

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/20/2024 10:02 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	26
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	9
Sub Total	70	65
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	76	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #23 - Early Tier 1 - 23: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

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 application provides strong evidence that the proposed project demonstrates new and innovative strategies. The proposed project builds upon existing research in the field by harnessing multiple effective strategies into an intervention that may have a significant impact on the field and that is also intended to be scalable. The aim of the project is to take at-risk students and provide them with the skills and supports to be viewed as "visible technology leaders" through an elective course. This is an innovative approach to working with at-risk students, who have traditionally been placed in math learning labs or other forms of traditional remediation. This proposal provides a positive, strength-based intervention that may be of interest to the field.

Two innovative features of the program design are the student-led technology support and the evidence-based reading modules. In addition to having at-risk students fully participate as help-desk tech experts, the project aims to bolster reading skills to improve competency on industry-based assessments that will provide career pathways for the students in the study.

Targeting students that are at-risk to participate in a career-based course centered on career fields that are expanding, while integrating reading and progress toward success on industry-based assessments appears to be a new and innovative approach to working with at-risk students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 26

Sub

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

Strengths:

The conceptual framework section provides a robust description of how each of the five identified components serve to support the project design and work toward achieving the desired outcomes. Each of the five components are backed by research and describe how they fit within the context of the overall project design. For example, the project design provides opportunities for students to work as advocates while increasing their comprehension skills, two components described in the framework. The logic model complements the narrative in describing the project components and desired outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks an overarching connection to describe how the five components work interdependently, rather than being presented as five separate components.

Reader's Score: 8

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 application describes the four goals, aligned to objectives and outcomes. Each performance measure for objectives 2 and 3 has specific and measurable targets. For example, performance measure 3.c. states that 70% of the 40 participants will take the industry-based assessment. The logic model aligns to the narrative and to the goals and outcomes as outlined on the chart. The application provides strong evidence that the goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The proposal defines "high needs" as students failing two or more subjects in 8th grade and therefore are "at-risk" in 9th grade. The project targets students that are considered high-risk and provides them with an intervention that serves to improve writing skills while empowering students to take a leadership role in their school communities. The project design, professional development plan, and activities are aligned to achieve the objectives and are poised to meet the student's needs. The application provides strong evidence to suggest that the implementation of the program with fidelity may lead to the desired outcomes.

Letters of participation from the partner districts are included, indicating an ability to begin the project with the desired number of participating districts, as the recruitment and commitment process is complete. The demographic and performance data from the 2021-2022 school year is provided, which demonstrates a justification for the project

Sub

in the target area.

Weaknesses:

Students who have failed two or more courses may not have room in their schedules for an elective, potentially making the course inaccessible to some. Given that the course is an elective, the participation rate may depend on enrollment and retention in the course, limiting the ability to meet the target population's needs.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 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 application provides strong evidence that the project personnel are qualified, experienced, and represent traditionally underrepresented groups.

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is committed to non-discriminatory hiring practices and the organization consists of 90% of the employees identify as people of color. There is a plan to reach out to historically underrepresented groups for recruitment, such as attending minority serving institution's job fairs.

Multiple teams have been identified to lead the project, such as the instructional implementation team, the instructional design team, and the evaluation team. A designated leader has been assigned to each team. Ten key personnel have been identified, with identified roles on the team and corresponding evidence to demonstrate that their qualifications and experience are appropriate to their roles.

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: 9

Sub

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

Strengths:

The management plan breaks the project into four distinct phases. Each phase is thoroughly described, including goals to be completed by the end of each phase.

Each phase includes a broad description of the activities and an expanded description of the activities in a separate section of the application. Specific start and end dates are provided, and key personnel are identified to oversee each activity. A meeting schedule is included in the design and is intended to serve as an opportunity to monitor progress and ensure that the various teams are in communication and provide oversight for the activities during the identified phases.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks milestones that could be used as benchmarks to monitor progress throughout the duration of the project. The application provides major phases for when goals should be completed but lacks specificity in providing more detailed benchmarks embedded in each phase.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

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

The project includes a partnership with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), a minority serving institution. UTRGV is involved in the technical assistance aspects of the program, demonstrating a true partnership and involvement in the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

