

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2024 12:40 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

Reader #1: *****

	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	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	3
Total	76	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Early Tier 1 - 13: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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:

A comprehensive and detailed description documented the promising new project strategies and the foundational pilot studies upon which they were built. The results of the pilot studies indicated that there was a resulting positive and effective outcome on academic achievement and reduction in disruptive behaviors in early school high-needs learners when classroom promotion and self-regulatory skill training for teachers were combined (Abstract, p. e9; pp. e18-e19).

A thorough explanation identified the differences in traditional social-emotional learning strategies with those of the promising new project strategies. As an example, the applicant described the traditional approach to social-emotional skills that does not address the importance of building a safe classroom environment for learning (p. e18). In contrast, the project will implement a promising strategy that focuses on the emotional climate of the classroom to meet the basic needs of children through implementation of a model that focuses on "imaginative plan" as a key instructional mode for learning (p. e18).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Strengths:

A thorough and well-defined description supported the high quality of the evidence-based framework upon which the proposed research is derived. The conceptual framework combines two principles supported by the recommendations from the Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) framework and What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) (pp. e19-e20). These include SoLD - Productive Instructional Strategies – to connect to student experience, support conceptual understanding, and develop metacognitive abilities; WWC Guide Preparing Young Children - strengthen children’s executive function skills using specific games and activities; and the WWC Guide Reducing Behavior Problems - modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior (pp. e19- e20; Appendix J2, p. e132).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

An inclusive summary supported by a detailed chart defined clearly measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. The two primary goals of the project are to strengthen the program components and evaluate its effectiveness in improving teacher and child outcomes (p. e21). The chart (Exhibit 2) identified four main objectives (supported by strategies), outcomes, and project output measures (e.g., Objective 3 -- implement and test the revised Bouncy program for impact (July 20226-June 2028) (p. e21). Clearly defined strategies included: Strategy 3.1 – identify 56 elementary schools to participate in an impact study with the Outcome – school leaders and teachers agree to participate in the impact study (p. e21).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a concise description of the target population - the high-needs students to be served by the proposed project. The students (performing below grade/age expectations and/or considered part of an underserved population) will be served in schools with a substantial proportion of ethnic minority students (50% or more) or who have a high percentage of students (50% or more) who live in low-income homes (Abstract, p. e9).

The proposed project will be implemented in three school systems that met the identified criteria (Boston, Juliet, and Lamar Consolidated Independent) (pp. e24-e26). Letters of support from the identified school systems were included in Appendix C that documented their intent to support recruitment and implementation of project activities (p. e24; pp. e113-e115).

The project will address the poverty and adversity related gaps in readiness in the early grades and combine

Sub

classroom and teacher professional development activities with a focus on ensuring a positive caring classroom emotional climate to meet the basic needs of the high-needs students. Project activities focus on the implementation of playing with purpose strategies that are documented effective as a key instructional mode for early learning students (Abstract, p. e9; pp. e19-e26).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant prioritizes maintaining work environments that support diversity and respect for all persons, including underrepresented groups. In commitment to this policy of inclusion and recruitment of underrepresented staff, the project team reflects this diversity with experiences in working with urban communities and underserved populations. In addition, the majority of key project team members are from traditionally underrepresented groups (p. e27).

The applicant also committed to recruiting additional project staff to reflect diversity through strategies such as advertising in listservs and postings that target underrepresented groups as well as developing job descriptions and interview questions that prioritize lived experience and diverse perspectives (pp. e27-e28).

A detailed summary identified the highly qualified interdisciplinary team that included project management, evaluation, implementation, and technology enhancement experts. The summary was documented by formal résumés of key project staff that identified expertise and experience in project management, evaluation, technology, education, and curriculum development. These relevant skills will facilitate successful accomplishment of project outcomes (pp. e26-e28; Appendix B, pp. e54-e85).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

A well-defined management plan with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones documented the ability of the project partners to successfully achieve project outcomes. The precise plan was detailed in Exhibit 3 - Management Plan, Timelines, and Milestones (p. e29).

