

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2024 10:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

Reader #1: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 15 | 13 |
| Strategy to Scale | | |
| 1. Strategy to Scale | 40 | 35 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 20 | 18 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 25 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 66 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 1 | | |
| 1. Promoting Equity | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 2 | | |
| 1. Impact of COVID-19 | 3 | 2 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 106 | 68 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

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 factors:

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes the Plan, Lead, Act, Network and Sustain (PLANS) is an innovative approach that goes beyond traditional improvement strategies by combining multiple promising strategies while focusing on developing leadership practices across multiple stakeholder groups (e12, e13). This combination of practices is well articulated in the Appendix J2: Core Leadership Practices Rubric on e163-e174 that includes:

1. Setting Direction; 2. Monitoring Progress; 3. Building Capacity to Teach; 4. Building Capacity to Collaborate; 5. Building Capacity to Lead; and 6. Reorganizing Systems.

The applicant includes a comprehensive strategy that integrates continuous improvement methods into the curriculum to build capacity across various educational roles (e134-e136).

The applicant builds on multiple promising grant-funded and peer reviewed research projects that suggest this multifaceted approach has strong potential (e196-197).

Weaknesses:

The proposal lacks clarity on how the current project significantly differs from other 'ground-up' leadership intervention programs. Arguably, there are a variety of frameworks and strategies that take similar approaches ranging from large-scale instructional coaching efforts to school culture interventions. Additionally, the links between improving teacher practice and student achievement are not sufficiently clearly articulated.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 35

Sub

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

Strengths:

The applicant includes a comprehensive approach to support district leaders in implementing Plan, Lead, Act, Network and Sustain (PLANS), addressing key barriers such as initiative alignment and stakeholder engagement (e134-e136).

The applicant has a clear rubric addressing each core leadership practice and the specific embedded practices necessary to excel in that domain (e163-e174).

The applicant proposes to adapt their curriculum to accommodate diverse school contexts, addressing the barrier of scalability across different educational settings (e21).

Weaknesses:

The application might benefit from additional articulation around the mechanics of how the day-to-day operations and collaborations with school districts would work. This is especially true as it relates to how the project will be handling day-to-day instructional improvement in classrooms.

Reader's Score: 8

- 2. (2) 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 describes a robust collaboration plan between The Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE) and The American Institutes for Research (AIR), ensuring regular communication and data-driven decision-making (e23).

The application has wisely budgeted for a communications and marketing team to ensure they can communicate effectively with collaborators, stakeholders and interested parties during the project and as they are sharing lessons learned (e228).

The applicant includes a detailed management plan (Appendix J3) with clear timelines, activities, and responsible parties for achieving project goals (e182).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional**

Sub

level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates a strong track record of successfully managing and scaling large-scale educational projects with major funders (best articulated on e196-197).

The applicant shares impressive growth and impact statistics, indicating significant capacity to scale the proposed project (e25).

The applicants' supplemental materials clearly demonstrate a diverse and uniquely qualified team with connections to and experience with the school districts they intend to serve, including letters of support from a wide range of said districts (see e51-e130).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a regular communication strategy to share project insights and progress with participants, fostering ongoing engagement and learning (e26). Additionally, they will supply communication templates to partners to systematize and localize additional dissemination of information.

The applicant describes a significant existing platform for open and free dissemination of product, demonstrating strong potential for broad reach and impact (e28).

Weaknesses:

The applicants are not sufficiently specific about how they might share their practices at state and national (e27) professional organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) or curriculum and supervision conferences such as Learning Forward or the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Reader's Score: 9

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to involve a strong and diverse sample of local education agencies (LEAs), enabling the study of the proposed Plan, Lead, Act, Network and Sustain (PLANS) effectiveness across various settings (e28).

The applicant describes how the project's components are designed to be flexible and adaptable, increasing their potential utility in diverse educational contexts. (e28).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide specific plans for how they will support other organizations or districts in adopting and implementing Plan, Lead, Act, Network and Sustain (PLANS) materials and processes. This proposal might be strengthened with an inclusion of the type of products that would be disseminated and how they might be used by other schools.

