

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2023 12:32 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

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	28
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	70	66
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	0
<b>Total</b>	77	66

# Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - EIR Early-Phase - 13: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

## 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:

Applicant provides a concrete, ambitious plan to develop a promising program, HealthyU, by adding health literacy models to increase social emotional wellness to create EmpowerU. They cite preliminary evidence (e26) from the HealthyU pilot that students receiving explicit instruction improve health literacy-related educational outcomes, self-determination, and transition preparedness, thus linking the program's potential to address a crisis of national significance, including an astronomical rise in health care costs (page 23). Recognizing that schools play a role as change agents, their plan includes an innovative approach to modify the curriculum to impact students in new educational and geographical settings, including rural.

#### 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: 28

#### 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)

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

Applicant clearly outlines a comprehensive, iterative design grounded in frameworks (How People Learn and Universal Design) proven to provide optimum learning environments for all high-needs students (e29) For example, the Logic Model (e347) is an exceptional articulation of the theory that the identified inputs and activities will result in improved outcomes in student employment and social stability. Additionally, they offer a thorough consideration of how to support and maximize the impact of digital pedagogy, via T-BIDS.

**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:**

Applicant describes a thorough, structured approach to ensure achievement of project goals, objectives, and outcomes. They have clearly tied the goals to outcomes throughout the development and testing Phases, and have detailed how recruitment methods will be used to inform development of modules, for example, as noted on e31, they will collect participant intake data to create a foundation for content objectives for the proposed module on rural health literacy. Table 4 clearly identifies measures to be used and when.

**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)**

**Strengths:**

Applicant cites the success of HealthyU program and an extensive body of empirical literature on the health literacy status of high-need students to make a sound case that EmpowerU is appropriate to needs of their proposed target population. Recognizing that how this critical information is presented is important, the applicant points to EmpowerU conceptual frameworks (How People Learn, universal design, and digital pedagogy) to demonstrate how the program will address target population needs.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant does not articulate clearly what innovations or considerations will be explored to address the needs of rural students, nor do they cite sufficient literature that considers the unique needs of rural population.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**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: 9**

**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:**

Applicant's organization has a standing commitment to diversity, evidenced by their collaboration with REWork. Applicant clearly states a commitment to hiring underrepresented groups. The qualifications of key project personnel are appropriate to the project, and include teams robust in their expertise (i.e. R&D, IT, curriculum content). The curriculum content team includes an individual experienced in rural education.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant did not clearly identify a recruitment tool or resource that would be utilized to target potential employees from diverse backgrounds. For example, "actively seek" (e38) lacks detail about the process, which could include job opportunity listings in newsletters, specialized journals, online forums, etc.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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: 9**

**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:**

Most responsibilities for each component are assigned to appropriate project staff. Timelines are thorough and include start of activity and milestone and are explicitly detailed in Table 7 (e41).

**Weaknesses:**

The Project Director is not specifically tasked with ensuring the project is implemented on time and within budget.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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:**

No strengths noted

**Weaknesses:**

Neither applicant nor its partners, Influents Innovations and Latino Center for the Midlands, meet any of the four eligibility definitions for this priority. Neither entity meets the definition of a partnership that qualifies for this priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**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**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/13/2023 12:32 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2023 08:59 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

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	28
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	70	67
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	0
<b>Total</b>	77	67



# Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - EIR Early-Phase - 13: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

