

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/19/2025 08:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (S411B250088)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	65
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Returning Educ to States	10	10
Sub Total	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Expanding Educ Choice	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	115	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Midphase - 6: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (S411B250088)

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:

Reader's Score: 15

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project introduces an innovative approach, such as a modification of an evidence-based project component to serve different populations, an extension of an existing evidence-based project component, a unique composition of various project components to explore combined effects, or development of an emerging project component that needs further testing.

Strengths:

The proposed project introduces a highly innovative approach to improving literacy for students in grades 3–8 by integrating the We the People civics curriculum with evidence-based reading instruction (e12). The design scaffolds students' development of literacy skills through high-quality, nonfiction text drawn from civics content, aligning disciplinary literacy with the science of reading. The proposal directly responds to the U.S. Department of Education's recent emphasis on civic education and to the Delaware Department of Education's declaration of a statewide literacy emergency, positioning this work as both timely and responsive to urgent state and national needs. The project model includes high-impact tutoring and teacher coaching delivered by literacy specialists, providing intensive, research-based support for both student learning and teacher practice (e13).

Importantly, the applicant has solicited participation from a wide range of schools across the state, including rural, urban, traditional public, and charter schools, ensuring that the model will serve a diverse student population representing varied educational settings and needs. The initiative will launch in 20 schools statewide and has received expressions of interest from 20 additional states for later phases (beginning on e80), expanding the project's potential reach and impact. A projected total of 12,320 students will benefit directly from the program during the grant period.

The proposed project represents a well-designed extension of an existing, evidence-based model. The applicant draws directly from the We the People civics program, which has previously demonstrated positive outcomes for students' civic knowledge and literacy-related skills. The proposal references the Evaluation of the James Madison Legacy Project (Owen, 2018) (e183), a rigorous study that found significant gains in students' civics and history content knowledge and included vocabulary development as a key literacy outcome within the We the People framework. Building on these findings, the current project expands the model's evidence base by explicitly integrating structured literacy practices—such as decoding, fluency, and comprehension support—into the existing civics curriculum. This approach transforms a proven civics education program into a broader literacy development initiative, effectively extending prior evidence to a new instructional purpose and a wider population of grades 3–8 students.

Overall, this proposal demonstrates a clear and credible extension of a validated instructional model, grounded in existing research and positioned to generate valuable new evidence about the intersection of literacy and civic education.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

- 1. The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to effectively scale the proposed project for recipients, community members and partners. In determining the applicant's strategy to effectively scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 35

Sub

- 1. (1) The extent to which there is unmet demand for broader implementation of the project that is aligned with the proposed level of scale.**

Strengths:

The proposal provides compelling evidence of unmet demand for improved literacy instruction in Delaware and beyond. Recent statewide performance data show that 45 percent of fourth graders scored below basic and 26 percent at basic on the 2024 NAEP Reading Assessment, with 41 percent of eighth graders scoring below basic—placing Delaware third lowest in the nation (e14). In response, the Governor has declared a literacy emergency, underscoring the urgent need for scalable, evidence-based solutions.

The applicant also documents substantial external demand for broader implementation of the proposed project. Multiple states and organizations have submitted letters of support, reflecting strong national interest in the program's potential to integrate civics and literacy instruction. For example, the State Coordinator for Arkansas Project Citizen offers to assist with implementation (e86), the State Coordinator for Florida's Department of Social Services offers to host training in that state (e89), and the Executive Director of the Judiciary History Center in Hawaii expresses a formal commitment to collaboration (e91). These and other endorsements demonstrate cross-state enthusiasm for replication and scalability.

Overall, the proposal presents persuasive evidence of both urgent need and genuine demand for broader implementation. The alignment between the project's scale, demonstrated interest from multiple states, and the scope of the literacy challenge positions this project as exceptionally well-suited to meet the criterion for unmet demand.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The project is led by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), which brings substantial organizational capacity and experience managing large-scale, statewide initiatives. Key activities are clearly defined and logically sequenced to support successful implementation. For example, Activity 1: Resource Development (e19) includes producing a comprehensive toolkit to guide explicit, structured literacy instruction within the We the People civics curriculum. Lesson materials are designed to scaffold students' phonological awareness, decoding, oral language,

Sub

vocabulary, and argument writing, and are fully aligned with state standards in civics and history (e19). Subsequent activities include piloting the program, implementing a “train-the-trainer” model, and delivering high-quality professional learning for educators, creating a coherent plan from development to scale.