Reader's Score: 3

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: 18

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.**

Strengths:

The applicant includes a comprehensive theory of change that clearly links scaling strategies, program components, and desired outcomes (e29-e30).

The applicant demonstrates a strong research foundation for their conceptual framework by explicitly linking each component to existing evidence (e29-e30).

Weaknesses:

The applicant has a vast number of interventions and metrics in play – it is not clear what the highest leverage / highest priority project activities might be that support the framework. The volume of activity runs the risk of becoming too complex to manage while maintaining high quality.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes clear, overarching goals that address both student outcomes and the broader impact of the project (e227-e228, Appendix J5). Additionally, the team describes a structured approach to measuring progress, with specific objectives and performance measures aligned to each goal.

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.**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a comprehensive approach to address the needs of marginalized students through fostering widespread leadership and continuous improvement (e31).

The applicant includes strategies to promote diversity in school leadership, addressing the needs of underrepresented groups among both students and educators (e33).

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide specific details on how the project will address the unique needs of different subgroups within the target population.

Reader's Score: 9

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: 0

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

- 2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

- 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**

Sub
implementation.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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 includes community asset-mapping as a key component of their approach, aligning with the priority's focus on community engagement (e13).

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide specific details on how they will assess and address student disengagement resulting from the pandemic.

Details on how the applicant aligns this priority with the Core Leadership Practices is not clear.

Reader's Score: **2**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/05/2024 10:21 PM

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

Reader #2: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 15 | 13 |
| Strategy to Scale | | |
| 1. Strategy to Scale | 40 | 35 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 20 | 18 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 25 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 66 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 1 | | |
| 1. Promoting Equity | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 2 | | |
| 1. Impact of COVID-19 | 3 | 1 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 106 | 67 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

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 factors:

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposal details a project—Plan, Lead, Act, Network, and Sustain (PLANS)—that is responsive to research indicating that school leader quality is critically important to achieving organizational goals. (e12-e13) The proposal also rightly reports that principals (and other school leaders) leave their positions and the profession at extraordinarily high rates (e13). Policy and resource-driven responses are seldom designed to build leadership capacity. (e15) Professional learning that develops the competencies and skills of principals, along with other school and district leaders, is a reasonable response to the challenges identified in the literature. (e15-e16) The program is embedded in research-based practices (e17-e18) responsive to elements of continuous improvement (e16) that should result in comprehensive professional learning that ties many elements of good school leadership together. The leadership strategies (e.g., one-to-one coaching, peer learning, etc., e134-e136) and core practices (e.g., setting direction, monitoring progress, etc., e163-e173) the applicant embeds in the proposal are compelling. Incorporating evidence-based professional learning practices described in the proposal could realistically increase collective leadership capacity, respond to high-needs student groups, and support scale. (e18-e19)

Weaknesses:

School (and district) leadership is typically somewhat removed from the classroom and the instruction that impacts outcomes for students. This project proposal does not sufficiently detail how the organizational improvements—better trained principals and leaders—will result in improved student achievement outcomes. (e19)

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 35

Sub

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

Strengths:

The proposal strategically indicates that a decade of studying the program informs Center for Leadership and Educational Equity's (CLEE) identification of barriers. (e19) The project team also wisely frames the identification of barriers within Coburn's (2003) four dimensions of scaling, which helps to tie the barriers and strategies together into a more cohesive whole. Building strong district partnerships (e20) and modifying curriculum (e21) appear to be reasonable strategies to respond to the various barriers identified (e.g., alignment and ownership, time and structures). (e20-e21) A more comprehensive approach to leadership, including supporting district leaders (e134-e136), seems critical to the implementation of PLANS with fidelity, as well as sustaining lessons learned and increasing scale.

Weaknesses:

The second scaling strategy—modification of high-quality curriculum (e21)—does not seem completely aligned with the barrier “time and structures.” (e21) Modifying curriculum is suggestive of changes in content, but the proposal does not sufficiently explain or illustrate how changing structures or timing is a sufficient substitute. To indicate that time in sessions will occur after school in a section entitled “flexible, anytime learning” (e22) seems contradictory.