## 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 provides adequate and consistent research to back their claims and concerns, and defines a clear need for support in the area of health literacy. The applicant proposes to address this need with a comprehensive web-based curriculum aimed to improve health-related social, emotional, and educational outcomes of high-needs secondary students. EmpowerU is designed to focus on social emotional learning and educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged, high-need secondary students in both rural and urban settings. The curriculum is well thought out and includes the five SEL core competencies. The material includes 45 minute lessons with instructional materials, interactive activities and learning objectives that require minimal teacher training or support which limits the need for additional PD or strain on the teachers for additional SEL lesson planning. The applicant notes that the development and evaluation of a sister web based product (HealthyU) was previously US DOE Grant funded, and they are now seeking to expand and build upon this with a new product (EmpowerU). They provide results of several pilot studies on their HealthyU product which suggests that kids were satisfied with the product and showed gains in learning outcomes from pre-tests to post-tests. The applicant also notes deficiencies in HealthyU with its platform capabilities, and limited design concepts. The new proposal aims to improve the hosting platform, and enhance the curriculum based upon previous studies, research and feedback from key stakeholders. The applicant has clearly done ample research to suggest these changes and understands both the needs of the populations served and the needs for an evidence-based platform. The applicant clearly demonstrates how the new product will improve upon existing strategies while also proving potential success of the product based upon their previous work and research.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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: 28**

**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 provides clear research on the frameworks selected in multiple areas including how people learn, universal design for learning and digital pedagogy (p.e29). The curriculum of the program is also based in research on health literacy and learning as well as academic success. The applicant has well thought out procedures and recruitment methods to ensure the feasibility of each phase of the studies. For example, the applicant puts measures in place to ensure that the target population will be involved in the EmpowerU development process from inception to evaluation. This conceptual framework has been tested and appears sound and appropriate for this project and aligns with the SEL competencies.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were 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:**

Adequate research has been completed and applied to the proposal. For example, the applicant cites The How People Work framework and Universal Design for Learning as principles to ensure a strong framework that reinforces SEL supports. The applicant defines project goals, objectives, and outcomes according to four well thought out phases of the project (p. e30-35). Table 3 (p. e33-34) provides a clear synopsis of their goals, objectives, and outcomes including curriculum development, new module development, a pilot study and refinement. The application illustrates a brief but clear description of inputs, and activities, and describes short-term, immediate, and long-term outputs. Great thought has been given to the pilot program including recruitment methods, implementation with fidelity, and participation levels.

**Weaknesses:**

Appendix J (e pg. 369-370) and Table 4 (p. e35) discusses student outcomes and measures, but fails to define adequate measures for long term outcomes. For example, the number of participants, participation rate and implementation rate are all measured, but the application lacks a clear measure for long-term outcomes like student satisfaction or a specific increase from the pre-test to the post-test.

**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 is seeking to expand its reach from underperforming students in high-needs populations to underrepresented, economically disadvantaged, and rural adolescent populations. The applicant uses evidence based research to utilize effective strategies to address the need for the underrepresented and disadvantaged. For example, the applicant states that "Universal education and gatekeeper programs have been useful in rural, ethnic

**Sub**

minority communities” (e25) Table 5 (p e36) notes the needs of the target subgroups and provides ample empirical research to back up their claims.

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant clearly indicates the need and advantages of the program to meet those needs, the application lacked sufficient research-based strategies specific to the identified subgroup of students with disabilities.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**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 clearly defines its intentions to encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented and provides evidence of community partnerships that strengthen its work in equity and equality. For example, the applicant cites working with The institute’s Racial Equity Working Group (REWork) to actively recruit members of diverse backgrounds. The applicant also provides ample evidence of the qualifications and relevant experience of key project personnel.

**Weaknesses:**

There were no noted weaknesses.

**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: 9**

**Sub**

**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:**

Table 7 (p. e41-42) describes project activities and timelines with assigned responsibility. The timeline is broken down into phases which align with project goals, objectives, and outcomes. The plan and its phases are well thought out and complete to meet the needs of the proposed project. For example, phase A runs from Jan 24 – Dec 24 and includes tasks like measure development, expert review of outcome measures, focus groups and training. The budget (provided in the Budget narrative (p. e419-442) includes an adequate description of the project costs and aligned tasks over the 5-year period. The plan identifies an independent, external evaluator.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposed project may serve as few as 543 students and 42 educators within the \$4 million budget. As such, the overall cost of the project seems high for the justification of the budget to meet the objectives of the management plan.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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:**