In addition, a succinct summary identified the specific leadership roles of the two key project partners, which will support successful implementation of project objectives. The applicant will be the lead for project administration and the identified partner will be key in project implementation (p. e28).

Well-defined tables with an expanded discussion of the project phases (planning, project, Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT), reporting) further confirmed the adequacy of the management plan to successfully achieve outcomes. The description was supported by a timeline of project tasks and a management organization structure-organization chart (Appendix J3, pp. e133-134; J3 – Timelines of Project Tasks, pp. e135-e136; and J4, p. e137).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 3 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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

(a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The applicant identified specific strategies to engage the community to determine community needs. During the planning phase, the applicant will review the applicability of existing assessment tools with partner school districts, determine their applicability to the local community, and either adopt or adapt them to collect qualitative and quantitative data to guide project activities (p. e12, p. e133).

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students were clearly identified in explanatory statements throughout the application. For example, the applicant identified impacts such as deficits for students in critical school skills, heightened aggression, difficulty concentrating, and a greater need for adult reassurance (p. e12). To address these challenges, the applicant will implement a program that includes techniques to create a safe and caring classroom environment, strategies to teach self-regulatory skills, and a teacher professional development support system (Abstract, p. e9).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	3
Total	76	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Early Tier 1 - 13: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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 has proposed a project to provide a social-emotional learning intervention to kindergarten and first-grade students. The proposed project includes a program designed to combine a character-based approach to creating a safe and caring classroom, instructional strategies to teach self-regulation, a system of training resources, and support for teachers implementing the program (p. e15-16).

The applicant has done an excellent job of describing the project's significance and the need for it due to negative impacts on development due to the COVID-19 pandemic (p. e13). They have linked this program to previous research on similar programs demonstrating effectiveness while highlighting the proposed project's innovations (p. e17-e19).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

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 applicant has presented a clear conceptual framework describing how their program components and activities are designed to have both short and long-term impacts on teacher, classroom, and student outcomes (p. e20). The description of the conceptual framework is strengthened by the fact that they have clearly linked the individual program components to specific outcomes in their narrative (p. e20).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

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 has done an excellent job of clearly describing the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. The applicant has indicated that the project's primary goals are to 1) strengthen the program components and 2) evaluate the program's efficacy. The two objectives are broken down into four aligned objectives presented in Exhibit 2 (p. e21-22). Each objective includes a measurable outcome, and an achievement criterion is specified for each. The narrative description further clarifies the objectives listed in the table and how they will be addressed.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant has defined their target population as students in grades K-1 with underserved populations. They have clearly defined underserved populations by communicating their intent to work with schools with 50% or greater minority enrollment or 50% or greater in low-income homes (p. e24). The application is further strengthened by the fact that the applicant has provided statistics on the populations of the partner school districts, confirming that they fit the definition (p. e24-e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

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 described their previous history of completing large-scale research similar to the proposed project, indicating that they are well-equipped to execute it (p. e15). The resumes and curriculum vitae of project staff indicate that they are highly skilled and experienced in both the clinical and research aspects of the project.

The applicant has indicated that the current program staff represents a diverse group of individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups. They have clearly described how they plan to recruit additional staff through diversity recruitment materials and targeting (p. e27-e28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

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:

In Exhibit 3, the applicant has provided a management plan with key milestones, timelines, and responsible parties. The project timelines are broken down into more discrete intervals in Appendix J and Exhibit J3 (p. e135-136), making this a well-developed plan. The applicant has outlined a budget appropriate to the proposed project's scope and activities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Sub

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 3 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 reference to specified entities noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not demonstrated how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with any of the identified competitive preference entities.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

- (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The applicant has done an excellent job describing how the proposed project seeks to use evidence-based instructional approaches to address the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. They have clearly defined their underserved population and the innovative instructional practices they plan to implement to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. The applicant has selected self-regulation as a variable for intervention due to the link between social-emotional and cognitive development (p. e14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2024 10:01 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2024 09:59 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	3
Total	76	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Early Tier 1 - 13: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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 Proposed project proposes to refine, implement, and evaluate Bouncy's Ready to Learn Resilience Program (the Bouncy program) with kindergarten and first grade teachers and students from three school districts (p.e12). The intended outcome of the project is to reduce shortcomings in social, emotional, and academic outcomes in the early grades (p. e15).