Reader's Score: 8

- 2. (2) 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:

CLEE and American Institutes for Research (AIR) have experience working together on a sizeable federal grant. (e23) They are committed to biweekly meetings and formative data meetings (e23) for ongoing communications, strategizing, and response. The proposal states that working with a Local Education Agency (LEA) will occur in two phases based on prior learning, which results in a reasonable breakdown of objectives by project phase. (e23) Project objectives are clear (e226) and supported by a sufficient timeline and budget (including key personnel from finance). (e187) Personnel responsibilities and time commitments (e.g., associate director of emerging learning technology, 33%, curriculum modification and modules in Canvas) appear reasonable. (e187-e188)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

Strengths:

Qualified personnel for both organizations have substantial experience leading projects. (e23-e24) CLEE makes a compelling argument that its growth as an organization is indicative of its successful ability to scale projects over time. (e24) The headquarters of CLEE gives the organization access to the states included in this proposal. (e24) Personnel have substantial experiences related to the core work of this project. (resumes beginning on e51-e110, e187-e188) Based on their location, relationships, and history, the project team's proposal to expand PLANS in the

Sub

region is appropriate.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 10

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

The project team proposes a good blend of dissemination strategies. The first two strategies focus on the local levels, rightly prioritizing participating schools, leaders, and communities. (e26) Mechanisms for dissemination are varied (e.g., newsletters, blogs, social media, etc.). (e26) The variety of resources to be shared is commendable. (e26) The third strategy focuses on reaching regional and national audiences interested in CLEE's work. (e26-e27) CLEE and AIR both have robust networks with different, but related, interests. Their collective ability to access and disseminate across websites, social media, federal centers, etc. is robust. (e27)

Weaknesses:

The proposal might be strengthened by being more specific about the applicant's target practitioner and researcher conferences, making specific connections to their products. Research products are primarily limited to AIR and only one research article (e247), unnecessarily limiting the potential scope of the dissemination of research.

Reader's Score: 8

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

Strengths:

The project team strategically discusses the utility of products in terms of dissemination, no-cost resources, and processes. (e28-e29) They reasonably argue that the diversity of district and school partners in the study will allow them to produce and share materials that are responsive to various school contexts. (e28) They are appropriately making materials publicly available. (e28). Asynchronous learning modules give potential users flexibility to access materials and understand them when convenient. (e29)

Weaknesses:

Products are discussed somewhat generally. The proposal might be stronger with a clear example (and discussion) of a resource or product that practitioners might find particularly useful.

Reader's Score: 4

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: 18

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.**

Strengths:

The proposal team has developed a comprehensive, logical framework that details strategies, implementation, and outcomes. (e30) The theory of change includes relevant research (e.g., Gates et al., 2019) to undergird it. (e30) The project team strategically connects the theory of change back to project goals to scale and the barriers they intend to address. (e29) There is considerable alignment within the theory of change and across the proposal. Key aspects of the intervention are strategically shared (e.g., core leadership practices rubric beginning on e162) that effectively connect the applied to the conceptual.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Overarching goals (e31) are clearly aligned with the rest of the proposal. Goals and objectives (e182-e186, e226) are appropriately aligned to intervention content and stated significance of the project. The outcomes are reasonably clear and measurable. (beginning on e182) The presentation of goals, objectives, and outcomes is easily followed and understood, demonstrating clear overall logic. (e227-e228)

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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.**

Strengths:

The inclusion of the leadership development curriculum (e32-e33) illustrates a logical flow of content that should help principals (and other school leaders) increase their leadership skills. The project team reasonably argues that the target population for the intervention will vary based on district and school contexts (e.g., language learners, special education status, etc.; e31), so the development of leadership skills to be responsive to difference is critical (and a significant component of the project). This flexible approach to meeting the needs of target populations seems appropriate given the goals stated from the outset of the proposal. (e12)

Weaknesses:

The proposal could be clearer about how target groups will be determined by district or school. There also remains some ambiguity about how the intervention will influence what teachers will do in classrooms.

Reader's Score: 8

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: 0

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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 strengths were identified.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not demonstrate an intentional promotion of equity in student access as defined in the competition.