There were no noted strengths

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant addresses CPP:1 (e38) where it describes a partnership with minority-serving institutions, those organizations do not meet the definition of qualifying minority-serving institutions.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   09/13/2023 08:59 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2023 06:13 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	19
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	28
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	70	66
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Workforce Diversity	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	7	0
<b>Total</b>	77	66

# Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - EIR Early-Phase - 13: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

## 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: 19

#### 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:

Extensive research (over 20 studies and resources included) notes the impact of mental health on academic achievement, particularly in the context of health literacy (E21). The applicant further cited recommendations from the CDC and DHHS on how health literacy includes SEL aligned goals (E23-25).

The applicant continued to expand on research and drilling down to specific needs as evidenced on page E24 identifying SEL alignment and calling on school systems to improve outcomes for youth. The applicant indicates that this project will help all adolescents, including high need students that are the target population of this grant (E24).

There is an extensive explanation of the "The HealthyU" curriculum including structure of program delivery (11 modules) and reference to appendix with additional information (E25). Specific description of delivery model including research to selection of online platform (E27). Noted past successes as well limitations of "HealthyU" program as well a transition chart from the HealthyU to EmpowerU program (E26-28).

#### Weaknesses:

While EmpowerU includes the additional mental health and stigma unit and the narrative speaks to integration of SEL related topics, the description is somewhat vague on the integration across the curriculum given the extensive details included throughout the grant proposal.

Reader's Score: 19

### 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: 28**

**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:**

There is an extensive description of conceptual framework for the design and delivery of the EmpowerU program, including research that supports the framework. A summary of the framework is outlined on pages E28-29 and is further explained throughout the section, using the Grounded in the How People Learn framework, UDL and digital learning pedagogy. The framework outlines promotes social and emotional development embedded within health literacy.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**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 outlines eight primary goals in four phases over the course of the five-year project (E30-35). Extremely detailed and clear explanations, objectives and outcomes are outlined throughout the application, as an example Project Goal 2 (Y1) outlines specific details around student and educator recruitment and participation in focus groups, meeting the advisory board and identifying areas to include in the EmpowerU revisions in the next phase of the project (E33-34). The application also includes a specific goal, Project Goal 4 (Y2), to ensure EmpowerU meets target student needs (E34).

The applicant notes the WWC eligible outcome domains, Life Sciences, Civic, Social and Economic Participation, Intrapersonal Competencies and Student Behavior (E35) to the EmpowerU construct areas.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**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 project is very clear in the identification of the targeted student population which includes: students with disabilities; living in low-income households; educated in traditionally underserved rural settings or alternative education settings; or members of racial, ethnic, or gender groups who have been traditionally underrepresented (E27). The application specifically speaks to supporting this targeted population of students by outlining past evidence and successes with these identified students in the HealthyU program and addressing needed extensions to the foundational program to be inclusive to these students with EmpowerU. The application provided detailed descriptions and rationale to meet these needs by making



**Sub**

improvements to the learning platform, enhancing curriculum based on studies and feedback from key stakeholders (i.e., students, educators, curriculum specialists) and the role of the HealthyU Advisory Board (mental health, infectious disease, pediatrics, obstetrician, education, nursing, and research experts).

Additionally, the research base for meeting the specific needs of these targeted student populations was outlined in a summary of “Empirical Literature Evaluating Health Literacy in High-Needs Student Populations” (E36) which supports the projects purpose of access to high quality education that is accessible to all students is critical to health outcomes for youth.

Specific examples were provided to address identified student needs such as on page E444, which addressed how Universal Design principles would be included throughout the program to support students with limited reading abilities and promote comprehension for all students.

**Weaknesses:**

With a noted focus on rural students, there was a lack of research as well as specific and detailed information on how the project would support and address this subgroup of students.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**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: 9**

**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 provides a statement of commitment to hiring project personnel that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (E38), which includes a Racial Equity Working Group (REWork) that works in collaboration with the Board of Directors. Additional information is included in the application around commitment to equity and DEI efforts, including a commitment to identifying a diverse range of project team members that reflect underrepresented backgrounds, geographic regions (e.g., rural, urban, suburban), and content expertise (E37).