The Bouncy program features guide the significance of the project activities: (1) a character-based innovative approach; (2) intentional, engaging, multi-sensory instructional strategies; and (3) a training and implementation support system (p. e15). Another important component of the project activities is the Breathing Bouncy the Service Dog, which supports the integration of self-regulatory skill training, security and attachment, storytelling, and the multi-sensory experience (p. e15).

The promising practices of the Bouncy program are documented in the detailed description of the project components. The first component, the Bouncy program package, uses evidence-based strategies, including the scripted implementation guide and multimedia resources. (Appendix J10 program materials) (pp. e151-e167). The instructional strategies to teach self-regulatory skills, using developmentally appropriate games and activities, constitute the second component with six scripted lessons on self-regulation skills coached by the animatronic Breathing Bouncy) (p. e16)

Furthermore, extra documentation of the significance of the Bouncy program and its impact in the early grades is supported by the third component of the project, the ongoing needs-based training and support (p.e16).

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

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 a detailed description of its conceptual framework that integrates two of the Science of Learning and Development principles for practice with the recommendations from two What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guides: (1) Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom (Epstein et al., 2008); and (2) Preparing Young Children for School (Burchinal et al., 2022) (p. e19).

Three core components inform the conceptual framework: (1) a character-based approach, (2) self-regulation skill training strategies, and (3) teacher training and implementation support (p. e19-e20).

The logic model in Exhibit 1 provides a detailed description on the quality of the conceptual framework. The logic model lists the key components of the Bouncy program, the activities associated with the key components, and the outcomes (p. e20). For example, for the resilience and self-regulation unit, teachers facilitate student engagement with Bouncy.

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 applicant describes specific and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes for the proposed project (pp. e21-e22). The four objectives to meet the applicant's two goals are:

1. Expand the teacher training and implementation support system to support implementation and promote sustainability.
2. Enhance the breathing animatronic through two research and development (R&D) cycles.
3. Implement and test the revised Bouncy program for impact.
4. Analyze, report, and disseminate findings about Bouncy.

Exhibit 2 (p. e21), lists the strategies for each objective, the outcomes, the timeline, and the project outcomes measures. For example, one of the strategies for objective 1 is to create professional development (PD) and demonstration videos. Project outcome measures include the creation of at least eight videos. Also, at least 80% of teachers in pilot schools agree that Bouncy is feasible to implement and supports students' needs.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

Sub

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 proposed project will serve 6,000 kindergartens and grade 1 high-need students who are defined as living in low-income homes, performing below grade/age expectations and represent underserved populations. In addition, the students are enrolled in urban districts, which are defined as schools with the following characteristics: 50 percent or higher enrollment of ethnic minority students, or 50 percent or higher enrollment of students who live in low-income homes (p.e24).

Statistical data for district partners who serve a large proportion of high-needs students is documented. For example, in Massachusetts' Boston Public Schools (BPS), there are 44% Hispanic, 28% African American, 15% White, and 9 percent Asian elementary students. Nearly 70% are economically disadvantaged. One-third of BPS elementary students missed 10% or more school days, and 12.6% missed 20% or more school days in 2023 (p. e24).

The project is designed to meet the critical needs of identified students through the Bouncy program using these three key components: (1) an innovative approach to create a safe and caring classroom environment, (2) engaging instructional strategies to teach self-regulatory skills, and (3) a teacher training and implementation support system.

