

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/16/2024 07:15 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	9
Sub Total	70	66
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	3
Total	76	69

Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - Early Tier 1 - 14: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has demonstrated a strong capacity to execute the proposed project – addressing chronic absenteeism as a response to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. The introduction of mentors and embedding community support is innovative at its core. The intervention aims to provide direct support in schools served through the Title I Program for high-needs and underperforming students, as defined by Nebraska. The program does a good job of comparing the mentor program to existing program(s) available to the target population. Section A.2 provides clear criteria for the school and student selection process, which ties directly into the need for the innovative intervention.

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 has effectively outlined a comprehensive framework for resolving gaps in standardizing the implementation, addressing the absence of a system to track the fidelity of implementation, evaluation, and data collection. The proposal shares insights into outdated techniques; like paper-pencil evaluations.

Weaknesses:

There is a gap in the connection to the proposed experiential learning activities, learning activities, and student expectations.

Reader's Score: 9

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 proposed evaluation plan is comprehensive and well-suited to support the proposed multidimensional strategy. The authors have provided context for the conceptualized scale-up, and expansion of the program development, and provide a rigorous external evaluation. Table 4 provides clear and specific examples of yearly attendance to support the goal for participating students to stay under the 20 absences and for those students to develop self-efficacy to take charge of their learning through student voice.

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 application effectively addresses potential challenges by providing background and clear context to the target population. The Oregon Research Institute will implement the Core Components/Activities of the YAN program and has provided corresponding evidence in Table 2. Table 3 introduces the Restorative Circle, also backed by evidence. The proposal is further strengthened by providing time-tested opportunities to “ramp up and improve” the curriculum over time and has outlined time on task with mentors and student engagement. The recruitment tasks measure and identify students most in need.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a good case for encouraging applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. The applicant states "lived experiences of mentors", in the logic model. Appendix B additionally provides a variety of resumes of Key Personnel. Table 9 highlights a comprehensive view of Key Personnel.

Weaknesses:

The approach outlined does not describe the traditionally underrepresented groups.

Reader's Score: 8

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 provides a more than adequate management plan. The applicant details training, individual student action plans, and risk indicators. Notably, the proposal shares a direct connection from the "mediators" to short/long-term outcomes. The budget narrative is clear for each year. For instance, Years 1 and 2 include technology/software, but Year 2 is significantly less.

Weaknesses:

The program provided limited context to the sustainability of the mentors, as they are a large part of the management plan and are not included in the budget.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

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

Weaknesses:

The partnerships included in the application do not meet the qualifications.

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 evidence provides a strong case for addressing chronic absenteeism perpetuated by COVID-19. Specifically, "...addressing impacts of COVID-19 through the use of evidence-based approaches that enable students to access the educational opportunities they need to succeed in school and reach their full potential; see Section A)." The research to support the claims of the lasting effects of COVID-19's link to dropout rates is defined and monitored through objectives, goals, and outcomes.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/16/2024 07:15 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2024 08:45 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	68
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	3
Total	76	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - Early Tier 1 - 14: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided an innovative approach, supported by compelling evidence and research to address chronic absenteeism. The approach goes further by involving school-embedded mentors, who would provide [high school students] weekly contact (four days a week) to include two hours of support. Mentors would assist students in creating an action plan, which would assist students in ownership of their own behaviors. Other activities include Restorative Circles, designed to improve behaviors, increase school connectedness, and decrease disciplinary referrals and incidents.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provided a multi-faceted conceptual framework using the research-based Developmental Relationship and the Positive Youth Development Frameworks as the foundation. The concept considers the individual and contextual elements impacting school success and then forges strategies to skills and behaviors needed to promote resilience, connection, and empowerment. The four selection criteria for participants were clearly outlined, including having a minimum of 8 unexcused absences from the prior school year, being defined as a high-needs student, being enrolled in grades 6-12, and speaking English.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

Through a well-developed three-phase approach, the applicant's goals will refine, develop, and standardize the program to address the needs of students; examine the program through a 6-month pilot study; and examine the effects of the program on educational engagement, performance and school stability of students. Each phase has identified measurable objectives and outcomes citing appropriate baselines. For example, goal two includes the objectives of conducting 60 hours of program training with 2 mentors and 2 administrative staff, attaining 90% proficiency for mentors, obtaining the consent of 70 student participants, 90% fidelity implementation, conducting appropriate assessments, and conducting follow-up interviews to determine feasibility.