There is extensive experience among team in all areas identified in the project (E39-41) as well as the 177+ pages of resumes and vita's. Project staff were divided into four teams, Research and Development, Technology, Curriculum Content, and External Evaluation (E39-40) with the Research and Development leaders, Dr. Alexandra Hamilton and Dr. Jacqueline D'Angelo, both Co-PD's of PD of an EIR Early-Phase project focused on improving educational outcomes of secondary child-welfare involved students (E39).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

While there were many commitment statements to hiring a diverse staff, it was not clear the action steps the organization employs to actually hire a diverse staff.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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 application included an ambitious statement of what the project intends to accomplish with some of the most under-served and under-resourced student populations to not only improve their physical well being but emotional well being. .

The objectives illustrated concrete attainment that can be achieved by following specific steps in support of eight project goals that include implementation year, between four to eight objectives and outcomes. These are clearly outlined in detail in Table 3. Project Goals Objectives, and Anticipated Outcomes (E33) which is written using SMART metrics supported by performance measures, observable indicators to assess how well objectives are being met with targeted outcomes, as an example one of the objectives for Project Goal 2 (year 1) is to conduct nine nominal group technique focus groups with key stakeholders (students, educators, providers) which provides enough detail which provides specific details to transfer to day to day activities and monitor progress towards project outcomes.

The applicant then further drills down information in Table 7. Project Timeline, Milestones, and Responsible Person (E41-42) that provides information to document the day to day pieces that must be completed to signal that the grant is on track for being on time and within budget as well as includes explicit detail about who will carry out what activities. Both Table 3 and Table 7 provide a timeline that includes milestones and allows for task monitoring.

Extensive budget details included in appendix outline costs, responsibilities, etc., which not only included a detailed yearly breakdown of the budget for Oregon Research Institute but also contractors, Influents Innovations and ABT Associates, and ORBIS (E419-433)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**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:

None.

#### Weaknesses:

While the information about how the applicant has partnered with a minority-led company, Influents Innovations (the CEO is African American, the COO is Latina) for content and platform (T-BIDS) development and with the Latino Center for the Midlands for assistance with participant recruitment, it is not clear how this meets the criteria set forth by in the grant requirements to partner with Community colleges, Historically Black colleges and universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA).

Reader's Score: 0

## 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

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/13/2023 06:13 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/28/2023 11:23 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

**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 #9 - Early-phase Tier II Panel - 9: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

## 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 indicates that the evaluation plan will be a randomized control trial that will meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations (page e42). The project will be assisted by an external evaluator (Abt Associates) who has experience in assessing similar projects of this size. The plan seeks to address the impact of the project and the health literacy and health preparation of participating students and the impact the project has on the self-determination on the part of the student participants. A third area that will be addressed is the awareness of student health related stigmas. The plan will include the random assignment of students to both a treatment and a control group. The applicant indicates that the focus will be on eight schools across urban, suburban, and rural settings and the development of a sample of 60 students per school for a total of 480 students (page e44). These students will be divided into two assessment groups. The applicant indicates that they believe the attrition rate will be low and they will have the ability to develop a baseline prior to intervention. The evaluation plan also includes a feasibility study, a pilot study, and the initiation of the random control trial to assess the impact of the project. The evaluation will likely produce evidence of the project's effectiveness in meeting WWC standards without reservations.

#### Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the applicant will deal with the issue of attrition. The applicant does not indicate a rationale for the expectation of low attrition. In addition, the applicant does not provide any proactive efforts such as incentives to ensure that attrition does not occur on the part of the schools or the student participants. The applicant also lacks any discussion of potential bias that may be realized during the assessment process. It is also unclear if the project will develop baseline data as a result of the pilot study or through pretesting activities.