The applicant provides a detailed management chart outlining major milestones, responsible parties, and timelines for each phase of the project. For example, between August 2026 and June 2027, 20 teachers will pilot the instructional materials with at least 500 students (e29). In each of the years 2026–27, 2027–28, and 2028–29, approximately 320 students will receive high-dosage tutoring to advance reading skills, led by contracted tutoring providers and overseen by the DDOE (e30). The project’s stated goals—to innovate curricular materials, expand access to high-quality professional learning, and increase high-need students’ attainment of literacy standards—reflect an appropriate balance between program development, student achievement, and long-term sustainability. The proposed budget is well developed and feasible. The Center for Civic Education provides a verified in-kind match of \$561,656.37 contributed through state and local education agencies as the program expands (e137). The budget includes detailed expenditures for personnel and fringe, travel, supplies, contractual services, and indirect costs, with the largest share allocated to contractual services covering the work of multiple implementation partners. Itemized budgets from the DDOE, the Delaware Center for Civics Education at the University of Delaware, the Center for Civic Education, and Georgetown University’s Civic Education Research Lab demonstrate careful fiscal planning and a strong understanding of partner responsibilities. These details lend confidence that the project is financially sound, well-coordinated, and likely to be conducted on time and within budget.

Overall, the management plan is clearly articulated, feasible, and supported by a transparent and realistic budget. The combination of defined responsibilities, detailed milestones, and documented cost-sharing demonstrates strong capacity for successful implementation.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

3. (3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

Strengths:

The project brings together a strong group of partners, each with a clear and relevant role in supporting the work. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) will lead the project (e12), providing overall management, oversight of tutoring implementation, and alignment with the state’s literacy priorities. The Delaware Center for Civics Education at the University of Delaware (e27) will guide curriculum development and help align instructional materials to state standards and the We the People framework (e12). The Center for Civic Education, which developed We the People, will provide program expertise, training resources, and support for scaling and sustainability. Georgetown University’s Civic Education Research Lab will serve as the external evaluator, responsible for data collection, analysis, and reporting on project outcomes and scalability (e32).

The commitment of these partners is well documented. The Center for Civic Education has pledged a verified in-kind match of \$561,656.37 through state and local education agencies to support expansion (e137). Each partner’s role and budget are clearly detailed in the proposal, showing that responsibilities are well coordinated and resources are in place to carry out the work. The inclusion of higher education partners adds credibility to the research and curriculum components, while the collaboration with DDOE ensures strong leadership and sustainability within the state.

The project demonstrates a high level of partner alignment and commitment. Each organization brings expertise that directly supports project goals, and the combination of program, research, and state leadership creates a solid foundation for success.

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Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. (4) The quality of the plan to deliver project services more efficiently at scale and maintain effectiveness.

Strengths:

The proposal outlines a practical and sustainable plan for scaling the project while maintaining quality. The Delaware Department of Education will leverage its existing statewide communications and professional learning networks to share resources and coordinate implementation efficiently (e34). A “train-the-trainer” approach will build capacity by preparing mentors and teacher leaders to train others, allowing the program to grow without increasing costs over time. The applicant also plans to partner with other state organizations to adapt the program to fit local contexts, ensuring that each state can implement the model effectively within its own systems (e34).

Teachers who participate in the project will become part of an ongoing professional learning network within their state, fostering collaboration, continued research, and shared resource development (e35). This network structure supports long-term sustainability by embedding the program’s practices and materials into local professional communities rather than relying solely on external support.