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 applicant promotes goals to help students stay below 20 unexcused absences, improve one letter grade per course, and increase SEL functioning. The needs of the target population have been identified as overcoming chronic absenteeism, increased incidents of dropouts, the need for SEL programming, and the need for improved academic achievement. Each of the project's proposed goals and objectives has thoroughly addressed the identified need, provided the method to address those needs, provided partnership pairings, including training, and integrated a refinement process. Relevant supporting research was referenced for each goal and strategy.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 8

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 staff is well-qualified, experienced, and published. The background of existing staff renders them more than sufficient to carry out the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Organized into three teams – research and development, community agency, and external evaluation teams --- each has a deliberate function, identified roles and responsibilities, and assigned project activities. The narrative included the all-encompassing statement, “The institute advances diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism within its organization and the broader community through community partnerships and the Racial Equity Working Group, which makes recommendations to the Board of Directors to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging among employees, research partners, and community groups.” Current staff is well-qualified.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not indicate the percentage of time key personnel dedicate to the project, nor do they describe the qualifications and selection criteria for the mentors. The narrative referenced “lived experiences,” however, fails to define what a lived experience entails, making it unclear to determine the impact of such an approach.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The narrative included an intensive management plan, which included proposed activities, the timeline for implementation, and the person(s) responsible. Duties provided included having mentors provide continuous support to at-risk students, focusing on improving attendance, academic performance, and social-emotional learning. Services are implemented through an integrated model of evidence-based practices by a trained Youth Attendance Navigator, who coordinates keeping attendance, educational attainment, and SEL outcomes at the forefront. Mentors help students create an action plan for monitoring goals, meet one-on-one with students at least once monthly, and conduct weekly lunch-and-learn sessions using Restorative Circles.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

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

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
- (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant lists partnerships with the Urban League of Nebraska, the Oregon Research Institute, Abt Global and the School District of Omaha, none of which are identified as a community college, historically black college or university, tribal college, and university or minority-serving institution.

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 cites strong national and statewide research which supports the focus on absenteeism and the problem of student drop-out rates. The narrative provided a seamless link to SEL training as a potential remedy for the identified needs. The applicant will use mentors embedded within schools, particularly high-needs schools – four middle and four high schools (grades 6- 12). Mentors will provide coaching and skill instruction, monitor in-school behaviors, and provide experiential learning activities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/10/2024 11:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	9
Sub Total	70	67
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	3
Total	76	70

Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - Early Tier 1 - 14: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposed Youth Attendance Navigators Program does demonstrate a promising new strategy of providing mentors for students in need at the middle and high school levels. The mentors have lived experiences that students can relate to according to the applicant. Further, this project will focus on improvement of SEL, academic performance and attendance among the high-needs urban population in the selected schools. There is a discussion of comparison to existing programs which further validates that this is an innovative approach. Embedded in the project are youth restorative circles and student will create their own action plans.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides a solid conceptual framework to support the project. There is a convincing body of research that ties chronic absenteeism among students to other issues that impact their academic performance in school. The project seeks to create a 'culture of attendance'. In addition to the Logic Model in Appendix D, there are multiple tables that illustrate the components of the program that comprise the conceptual framework.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant is on target to successfully achieve the project goals, objectives, and outcomes given the evidence provided. For example, it describes the multiple phases of the project, along with specified goals, objectives and outcomes to achieve the project's end result. Specific measures for each phase of the program can be found within the application. There are clear plans to scale up the project. In addition, the self-efficacy plans for students are an attribute.

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:

There is a well-organized recruitment method described which indicates a lot of thought was put into how to identify students most in need for the pilot phase of the program. Identified needs are correlated with goals and objectives. The Restorative Circles and training will be beneficial to meet the needs of the target population.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

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:

According to the proposed project, a substantial number of team members will come from underrepresented backgrounds like individuals who are multiracial and come from economically disadvantaged groups. Table 9 illustrates key personnel training and experiences. Evidence within the application indicates personnel with prior experience supporting programs involving youth similar to the proposed project. Lastly, Appendix B contains key personnel resumes.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not elaborate sufficiently on the lived experiences of the mentors who will be assigned to work with students in schools. It is unclear how the program mentors will be selected and vetted to support the students and the specified outcomes of the project. They are an essential part of the project, therefore it would be helpful to know this information.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

There appears to be a strong evaluation process in place with multiple program phases to be evaluated and refined. A detailed explanation of the processes that will be utilized are evident within the application.

The proposed plan is intricately connected to the What Works Clearinghouse standards that are highly regarded. The Logic Model on contains the program models, mediators, and outcomes. Also, the budget narrative in the appendix for all five years of the project identifies standard costs for the project. The Youth Navigator Logic Model complements the management plan. Lastly, the applicant presents additional management information such as how barriers will be overcome and targeted milestones for addressing those barriers.

Weaknesses:

The percentage of time various key personnel will spend fulfilling responsibilities and linking this to the budget would help to further assess whether objectives can be achieved.

Sub

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The following organizations will partner together to implement this project: Oregon Research Institute; Urban League of Nebraska; Abt Global; Omaha Public Schools (Nebraska). None of these organizations qualify as entities under CPP1.

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 proposed project adequately addresses impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The applicant does explain that it will address chronic absenteeism that which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There will be mentors to provide continuous support to at-risk students, focusing on improving attendance, academic performance, and social-emotional learning (SEL). COVID statistics were provided concerning effects of the pandemic on student attendance which were highly validating with regard to the need for this type of student support.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/10/2024 11:03 PM

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/04/2024 04:14 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Reader #1: *****

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Early Tier 2 - 5: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that the evaluation plan is coherent, as it ties the goal of examining the intervention effects on student performance (p. e26) to the logic model's key components and outcomes (p. e123) as well as to the research questions about program impact (p. e33).