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 proposal connects "setting direction," one of CLEE's steps of leadership development (e32), to competitive preference priority #2. There is attention to asset mapping (e13) that suggests the applicant is considering the impact of COVID on schools

Weaknesses:

The proposal fails to provide any substantive data about the impacts of COVID or how the intervention will be responsive to it. There seems to be a lack of clear, continuous focus on being responsive to the impact of the pandemic.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

Reader #3: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 15 | 12 |
| Strategy to Scale | | |
| 1. Strategy to Scale | 40 | 34 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 20 | 20 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 25 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 66 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 1 | | |
| 1. Promoting Equity | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 2 | | |
| 1. Impact of COVID-19 | 3 | 2 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 106 | 68 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

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 factors:

Reader's Score: 12

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant used data to support the importance of effective school leaders in school improvement efforts. The low retention levels of school leaders are a nationwide concern, as stated in research conducted by Goldring & Taie, 2018. The turnover rate of school leaders was cited to support the need for evidence-based strategies and coaching for leaders. For example, the average time a person stays in a principal position is only four years. According to research conducted by the applicant, principals leave the profession due to inadequate professional development and support for their challenging positions. The applicant will implement a program called Plan, Lead, Act, Network, and Sustain (PLANS) for Equitable Student Outcomes as a professional learning program that utilizes the evidence-based program components of experiential learning, data use for continuous quality improvement, and interactive learning. PLANS is a professional learning program that implements evidence-based program components to improve the core leadership practices of educational leaders. The components are delivered through coaching, professional learning sessions, network sessions, and asynchronous modules and resources for groups of educational stakeholders, school teams, educators, school leaders, and district leaders to support their school improvement processes aimed at increasing equity for high-need focal groups of students (e.g. economically disadvantaged, receiving special education services, multilingual learners, and/or from a marginalized racial group). The applicant states that implementation of these evidence-based program components will result in improved schoolwide Core Leadership Practices (CLP) of a wide diversity of leaders, increase school leader retention and improve student achievement in math and English language arts (ELA), particularly for students in high-need focal groups. The proposed project provides an alternative to the existing school improvement strategies (e.g., mandates and resources) by fostering leadership practices that focus on deeper implementation and building the capacity of educators, leaders, and stakeholders to use CLP to drive and sustain effective school improvement processes. The applicant demonstrates that there is a significant need to add to the evidence-based leadership development strategies and leadership curricula that meet the high standards in What Works Clearinghouse. The proposed project will strengthen and build on the leadership development studies and extend the research to apply to leadership teams, educators, and stakeholders. Finally, the applicant will use the proposed project to expand research by focusing on leadership practices that positively impact high-need focal groups of students. The applicant will use the proposed project to support the premise that when school leaders facilitate school improvement processes that support leadership among many stakeholders, the following areas will increase: (a) academic outcomes for students, (b) collegial and instructional practices for educators and leaders, and (c) retention rates for school leaders (pp. e12-19). (pp. e12-19).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include achievement data, principal survey results, school improvement plan goals, and outcomes from participating districts and schools to support the effectiveness of the Early Phase of this program and the need to scale the project

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.**

Strengths:

The proposed project will utilize two strategies supported by research: (a) building solid partnerships with local education agencies (LEAs) and (b) building on a high-quality leadership development curriculum. The first barrier to be addressed is that district and school leaders often struggle to foster the ownership and commitment needed among stakeholders and educators to accelerate implementation and sustain progress toward critical school improvement goals. A strategy to address barrier one is the implementation of PLANS's coaches to support district leaders in organizing during the implementation phase of the proposed project. The Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE) will develop a strategic communication plan to share learning and resources among PLANS schools.. The second barrier addressed is time and structure. Schools often do not have time and structures that allow for the ongoing collegial collaboration needed to establish widespread leadership implementation. The strategy for addressing barrier 2 is the implementation of PLANS curriculum modification, which will be modified from CLEE's current curriculum to ensure a diversity of school contexts (e.g., different types and student demographics) that can leverage their state-required school improvement processes. Another strategy to address the second barrier is flexible, anytime learning: CLEE will use implementation supports such as a limited number of after-hour peer sessions to maximize the limited time of leaders, educators, and stakeholders. Asynchronous modules and resources will provide pathways for leaders/schools to implement quickly based on a schedule that is convenient within the constructs of their work schedule. Finally, virtual and on-site coaching and observations will be used by CLEE coaches to eliminate the need for participants to travel and hire substitutes (pp. e19-21)second barrier is flexible, anytime learning: CLEE will use implementation supports such as a limited number of after-hour peer sessions to maximize the limited time of leaders, educators, and stakeholders. Asynchronous modules and resources will provide pathways for leaders/schools to implement quickly based on a schedule that is convenient within the constructs of their work schedule. Finally, virtual and on-site coaching and observations will be used by CLEE coaches to eliminate the need for participants to travel and hire substitutes (pp. e19-21)