The plan demonstrates a thoughtful approach to scale and sustainability. By combining existing infrastructure, local adaptation, and capacity-building strategies, the applicant presents a clear path to delivering services efficiently and maintaining effectiveness as the program grows.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

5. (5) The quality of the mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information and resources on its project to support further development, adaptation, or replication by other entities to implement project components in additional settings or with other populations.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear and practical plan for broad dissemination of project resources and results. All materials, reports, and toolkits will be made publicly available through the websites of each major partner, ensuring easy access for state education agencies, practitioners, and researchers nationwide (e36). The toolkit will include a “How to Use This Toolkit” section to support independent implementation and adaptation by educators in any setting. Partners will also conduct direct outreach through professional networks, conferences, and meetings, and share materials through the Schoology learning management system to expand reach among teachers and school leaders (e36).

The dissemination plan is supported by measurable performance targets, including at least ten presentations at state and national conferences, participation of 100 education leaders in national research dissemination activities, and publication of a final evaluation report to facilitate replication of the model (e169). These actions demonstrate a strong commitment to sharing results and supporting other entities in adapting the program to different contexts. Overall, the plan provides a solid framework for broad, accessible dissemination. By combining open access, professional outreach, and structured performance goals, the applicant presents an effective strategy to encourage further development and replication of the project nationwide.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

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: 15

Sub

- 1. (1) The quality of the logic model or other conceptual framework underlying the proposed project, including how inputs are related to outcomes.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a reasonably clear conceptual framework for how the project's activities connect to its intended outcomes (e37). The applicant describes how evidence-based literacy instruction, civics content, and tutoring supports are expected to improve reading outcomes and civic understanding (e18–e19). The plan follows a logical progression—from developing instructional resources and providing professional learning to implementing classroom practices and measuring student growth—showing a consistent chain of reasoning.

The narrative conveys an underlying logic: that equipping teachers with research-aligned materials and support will lead to stronger instruction, improved student engagement, and measurable literacy gains. This coherence provides a useful conceptual foundation, even in the absence of a formal logic model.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include the logic model in the submission (e134). As a result, the relationships among specific inputs, activities, and outcomes cannot be visually verified or fully assessed for clarity or measurement alignment (e134).

Reader's Score: 12

- 2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program.**

Strengths:

The applicant presents clear goals and measurable objectives aligned with the purpose of the EIR program (e37-e40). The proposal includes a performance measure directly tied to student achievement—an expected 10% improvement in students' ELA skills, discipline vocabulary, and civic literacy competencies during Years 1–2 (e169). The curriculum outline and standards alignment (e117) further clarify the academic skills the project intends to address, and the goals and objectives table (e38) provides additional structure. For example, under Goal 3, the project aims to increase high-need students' attainment of state literacy standards. A related outcome specifies that 50% of students participating in at least 10 weeks of high-impact tutoring will improve their reading scores by at least three months. These targets are measurable and appropriate for the project's scope and duration.

The goals and outcomes are well aligned with EIR priorities and offer measurable targets tied to literacy achievement.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The goals and measures lack sufficient detail about how progress will be assessed for teachers and students (e37–e40, e169). The proposal does not clearly describe how this data will be collected or validated (e45). The pre/post survey approach lacks methodological detail, such as sample size, administration schedule, or scoring criteria. Similarly, the proposal does not specify which literacy assessments will be used, when testing will occur, or whether measurement protocols will vary across schools or districts. These omissions make it difficult to determine the reliability of the performance data or to understand how observed changes in teacher practice will directly translate into improved student outcomes.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, 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 effectiveness of the project on relevant outcomes that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations, as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks.**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

3. **(3) The quality of the evaluation plan for measuring fidelity of implementation, including thresholds for acceptable implementation, to inform how implementation is associated with outcomes.**

Sub

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

4. (4) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including valid and reliable information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Returning Education to the States (up to 10 points).

Project or proposals that will be carried out by one or more of the following entities:

- (a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49))
- (b) An Indian Tribe (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(e)), Tribal organization (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(l)), or Tribal educational agency (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7452(b)(3))
- (c) Consortia of the entities identified under this priority.