The applicant presents an evaluation plan that is likely to meet What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations (p. e36). The applicant discusses the randomization process in detail, and presents reasonable precautions about missing data due to attrition, as baseline data on student attendance and achievement will be established to show comparable groups (pp. e34-35). As evidence of thoroughness, the applicant provides several appendices to describe the impact model (p. e143). The applicant describes the measures for the randomized controlled trial, including the source and date of collection (p. e143). The applicant documents the cohort process and dates in Table 8 (p. e144). The applicant also discusses the power and minimum detectable effect size calculations (p. e145). As a strength, the applicant provides the mathematical model of the impact study (pp. e146-147).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear if joiners will be permitted to participate in the program. It is uncertain if new students will be allowed to have an intervention mentor if one of the four students assigned to a mentor drops out of the program (p. e34). This is important as time in the program is one of the variables in the evaluation (p. e16). More details are needed to determine how joiners may impact the study.

Details are limited regarding the reliability of some measures. For example, the reliability of the BASC-3 instrument is not given (pp. e36, e142). This is important as it is part of the pretest and posttest measure in the impact model (pp. e36, e146-147).

Reader's Score: 18

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that it will have sufficient periodic assessment of progress. The applicant provides evidence that the evaluator will commit to monthly calls with the management team as well as to the training team (p. e171). The applicant presents thoroughness in periodic assessment throughout the various project stages. For example, the evaluator will give formative feedback to the management team based on focus group and survey data during the pilot phase, and will complete a formal analysis of the pilot study (p. e37). In addition, the applicant details how the evaluator will provide feedback every six months about the mentorship program (p. e37).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly articulates project components. The applicant presents a logic model with key components, mediators, and outcomes (p. e123). For example, key components include the youth attendance navigator training, the individualized student action plan, and the student risk database (p. e123). The applicant provides increased attendance, school engagement and peer relationships as mediators in the logic model (p. e123). The applicant describes outcomes which include improved academic performance, school connectedness, and improved social skills (p. e123).

As a strength, two of the research questions relate to program fidelity (p. e34). In addition, the applicant presents evidence of monthly implementation monitoring through the creation of a fidelity instrument maintained throughout the year (p. e37,143). As an additional strength, the applicant details other activities related to fidelity which will be tracked through the engagement database weekly (p. e37, 143). The applicant provides tentative thresholds for implementation in the Grant Application Form for Project Objectives. For example, 80% of participants will complete the pilot study intervention and 85% will complete the impact study (p. e175).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/04/2024 04:14 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/07/2024 02:19 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Reader #2: *****

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Early Tier 2 - 5: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Oregon Research Institute (S411C240237)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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

Strengths:

This evaluation is designed as an RCT. Randomization will be at the student-level; students will be randomly assigned to participate in the intervention, or a business-as-usual, intent-to-treat comparison condition (p. 32).

The applicants note that they will collect baseline data on student attendance and academic achievement for the quarter prior to students' random assignment. Baseline equivalence will be examined if there is high attrition in the study. Baseline characteristics will also be used to enhance precision in the estimation of intervention effects (p. e35).

For the school administrative data they plan to collect, the applicants state that they expect missing data to be low and to not differ between treatment conditions for that data. They also expect low attrition related to student dropout due to the fact that outcome data will be collected with one school year for each cohort of students (p. e35).

The applicants also plan to minimize attrition by clearly communicating data collection requirements and the importance of continued participation. Students and mentors will also receive an incentive for completing surveys (p. e35), which will likely increase response rates.

The application includes a power calculation for the minimum detectable effect size (p. e35 and e72).

School administrative records will be used to assess students' school attendance and academic performance, and are considered to be face valid and reliable. Additionally, students and mentors will report on a variety of standardized assessments which are also valid and reliable (p. e69-70).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear whether the study will meet WWC standards with or without reservations, since the applicants do not discuss how they will handle missing data, if it occurs, and information on the reliability of the BASC-3 is not provided in the application (p. e69).

Sub

The applicants do not include information on whether they will allow joiners to the intervention if a student drops out from the intervention.

Reader's Score: 18

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 evaluators and project leadership plan to meet monthly throughout the project. They propose 3 phases of their project, and will collect a variety of data during each phase to inform and improve the intervention. These data include focus groups and surveys on effectively implementing and evaluating the intervention. The applicant plans to conduct a pilot study and recommend final program improvements. They will also monitor fidelity of implementation so that the program is delivered consistently and assess the strength of the relationship between students and their mentor every 6 months, since this is hypothesized to be the driver of the intervention effects. Data will be used to adjust project activities and staff functioning (p. e37).

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:

Key project components are clearly articulated in the logic model (p. e50).

Mediators are clearly articulated in the logic model (p. e50).

Outcomes are clearly articulated in the logic model (p. e50).

Measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation are listed as performance measures on pages e101-103. The applicants also plan to finalize their fidelity rubric, as well as establish measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation for all components listed in the logic model (p. e37).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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