Sub

Weaknesses:

The barriers and strategy section of the proposed project was hard to follow, and it was difficult to determine which strategy(ies) aligned with which barriers (pp. e19-21). The applicant failed to provide data to support the contention that the proposed project will help with time constraints associated with Professional Learning (pp. e134-135).

Reader's Score: 7

- 2. (2) 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:

CLEE will work with an external evaluation team from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to achieve the proposed project's objectives on time and within budget. This Management Plan reflects how CLEE and AIR will combine their skills and experiences to manage the proposed project implementation and evaluation successfully. The detailed evaluation activities, timeline, and qualifications of the AIR team are listed in Appendix J4. CLEE and AIR will maximize the strengths of both teams through biweekly project management meetings, shared communications channels, and quarterly formative data meetings. The implementation team learned that the modification of curriculum, training of staff, and relationship-building with LEA partners needs to occur in two phases: (a) an initial, intensive period within the first six months of the grant, and (b) ongoing efforts throughout the grant. The management plan described in Appendix J3 includes roles for CLEE (program implementation and management), AIR (independent evaluators), LEA partners (recruitment/direction setting), and educational stakeholders (pp. e22-23; e 182-191, Table J3a, Appendix B, Appendix J3, Table J3a, Appendix J5).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

Strengths:

The proposed project contained a detailed job description for coaches and facilitators (p. e189), which supports the applicant's capacity to scale the project. The CVs and resumes of critical personnel cover expertise in district leadership, school leadership, coaches, and facilitators with Principal experience. A clear outline of the key personnel roles and responsibilities is on pp. e182-192 of the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

- 4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale and continue beyond the grant period is supported by evidence of the applicant's record of successful project management. Notable grants include the lead grantee for a United States Department of Education (USDOE) Turnaround School Leaders Program (2014-2018) and a current grantee under the USDOE SEED Program (2022-2025). The proposed scaling of PLANS will further build the applicant's capacity, allowing more significant expansion post- Education Innovation and Research (EIR) funding. Implementing the proposed project will enable the applicant to achieve programming at a lower cost, with higher impact, and more sustainable strategies to achieve outcomes. The hybrid approach and associated modules and materials will allow the applicant to address common barriers to participants' lack of time and costs to travel to in-person sessions (p. e25).

Weaknesses:

The applicant cited several grants in which it did similar work as the proposed project; however, data supporting the outcomes of the grants was not included in the proposal. Providing data on previous projects might strengthen the applicant's argument about its capacity to bring the project to scale (p. e25).

Reader's Score: 9

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Strengths:

The applicant describes various mechanisms for sharing the products. For example, new digital content will be added to the (a) open/free online resources housed on CLEE's website and (b) the learning management system (Canvas) utilized by participants. The open resource bank maintained on CLEE's website will be accompanied by a national community of practice accessible from the website. This access will allow districts and schools entry-level pathways to explore, inquire, and begin to implement critical practices of PLANS (p. e28).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not describe a variety of other settings in which the products from the proposed project could be used. For example, the applicant does not describe how the products will be shared with individuals interested in becoming school leaders, or as post-secondary settings (p. e28).

