence to federal requirements and regulations in planning, implementation, and reporting. The applicant includes a detailed chart, thoroughly outlining tasks/milestones, responsible parties, and timeframes (pp. e36-37). For example, the Project Director, working with the Manager and partners, including the UCI Co-Investigator, will be responsible for practical startup activities (i.e. hiring staff, recruiting cohort 1 Pilot schools, etc), which will take place from January through July 2024 (p. e36).

   Weaknesses:

   None 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 indicates that they meet Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) 1 through their partnership with the University of California, Irvine, a Minority Serving Institution, to provide AAE professional development and coaching for teachers in partnering elementary schools (p. e18). The applicant includes a detailed letter of commitment from the University, providing an assurance of their status as minority-serving, and declaring, that as a partner, they are committed to participation and support of program goals and objectives. Specifically, they will commit an Associate Professor who will be a Co-Investigator in Reading Reimagined (pp. e90-91).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

None noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not addressed CPP 2.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/14/2023 10:58 PM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/29/2023 02:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)
Reader #1:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	30
	Sub Total	30	30
	Total	30	30

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Early-phase Tier II Panel - 7: 84.411C

Reader #1:   **********
Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)

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: 30

> **Sub**

> 1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)**
>
>   **Strengths:**
>
>   The narrative includes a detailed evaluation plan that includes components that will satisfy the requirements for the What Works Clearinghouse without Reservations. For example, the evaluation includes a detailed matching and baseline equivalence process that will ensure accurate comparisons of collected data (p. e46). In addition, the research questions are well aligned to the project activities and will be measured using reliable and valid data sources to provide high-quality evidence of impact and implementation (p. e99). The narrative includes a clear description of the process that will be used to address attrition and joiners in the data collection process (p. e43). The evaluation includes justification for the types of analysis to be conducted and will have sufficient power to demonstrate impact of the planned activities (p. e45).
>
>   **Weaknesses:**
>
>   No weaknesses were noted.

> **Reader's Score:**   20

> 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 narrative includes an excellent implementation plan that includes many opportunities to provide performance feedback to project staff. For example, the monthly evaluation meetings will review data collected from attendance logs, facilitator checklists, and intervention program data, which will provide evidence of project implementation (p. e47). The implementation plan includes several data collection tools that will be used to provide periodic assessment of progress. For example, the evaluators will conduct focus groups with participants, conduct surveys with teachers, and conduct virtual interviews to better understand how coaching is impacting participants (p. e99).

Sub

    Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

    Reader's Score: **5**

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

    Strengths:

The evaluation clearly articulates the key components of the project through the included logic model and is addressed through the outcomes identified through the research questions (p. e42 & e96). The narrative includes a detailed process to address mediators and identify their impact on the outcome measures of the study. For example, the evaluation will consider how changes in teacher outcomes mediate student reading outcomes (p. e104). The process to establish threshold is well developed and includes preliminary thresholds to begin the implementation analysis process (p. e49).

    Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

    Reader's Score: **5**

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/29/2023 01:52 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)
Reader #2: **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	30
	Sub Total	30	30
	Total	30	30

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Early-phase Tier II Panel - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: UnboundEd Learning, Inc. (S411C230216)

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: 30

>   **Sub**
>
>   1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)**
>
>   **Strengths:**
>
>   The plan to evaluate the intervention is comprehensive in scope, providing excellent detail on three phases of the study – pilot, implementation, and delayed implementation for waitlisted participants and will be carried out by evaluators with expertise and WWC certification (e36).
>
>   Strengths of the proposed plan include:
>
>   Excellent detail on the target population and study samples (e45 and e9), study eligibility for schools and student participants (e9), and random assignment procedure across a multi-cohort evaluation. Informed consent will appropriately be sought before the intervention (e11).
>
>   RQs are fully aligned with data sources, and strong evidence of the reliability and validity of measures is presented, and there is a plan to develop a measure of culturally responsive instruction (e49). Data will appropriately be collected on both groups (e10 and e100).
>
>   Clear documentation and assurances that the study will meet WWC without reservations are provided, including strategies for minimizing attrition and reducing the likelihood of contamination that may result from implementation within a single district by using school-level assignment and a plan to exclude teacher joiners (e28).
>
>   Exemplary details on the statistical specifications for each research question are found in a technical appendix (e103) and include considerations for nested structures in the ITT student impact and teacher outcomes analysis.
>
>   **Weaknesses:**
>
>   No weaknesses noted.
>
>   **Reader's Score:**   20

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 evaluator is involved at the beginning of the project and will acquire necessary data-sharing agreements (e9).

    The comprehensive plan to gather data incorporates the multi-cohort complexity of the project with clearly delineated action plans for collecting and using data for improvement across cohorts and phases (e47).

    Performance feedback from all the phases of the evaluation will be regularly collected and shared through diverse qualitative and quantitative measures (e10-11 and e100) and various dissemination mechanisms (e37-39).

    The pilot study will provide rich feedback from attendance logs, facilitator checklists, and teacher surveys to assist in the refinement of the program for the impact study (e47).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: 5

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

    Strengths:

    The logic model is comprehensive, displaying inputs, activities, and outcomes broken down by teacher mediating outcomes and longer-term student outcomes that are aligned with the research questions and acceptable measures (e41).

    Key components of the intervention are identified, and the plan clearly articulates initial measurable thresholds for professional development and teacher support as well as established guidelines for school-based fidelity (e50).

    There is a detailed discussion of the mediating and moderating effects and an exemplary plan to estimate these effects analytically (e104).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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