Reader's Score: 12

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)

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant indicates that it will conduct a feasibility study as well as a pilot study prior to the random control trial (page e44). The applicant will use feedback from these activities to adjust and refine the various assessment measures and activities that have been planned. The staff and evaluator will refine and retest activities until internal consistency reaches the required level for the What Works Clearinghouse standards

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear if the evaluation process will provide feedback and information to the project in terms of the general implementation of the project. The plan does not identify any monthly, quarterly, or semester meetings or reports to advise the project stakeholders of any need to adjust project activities or staff functioning based on unintended outcomes.

**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 applicant provides a logic model that supports the evaluation plan (page e347). The logic model identifies the problems upon which the project is focused, inputs, activities, and expected outputs. The activities included in the logic model are consistent with the design of the project. The model illustrates how the inputs, activities, and outputs interact with each other in order to achieve the short term, intermediate, and long term outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not clearly identify the mediators. The logic model does not provide specific numbers or percentages of change that are expected in terms of the outcomes of the project. For example, it is unclear what percentage or number of students will demonstrate successful independent management of health-related needs. Without this information, it is difficult to determine if the project will attain a measurable threshold.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/28/2023 11:23 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/28/2023 12:44 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

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

	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 #9 - Early-phase Tier II Panel - 9: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C230011)

## 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:

Abt Associates will serve as the evaluators for this project and due to Abt's knowledge of the What Works Clearinghouse standards, the evaluation has very good potential to produce evidence of effectiveness for this project. Abt Associates has designed a stratified individual-level randomized controlled trial (RCT) using a waitlist designed control condition implementation for the comparison group. (pgs. e43-44) The evaluation design seems to account for attrition yet has a sample size (n=480) to have large enough statistical power. (pg. e44) The evaluation analysis will be calculated using a two-level linear regression with the inclusion of pretest scores to measure mean and treatment effects, which also incorporate student covariates. (pg. e44)

#### Weaknesses:

The terminology used within the narrative and the abstract seems to contradict each other. The selection of participants for the evaluation is established initially through first come, first served selection which is not randomization. (pg. e11). There are multiple phases with selections done through inclusion of focus groups (e.g. 10 rural, 10 underperforming, and 10 disadvantaged students) with students in rural settings completing 12 modules while others will complete only 11 modules, thereby creating a dosage issue for the evaluation. The randomization is very important to meet standards and is emphasized by the applicant (pg. e44), yet is not mentioned in the abstract. Attrition needs to be more fully detailed other than stating that stipends will address retention. (pg. e44) There is no mention of bias and how that will be addressed within the evaluation.

Reader's Score: 12

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 methods of performance feedback and periodic assessment of progress are good. One of the evaluation components of this evaluation is a feasibility and refinement study of the EmpowerU curriculum modules (pg. e44) which should provide performance feedback towards continuous feedback and improvement. The randomized

**Sub**

controlled trial (RCT) proposed and overseen by Abt Associates (pg. e44), if well implemented, will provide performance feedback on the student academic achievement outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant seems to confuse regular periodic assessments with different data types – qualitative and quantitative. (pg. e45) It is unclear how the feasibility and refinement study will be used to provide periodic assessments to make program and implementation adjustments. The applicant does not provide details in the narrative that demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of this aspect of the 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:**

This part of the evaluation is good and partially articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, including acceptable measurable thresholds. The applicant provides a Logic Model that guides the implementation of the intervention (Appendix G, pg. e347). The logic model identifies program short-term and long-term outcomes (pg. e45). The applicant states that intermediate outcomes are mediated by short-term outcomes and similarly long-term outcomes are mediated by intermediate outcomes, with some examples given in the narrative. (pg. e45)

**Weaknesses:**

The logic model does not identify the resources or key components other than the project itself and the key personnel identified which will be used to undergird the project. (pg. e347) The applicant does not provide measurable thresholds other than the targeted number of students. (pg. e44) There is no address of clearly defined mediators outside of the ones already identified on page e45.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/28/2023 12:44 PM