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 provides a comprehensive summary of the qualifications, expertise, and experience of a highly qualified interdisciplinary team. For example, the Project Director led the design and development of an online tool to improve high school graduation rate and the Technical Lead led an interdisciplinary coalition of software designers (p. e59).

The key personnel have the necessary expertise in project and task leadership, social emotional learning (SEL) programming, program implementation, technology, and research methods as evidenced by their resumes

Sub

(Appendix B for résumés and Exhibit J4 in Appendix J4 for the project’s organizational chart) (pp. e54-e109).

The principal investigator (PI) has more than 14 years of experience leading and conducting education research and evaluation and will draw upon experience as project director on three EIR evaluations of school-based SEL programs. In addition, the lead product developer has three decades of work in educational technology and specializes in process improvement, cross-team collaboration, and agile product development (p. e26-e27).

The applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have been underrepresented, as evidenced by the key project team members being from traditionally underrepresented groups. Additional project staff will be recruited using diversity recruitment resources, including advertising in listservs and virtual postings that target underrepresented groups, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the National Latina/o Psychological Association (p,e28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes a specific management plan comprising of defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones (p.e29). For example, they will recruit four pilot schools between Jan.–May 2025; AIR will conduct focus groups/interviews and analyze acceptability and feasibility data between Jan.–June 2026.

The applicant provided a comprehensive yearly budget, identifying necessary and reasonable costs. For example, in year 2, two AIR staff members will attend the annual 2-day project directors meeting in Washington, DC. (p. e171).

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 3 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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

- (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The impact of COVID-19 includes social isolation, disrupted routines, lower preschool attendance, and increased screen time. In addition, the effects of COVID-19 on children born after the initial onset of the COVID-19 pandemic are a lack of critical school skills and struggling with classroom social dynamics (p. e12). To address the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty, the proposed project will implement the following: three key components: (1) an innovative approach to create a safe and caring classroom environment, (2) engaging instructional strategies to teach self-regulatory skills, and (3) a teacher training and implementation support system.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/08/2024 09:49 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	29
Sub Total	30	29
Total	30	29

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Early Tier 2 - 2: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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: 29

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 proposes a school-level randomized evaluation design that could meet WWC standards without reservations (e30). The proposed research questions are clear and appropriate to the planned design (e30). The applicant effectively addresses key considerations related to its design such as expectations associated with attrition, handling joiners, and power (e31-32). The applicant clearly identifies the measures for key outcomes and provides information regarding their reliability and validity (e33). The analytic approach is also clearly detailed (e34).

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 applicant proposes a comprehensive plan to monitor implementation and provide feedback (e34-35). This includes a pilot program for developing measures and surfacing initial concerns, clear measures of fidelity, and a feedback process that will generate quarterly reports (e35-36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide sufficient detail regarding the qualitative components of its feedback system (e35). For example, there is limited information on how the results from the focus groups and interviews will be coded, analyzed, and applied (e35-36).

Reader's Score: 4

Sub

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 clearly describes the key project components, including specific metrics to assessing the level of implementation for some components (e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/08/2024 09:49 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/09/2024 10:45 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Sub Total	30	28
Total	30	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Early Tier 2 - 2: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences (S411C240191)

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: 28

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 evaluation uses a cluster randomized trial that meets WWC standards without reservations. The outcomes are eligible for WWC review. Teacher recruitment and student consent are performed before treatment assignment. The authors expect attrition to be low based on their established partnerships. The control group is waitlisted to receive intervention in the following year. Missing data is minimized because outcomes will be obtained from administrative data. Power analysis is provided to detect effect sizes between 0.15 and 0.2. Established measures with published validity evidence are used for all outcomes.

Weaknesses:

None 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:

There is a plan for performance feedback and interim reports.

Weaknesses:

The information that will be presented in the interim reports is not clearly provided.

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)

Sub

Strengths:

Evaluation includes investigation of moderators and mediators. Clear thresholds for program component implementation are defined.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/09/2024 10:45 AM