A community mapping needs analysis is included in the application. The program targets high-needs students identified as at-risk of dropping out. An overview of the demographic and achievement levels of the students in the target districts is provided. Evidence that the students in the target area have not rebounded from the pandemic is provided. The project aims to help improve student performance on industry-based assessments through the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices incorporated in the project design. A demographic analysis of the target districts is provided, which justifies that the proposal meets the CPP2 criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	19
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	27
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	9
Sub Total	70	65
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	76	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #23 - Early Tier 1 - 23: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

Reader's Score: 19

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposal combines the need for literacy-oriented support with clear gaps in student performance on industry-based certification examinations and describes an interesting approach to motivating literacy proficiency and engagement through computer science. Additionally, the approach is targeted to high-needs students via an elective course designed to build their professionalism and expertise as tech leaders and resources within their schools. The project builds on existing "help desk" models by incorporating a literacy component and integrating additional supports aimed at helping students succeed in their certification exams and suggests that it may offer a competitive alternative to work-focused curriculum pathways that fail to provide the rigor needed to successfully pass certification exams.

Weaknesses:

There are existing help-desk and tech-mentorship programs in action, including in the state of Texas, suggesting that the project's potential for innovation may be limited.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 27

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

STEM/computing identity form a key conceptual basis for this project, which integrates a set of five main components into its theory of change. Each of the components is addressed through research or other evidence, and a logic model depicts how the components are expected to interact.

The proposal points to a WWC practice guide on providing reading intervention that informs its work on aligning reading oriented supports to the project within its computer science context, specifically to creating, evaluating, and using technical manuals.

Weaknesses:

More detail on the expectations constituting a conceptual framework for teacher outcomes is needed to see how this level intervention reaches its potential at a school or district level or how the activities are well-aligned to the particular target population and area.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The proposal describes a variety of outcomes that are specific to both implementation and outcomes, and for most, measures are clearly provided and based on initial information about the population. The components all appear to be well defined and consistent t, and the evaluation plan provides additional detail, particularly on how measures related to teacher outcomes are incorporated into the project.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The proposal provides a well-defined geographic area and rich description of the target population in terms of demographic and performance characteristics. Particularly interesting is data suggesting that only about 1% of students in existing STEM-focused career-based classes pass their certification tests as needed to progress. Successful models of similar programs relying on tutoring, leadership, and help desk type roles are provided, demonstrating promise in supporting the target student population, with the tweaks to be made in this project to target the identified population.

The use of mentors, particularly teachers who are already familiar with the students, is helpful for reaching this target population, and the addition of industry-oriented mentors is helpful for motivating students to see representation and enrich their sense of identity.

Weaknesses:

The program targets students who have failed courses, but these students may not have the space in their schedules to choose to take the optional course provided. This may mean that time and curriculum restrictions would prevent the program or tools emerging from it to impact students without adjustments in policy and processes

Sub

in the schools that implement it.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposal details its policies of inclusive hiring and retention and provides examples of explicit recruitment and marketing strategies for engaging applicants from underrepresented groups, including in job fairs.

Key personnel are identified and demonstrate ample appropriate experience for managing a project of this type and scope, including having the access and connections for a successful partnership across the various stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 9

Sub

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

Strengths:

The table presenting the management plan provides a clear depiction of the project's goals and activities, with key points for adjustments and formative communication indicated. The teams and personnel responsible are detailed

Sub

as well, increasing the likelihood of smooth communication and decision making. The use of phases to organize the project is helpful and provides key points at which the project may adjust course or respond to developing issues. Letters of support demonstrate a broad partnership that has already developed an identity as a team and an understanding of roles.

Weaknesses:

Key milestones are not clearly delineated, and details that describe how the applicant will consider its formative progress, such as regular meetings schedules or communication structures, are not apparent.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

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

The proposal presents a strong partnership in collaboration with the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley, which is a minority-serving institution with an active role in the project.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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 depicts an interesting connection to literacy performance (which was a challenge seen prior to COVID and was perhaps exacerbated by it) and the successful completion of industry-based certifications. As such, it captures a COVID-related impact and justifies it with evidence collected through its literature review. Further, the project relies on a number of evidence-based strategies and on maintaining or increasing rigor for high needs students in their career pathways. The composition of partners and demographic information provided demonstrate that a community asset mapping and needs assessment were conducted in preparation for project planning.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	9
Sub Total	70	68
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	76	74

Technical Review Form

Panel #23 - Early Tier 1 - 23: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

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 application demonstrates an innovative component which is a new elective course where students in at-risk situations will lead technology campus support. The applicant noted that the experiences of providing technology support on campus and being recognized as leaders will increase students' STEM identity and engagement. The applicant will integrate disparate research-based strategies into a seamless intervention that can be implemented at scale, with measurable impacts for public high school students. The applicant posits that participation in TechXperts will positively impact students' STEM identity, campus community engagement, and academic achievement. Key innovative features are student-led technology support and evidence-based reading modules.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant clearly presents a TechXperts conceptual framework that is based on a theory of action that combines the effect of the program's five main components and includes information technology, computer science curriculum, student-led tech support, evidence-based reading modules, accreditation preparation, mentoring, and a community of practice, to improve participants' STEM identity and engagement. The activities are likely to positively affect reading instruction. The applicant proposes using modules based on What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guides.