Strengths:

The project is led by the Delaware Department of Education, a state education agency, which fully meets this priority. Having the state in the lead brings strong organizational capacity, direct access to schools across Delaware, and the ability to align this work with statewide literacy and civics initiatives already underway.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Expanding Education Choice (High-Impact Tutoring) (up to 5 points).

Projects or proposals that will expand access to education services that accelerate learning such as high-impact tutoring.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to review the evidence related to education services that accelerate learning, including high-impact tutoring, and to cite the highest-level of evidence supporting their response to the competitive preference priority in their application.

Strengths:

The project directly supports this priority by expanding access to education services that accelerate learning. It includes a high-impact tutoring model led by trained literacy specialists, providing targeted support to students who are below grade level in reading. The tutoring approach is aligned with the science of reading and is integrated into core civics and history instruction, giving students multiple, meaningful opportunities to build literacy skills while engaging with academic content. The program also broadens access to high-quality instructional materials and professional learning for teachers, helping schools implement evidence-based reading practices with fidelity.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 11/19/2025 08:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/20/2025 01:35 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (S411B250088)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	34
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	60
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Returning Educ to States	10	10
Sub Total	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Expanding Educ Choice	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	115	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Midphase - 6: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (S411B250088)

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:

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project introduces an innovative approach, such as a modification of an evidence-based project component to serve different populations, an extension of an existing evidence-based project component, a unique composition of various project components to explore combined effects, or development of an emerging project component that needs further testing.

Strengths:

The applicant's proposed deployment centered on social studies content and curricular strategies effectively demonstrates an innovative approach to literacy intervention (e15-17). In many cases, these types of projects merely position social studies as additional time/space to teach literacy concepts with different content, which misses a good opportunity to acquire and apply the skills inherent in social studies learning. As the applicant successfully argues, these social studies skills, such as critical thinking and evidence-based writing, indirectly reinforce literacy skills with successful literacy outcomes (e17-18). The applicant notes successful outcomes in a smaller scale project (e183), and a meta-analysis of the partners' prior success in implementing social studies curriculum(e18) in over "60 empirical research studies." The proposed intervention is scaling previously successful EIR projects for secondary students to grades 3-8, which is sufficient modification to meet this criterion (e19).

Weaknesses:

The interdisciplinary curricular approach is not, in and of itself, a particularly innovative concept (e12-13) – they have been implemented in a wide variety of settings for decades (see, e.g., New Tech Network or various project-based learning models).

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to effectively scale the proposed project for recipients, community members and partners. In determining the applicant's strategy to effectively scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

- 1. (1) The extent to which there is unmet demand for broader implementation of the project that is aligned with the proposed level of scale.**

Strengths:

The applicant has clearly defined a need for additional literacy intervention, noting Delaware scored 3rd lowest amongst states on 4th grade reading proficiency (e14). The applicant notes similarly low scores on U.S. History state assessments (e17). The demand for this type of intervention comes on the heels of the state response to literacy concerns, where state legislation now requires science of reading based strategies for early literacy intervention (e23). This project thus helps support a instructional continuum to reinforce early literacy efforts in Delaware. The applicant includes a wide variety of letters of support (e80-116) from educational nonprofits, institutions of higher education, and policy centers. Each letter states a commitment to implementing or replicating the proposed project along with a positive comment of successful work with the applicant in the past. This clearly demonstrates both a broad, multi-state network of support for the proposed program, and the ability of the applicant to recruit entities to participate in the treatment group.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide quantifiable data to support the claim that their previous efforts on similar projects have resulted in "significant demand," such as a survey indicating that participating teachers would like to continue the program (e24).