Reader's Score: 3

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: 20

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.**

Sub

Strengths:

The proposed project's Theory of Change (TOC) supports the premise that the scaling strategies will enable the effective implementation of the following: to strengthen widespread leadership that implements effective school improvement processes, and to support the outcomes of improved leader retention, educator practices, and student achievement. The applicant supported the TOC with evidence and research described throughout the proposal. The TOC includes (1) strategies to implement PLANS at scale, (2) the PLANS program itself, and (3) the intended outcomes. To ensure PLANS is scalable and sustainable, CLEE will build strong partnerships with districts and build on a high-quality leadership development curriculum (pp. e29-30, 132 Table G1, Figure 1).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The PLANS goals and associated objectives are specified in Appendix J5. There are two goals: (1) increase academic outcomes for students in high-needs focal groups and retention for school leaders and (2) make learning, practices, and resources widely available through dissemination efforts, strong district partnership, and high-quality curriculum materials. Each goal has associated objectives measured through aligned performance measures (p. e31, Appendix J5, Table J5a).

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.**

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that persistent and significant inequities exist in education for the target population of this proposal: high-need focal groups. This proposal's target population refers to underserved students in participating schools (evidenced by student outcome data) from specific subgroups (i.e., students who are categorized as economically disadvantaged, receiving special education services, multilingual learners, and from a marginalized racial group). The proposed project will provide professional learning and support leaders to engage in widespread continuous improvement cycles, creating learning environments where all students thrive. To serve the needs of the primary target population of high-need focal groups of students, PLANS aims to positively impact the retention of school leaders, particularly leaders from underrepresented categories (pp. e9, e31-33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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: 0

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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. This component is not addressed.

Weaknesses:

N/A. This component is not addressed.

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 will utilize coaches to guide school leaders to convene a diverse group of students, families, and educators, including the leadership team and district leaders. In the sessions, participants will analyze critical school data (including student academic outcomes, school climate survey data, qualitative data from focus groups that CLEE will conduct) to uncover critical assets and needs collaboratively. As part of the process, the analysis will be conducted on how the assets or successes have occurred so they can be replicated and leveraged. A root cause analysis of why the needs exists will be conducted so the underlying issues can be addressed. The group will recommend critical shifts to the school based on the work (p. e31

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not clearly explain how the proposed project is connected to COVID-19.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2024 02:59 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2024 02:47 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

Reader #4: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 15 | 0 |
| Strategy to Scale | | |
| 1. Strategy to Scale | 40 | 0 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 20 | 0 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 25 | 23 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 23 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 1 | | |
| 1. Promoting Equity | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 2 | | |
| 1. Impact of COVID-19 | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 106 | 23 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

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 factors:

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) 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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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: 0

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.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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:

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

If implemented well, the project can meet the standards of What Works Clearinghouse. The applicant will work with an external evaluator (e22) and conduct a cluster-level randomized controlled trial where 68 schools will be randomly assigned to experimental groups (e36).

The researchers will randomly assign schools to one of two cohorts after they are randomly assigned to experimental groups (e36).

The applicants address threats to internal validity and have plans in place to mitigate treatment spillover, sample attrition. They will exclude any joiners from the analysis (e37).

The applicant will incorporate outcome measures that align with What Works Clearinghouse outcome domains (e37) and the planned regression-based analysis is an acceptable method for estimating treatment effects (e37, e206).

Weaknesses:

Strategy two of the dissemination plan includes frequent communications and highlights about implementation findings sent to intervention participants during implementation (e26). This could be an issue if there is a relationship between implementation and impact estimates, causing bias in estimated intervention effects.

2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Strengths:

The evaluation findings will likely provide guidance about effective replication strategies. The applicant has proposed a robust plan for studying implementation of the intervention through the use of data from focus groups, interviews, and program data (e39-e41).

The applicant has planned to study implementation across a variety of contexts including type of leader and geographic location (e19). The applicant plans to implement the intervention in 68 schools across three states (e10).

The applicant will inform replication and scale-up efforts by incorporating student, leader, and school characteristic data in the planned implementation study to understand contextual factors that might influence implementation and impact (e39).

The applicants will conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis to inform replication and scale-up initiatives (e40, e198).

The applicant proposes to incorporate Community-based participatory research practices into the evaluation of implementation to ensure that implementation findings are relevant to the community that the intervention is designed to serve (e202).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found in the applicant's proposal.