In addition, the applicant demonstrates a strong rationale for the evidence requirement through a well-defined logic model, which provides an overview of key project resources, components, outputs, and outcomes, including short- and long-term measures for program participants. The logic model illustrates how positive outcomes are associated with the key components of TechXperts: student curriculum, integrated evidence-based reading instruction, teacher supports, mentoring, and student technology supports that stem from the review of relevant foundational research on student leadership

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly presents goals, objectives and outcomes that are measurable that address the development of a course, professional development, and materials to increase students' troubleshooting skills through computational thinking, STEM identity and reading skills. The applicant describes a plan for students to serve as tech support specialists for their campuses. The applicant provides measurable outcomes. For example, teachers participating in professional development will report a 50% increase in confidence in teaching STEM identity and IT skills.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant's program defines high-need students as 9th graders deemed "at-risk" by their state statute, including but not limited to failing two or more subjects in 8th grade and repeated failure on state assessments. The applicant noted that the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) is a persistent economically disadvantaged region along the Texas-Mexico border with statistical data as evidence. The applicant proposes to implement TechXperts in Brownsville, Hidalgo, La Villa, and Mercedes Independent School Districts (ISDs) in the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas, a persistent poverty region along the Texas-Mexico border. At least 20% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Sub

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how accessible the elective will be to the students because of their already full schedules.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant noted that diversity and non-discrimination are core explicit practices at IDRA. IDRA has a nondiscrimination hiring policy and employment policies that require every person to be treated equally regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, native language, age or disability. One of the key strategies employed is actively participating in job fairs hosted by HBCUs, MSIs and HSIs. By engaging with students and faculty members from these institutions, IDRA aims to foster a diverse and talented pool of candidates. The applicant is dedicated to promoting equal opportunities for individuals from underrepresented groups. With a specific focus on students of color, women, and other marginalized communities, the organization actively reaches out to schools of education, creating connections and building relationships that help identify and attract exceptional talents.

The Project Director (PD) leverages almost 20 years of experience to design, develop, and administer professional development for educators. Key areas of her work include designing, developing, and providing training in technology integration, technical writing, and technology coaching and mentoring. The Curriculum Specialist has over 20 years of experience in developing and managing youth technology projects.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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: 9

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a comprehensive management plan that clearly demonstrates the project will be achieved on time and within budget. All personnel have defined responsibilities. For example, the instructional implementation team. The management plan is described in phases, with Phase 1 Development, Phase 2 Pilot, Phase 3 Implementation and Testing, and Phase 4 Analysis to ensure that each goal is achieved.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide milestones within its management plan.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

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

The applicant is a federally recognized minority-serving institution (CPP 1) that primarily serves the communities and residents of the Rio Grande Valley region in South Texas.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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 conducted community asset-mapping and needs assessments that show a detailed perspective on achievement by race/ethnicity and provides context on schools' efforts to address gaps endured through school closures during the pandemic. The statistical data provided includes evidence from the 2021 Texas Academic Performance Report that indicates) 26% fewer Black 8th graders (compared to 27% fewer in 2019) performed at or above grade level on the STAAR reading assessment. Similar statewide trends emerged for Latino 8th graders who demonstrated a gap of 22% fewer on the reading assessment (compared to 22% in 2019) than White students).

The applicant addressing the Impact of COVID- 19 on students. TechXperts is a 9th-grade course designed to engage students who are in at-risk situations by positioning them as visible technology leaders on their campuses. This program creates opportunities to broaden participation in STEM and IT fields through a highly experiential leadership experience. To enhance this innovation, the project addresses the need for improved reading skills in STEM/IT pathways. This need is evident, as few students who take information technology classes pass entry-level industry-based certifications.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/02/2024 09:58 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

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 #25 - Early Tier 2 - 1: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

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 application presents a well-planned and articulated discussion of a project addressing the need to increase the academic achievement of high-risk and high-needs students. The logic model (page e104) provides direct linkages from key teacher support and teacher-developed student curriculum components to increased student skills and engagement in computing, and subsequently increased student reading skills.