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

The applicant notes a robust development and continuous improvement cycle (e19-22), that includes dedicated time to adapt existing materials to lower grade levels, a pilot year, and teacher training. This will allow the project to evolve over time and adapt to the actual progress being made. The applicant proposes to start with a pilot of 20 teachers and expands to 50 teachers and smaller cohorts of 20 teachers in 4 additional states (e25). At the end of the grant period, the fully scaled program will impact 360 teachers and over 10,000 students. This is a reasonable scale-up for this type of program (e26). The applicant provides clear roles and responsibilities for key staff and project partners (e27-29). For example, it is important to note in a multi-state project that constituent state education agencies are responsible for recruiting treatment districts and teachers for the project, as they are more familiar with their audience.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

- 3. (3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

Strengths:

The applicant includes a wide variety of letters of support from partners demonstrating clear commitments from project partners and targeted stakeholders (e94-110). Many of the partners have previous experience with the We the People curriculum that is proposed to be scaled for this project, which increases the likelihood partners will

Sub

implement the intervention with fidelity. For example, the College of Education at the University of Wyoming has committed to disseminate project findings and materials through its existing professional learning network where it already supports teachers in implementing the proposed curriculum (e116). Similarly, the Michigan Center for Civic Education indicated a willingness to host project activities and implement the proposed curriculum throughout the annual cycle of the project (e105).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. (4) The quality of the plan to deliver project services more efficiently at scale and maintain effectiveness.

Strengths:

With such a wide-ranging (geographically and managerially) and well-established network, the applicant successfully shows that they are capable of implementing the proposed project effectively at scale. The applicant has noted because there are a number of statewide entities participating in this project, broad disseminations of project materials will be a relatively accessible project activity (e36-37). This network is demonstrated in the large number of letters of support included by the applicant (e80-116), which include a wide variety of activities that will support the project in being implemented at scale, from hosting activities, to training teachers, and data collection. In addition, the applicant has noted implementing their project utilizing a trainer of trainer model (e20-21), which will not only allow the project to be scaled more efficiently, but increase the likelihood that the project will be able to be sustained after the treatment period and post-grant.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

5. (5) The quality of the mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information and resources on its project to support further development, adaptation, or replication by other entities to implement project components in additional settings or with other populations.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a robust dissemination plan supported by a wide network of partners and supporters that will allow for many other entities to adapt or replicate the proposed project. They have gathered widespread commitment to disseminate materials to a number of state education agencies and statewide social studies / civics education providers, who have offered commitments to deploy or make available project resources to districts, teachers, and other stakeholders (e94-105). This is an usually large amount of support for a curricular intervention, which suggests its prior iteration for high school students was both positively received and resulted in improved student outcomes, which bodes well for the proposed projects. Additionally, the applicant has noted because there are a number of statewide entities participating in this project, broad disseminations of project materials will be a relatively accessible project activity (e36-37).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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: 13

- Sub
1. (1) The quality of the logic model or other conceptual framework underlying the proposed project, including how inputs are related to outcomes.

Strengths:

The applicant's underlying conceptual framework is largely successful in linking inputs to relevant outcomes (e37-38), illustrating how intentional, well-designed professional learning leads to positive student outcomes. Providing curriculum materials and support to teachers via professional learning aligned to literacy best practices very naturally leads to the proposed improved literacy outcomes. Additionally, utilizing social studies content to reinforce literacy learning is an effective way to ensure that social studies learning does not suffer at the expense of additional literacy instruction. In addition, it is important that the applicant notes outcomes attached to both teacher effectiveness and student outcomes (e39-40), which will allow for a more holistic evaluation of project outcomes. For example, the applicant notes a goal that at least 50% of teachers demonstrate a "statistically significant" increase in knowledge of literacy strategies, which should directly correlate to the student goal of a 20% or more gain on a standards-based reading, writing, and civics literacy assessment.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include a logic model in the referenced appendix, so this criterion was more difficult to assess (e37, 134).

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, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program.

Strengths:

The applicant provides some specific goals and outcomes for the project for teachers and students (e37-40). For example, 60% of teachers demonstrating improved instructional efficiency and students demonstrating at least a 20% improvement on a standards-based literacy / civics test both provide specific targets by which to measure project progress.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how the applicant will measure specific outcomes for teachers (e44-45). For example, the applicant was missing specific criteria for evaluating outcome such as what an "increase of target literacy strategies means" (e39). Though the applicant describes a standard pre/post test format for teacher competencies, these competencies are not described in a way that is either specific or measurable (e45).