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.

Strengths:

The applicant outlines two overarching goals that are aligned to project objectives, outcomes, and performance measures (e31). The applicant also articulates a clear alignment between evaluation outcomes and the research questions that will guide the impact study (e34-e36).

The applicant outlines three program components that make up the proposed intervention (e17, e34).

The applicant outlines 11 expected outcomes that will be assessed through the impact evaluation (e10).

The applicant provides a clear description of the outcomes, research questions, and data sources that will ground the impact evaluation and the implementation evaluation (e35-e36).

The applicant provides a detailed theory of change that describes how the intervention components lead to intended outcomes for leaders, educators, and students (e30, e34). The program logic model (e131-e133) clearly outlines all key program components, outcomes, and outputs.

The applicant provides acceptable levels of implementation for each key program component and describes the measure that will be used to monitor program implementation throughout the project (e199).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found in the applicant's proposal.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/05/2024 02:47 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2024 10:57 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

Reader #5: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 15 | 0 |
| Strategy to Scale | | |
| 1. Strategy to Scale | 40 | 0 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 20 | 0 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 25 | 25 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 25 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 1 | | |
| 1. Promoting Equity | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority 2 | | |
| 1. Impact of COVID-19 | 3 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 106 | 25 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: 6/2018 (S411B240003)

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 factors:

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) 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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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: 0

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.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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: 25

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

Strengths:

The RCT (randomized controlled trial) study proposed by the applicant meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards for a study "without reservations." The applicant provides for equal probability of assignment to treatment group and blocking by school level and student demographics. Schools identified as control in cohort one will receive the treatment on a delayed basis (e34-e36). These activities are acceptable for meeting What Works Clearinghouse requirements for "without reservations."

The proposal indicates that "joiners" will be excluded from the evaluation study (e37). This should prevent changes in the treatment group outcome that are the result of students with partial treatment.

The measures that are contained in the proposal (e37, Appendix J5, e227-e228) exhibit acceptable reliability and validity and should produce data that can accurately assess the program's impact. The applicant also proposes standardizing scores across participating states to make across-site comparisons of student achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics possible.

The assumptions associated with the experimental power (e38) are reasonable for the research setting and should detect educationally significant differences between treatment groups.

The research questions (Exhibit 1, e35-e36) are consistent with the proposed activities and intended outcomes. They also are aligned with the project logic model (e132-e133). Addressing these questions should provide the applicant with information to assess project impact on student and educator outcomes as well as implementation fidelity.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses observed.

Reader's Score: 15

- 2. (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes registering the evaluation study in the Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness Studies website (REES) (e39) which will provide access to study design and findings for those interested in outcomes and replication. In addition, the applicant intends to publish results and disseminate findings to stakeholders. Details of dissemination plans provided in the proposal (e26-e28) show information provided at the local, regional, and national levels. These components should provide for useful information to replicators.

The applicant provides a detailed project model (e30) and logic model (e132-e133) that provide a guide to the project causal chain as well as a general guide for project implementation and evaluation. These components can assist in providing replicators with an understanding of project activities and their relationship to outcomes.

The proposal contains information about conducting a cost effectiveness study that will provide replicators with information regarding overall costs and component costs (e273) that can assist in implementation decision making

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses observed.

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.

Strengths:

The measures to be employed by the applicant are identified as reliable and valid, including the Learning Community Survey used (e37, e42) to assess changes in school-wide practices that may be impacted by the treatment.

Exhibit 1 (e35-e36) posits research questions that are appropriate to the study and the measure that are meant to inform each question.

The applicant proposes using measures that are valid, reliable, and (e37) consistently gathered. These conditions should ensure that the data assessed using these instruments accurately reflects the impact of the treatments. The proposal also provides for the creation of a standard score for student achievement (ELA, Mathematics) across states which will provide for comparisons across these groups (e37).

The proposal contains information about how implementation fidelity will be assessed (e39, Appendix J5, e228) and the applicant describes fidelity measures and thresholds (Appendix J.4.5, e199-e200) and includes the schedule for data collection (e196-e197).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
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