The project's four goals are clearly specified and measurable, with yearly components (e.g., what will be achieved during year 2025-26), objectives, and outcomes noted (pages e31-33). The goals, objectives, and outcomes are reasonable and achievable within the constraints of the presented timeframe and resources. For example, the project will have 20 students at each participating school experience the project curriculum (page e33), and another 20 students at that same school in a control group.

The project will include a development phase for teacher training and development of student coursework, followed by a pilot phase to refine structures created during development (page e42). Two implementation years will follow the pilot year, which is an appropriate length of time to capture the impact of the project on student outcomes (page e43). Students will be recruited for the TechXperts class through randomized control trial procedures, which meet What Works Clearinghouse guidelines.

The narrative notes that the outcome measures have adequate reliability coefficients (pages e50-51). For example, the STEM interest inventory reports Cronbach coefficients of .85-.89. In addition, the narrative includes how evaluation staff would deal with higher-than-expected attrition during the project (page e50).

The analysis model used is strong, being a linear regression model, modeling each outcome separately (page e51). The narrative provides a thorough presentation of the statistical analysis model (e.g., including stating the significance level using a two-tailed t-test at a .05 level) (page e52).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The narrative (page e33) notes that students will participate in student-led technical support and that students will make buddy visits to PreK-1 students in neighboring schools (page e54). However, the application does not provide information on any data-collection component for these activities.

Reader's Score: 19

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

Strengths:

The application provides a clear and sufficiently thorough description of the procedures that will be used to evaluate progress during each project year. The pilot data collection components are presented in detail in Table J3 (page e127), which includes how interview and focus group questions and processes will be developed, refined, and used. In addition, the narrative discusses how the evaluation team will modify the student survey instrument if it is determined that the reliability of the scale is too low (page e127).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes. The fidelity of implementation will be assessed each year for all treatment schools (page e50). The application provides a clear and thorough description of implementation thresholds for each of the key project components. For example, at least 80% of students in each school will participate in 5 of 6 mentoring sessions and participate in 2 field trips (page e128). By assessing the fidelity annually for all treatment schools, the applicant ensures that the project remains aligned with its intended design.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/02/2024 09:58 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/03/2024 11:33 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

Reader #2: *****

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #25 - Early Tier 2 - 1: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Intercultural Development Research Association (S411C240268)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Strengths:

This proposal outlines a multi-site randomized controlled trial (RCT; pp. e44), that uses intent to treat framework (ITT), meaning the analysis will include every participant who is randomized according to randomized treatment assignment (pp. e51). ITT preserves the benefits of randomization by including all participants as originally assigned and reduces bias to draw more accurate conclusions. Further, the proposal intends to test baseline equivalence on baseline measures and year-prior academic records (pp. e50-51), and will include a pretest measure of the outcome and covariates in the analytic model (pp. 131), providing a more precise estimate of effect. If well executed, this proposal can provide evidence of effects that meet WWC standards without reservations.

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:

A strength of the proposal is the use of a pilot study before the impact study (pp. e42-43). This pilot phase demonstrates the applicants understanding of the need to test feasibility before implementation, identify potential issues, and refine tools before the larger impact study. The proposal outlines a detailed plan that incorporates extensive feedback from teachers, mentors, and students (e127), which will increase the feasibility of classroom implementation. Focus groups aimed at obtaining teacher feedback will be conducted at multiple points during the development and pilot phase (pp. e53). This demonstrates the applicant's commitment to ongoing formative data collection and incorporating iterative feedback to meet intended outcomes.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

A key strength of the proposal is its plan to monitor implementation fidelity (pp. e47). The team will create a high-quality measure of implementation that will include one or more indicators for each of the key components (pp. e53). They further outline how they will consider these measures of implementation fidelity as a potential mediator of effect. This will allow the team to assess how variations in implementation affect the outcomes, helping to determine whether the intervention itself is effective or if differences in outcomes are due to inconsistent implementation. The proposal also clearly outlines thresholds for acceptable implementation on overall components (pp. e133-135), as well as individual subcomponents. This clear framework will allow project staff and evaluators to monitor ongoing progress and identify which factors are contributing to or impeding success of the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/03/2024 11:33 AM