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, 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 effectiveness of the project on relevant outcomes that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations, as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The quality of the evaluation plan for measuring fidelity of implementation, including thresholds for acceptable implementation, to inform how implementation is associated with outcomes.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

4. (4) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including valid and reliable information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

Strengths:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Returning Education to the States (up to 10 points).

Project or proposals that will be carried out by one or more of the following entities:

(a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49))

(b) An Indian Tribe (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(e)), Tribal organization (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(l)), or Tribal educational agency (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7452(b)(3))

(c) Consortia of the entities identified under this priority.

Strengths:

The applicant is a state education agency that will be responsible for implementing the proposed project and thus fulfills the requirements of this CPP.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Expanding Education Choice (High-Impact Tutoring) (up to 5 points).

Projects or proposals that will expand access to education services that accelerate learning such as high-impact tutoring.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to review the evidence related to education services that accelerate learning, including high-impact tutoring, and to cite the highest-level of evidence supporting their response to the competitive preference priority in their application.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear argument that their proposed project will increase access to interventions that accelerate learning using evidence-based practices. They propose implementing a system that will expand access to their existing network of civic education (e183), and note this program has already resulted in improved literacy and social studies outcomes for participating students and teachers. As the proposed project is an updated iteration of this project, it is more likely to produce similar results. In addition, the proposed curriculum blends evidence-based science of reading strategies with social studies content (e12-13), and seeks to expand these instructional strategies to its constituent organizations in other states, which will significantly expand access to the previously successful strategies.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/20/2025 01:35 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/19/2025 10:40 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (S411B250088)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	21
Sub Total	100	21
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Returning Educ to States	10	0
Sub Total	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Expanding Educ Choice	5	0
Sub Total	5	0
Total	115	21

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Midphase - 6: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (S411B250088)

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:

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project introduces an innovative approach, such as a modification of an evidence-based project component to serve different populations, an extension of an existing evidence-based project component, a unique composition of various project components to explore combined effects, or development of an emerging project component that needs further testing.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to effectively scale the proposed project for recipients, community members and partners. In determining the applicant's strategy to effectively scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which there is unmet demand for broader implementation of the project that is aligned with the proposed level of scale.

Strengths:

N/A

Sub

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

2. (2) The feasibility of the management plan to achieve project objectives and goals 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 relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

4. (4) The quality of the plan to deliver project services more efficiently at scale and maintain effectiveness.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

5. (5) The quality of the mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information and resources on its project to support further development, adaptation, or replication by other entities to implement project components in additional settings or with other populations.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Sub

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 quality of the logic model or other conceptual framework underlying the proposed project, including how inputs are related to outcomes.

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, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program.

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 or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 21

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the effectiveness of the project on relevant outcomes that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations, as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks.

Sub

Strengths:

The evaluation plan explicitly explains that the Director of CERL at Georgetown University will lead the independent evaluation team (e28, e42).

The core evaluation employs multi-site, school-level RCTs, which are the gold standard for causal inference and meet WWC standards without reservations. The approach is described as an iterative research plan that uses a mixed-method convergent design integrating quantitative and qualitative data (e41-42).

The pilot study allows for refinement of measures, instruments and procedures, enhancing the feasibility and fidelity of the full-scale RCT (e42).

Schools are the unit of randomization, which is appropriate given the intervention's school-wide implementation, supporting validity and reducing contamination risk (e43).

The evaluation design indicates 160 schools (80 for intervention and 80 non-control) in multiple states and 4,000 students (2,000 students per intervention and control schools) over two years (e44) demonstrating a strong sample size.

The plan includes estimation of Complier Average Causal Effects (CACE), a WWC-endorsed method for addressing treatment noncompliance. The use of CACE in the evaluation plan signals methodological rigor and a commitment to producing trustworthy evidence (e44).

Student assessments include established instruments (e.g., Adolescent Assessment of Literacy) with strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84-.93$) and civic literacy measures are drawn from prior validated studies, and essay rubrics are clearly defined across four analytic dimensions (e45-46).

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan refers to the Logic Model in Appendix G, which could not be found as one of the appendix attachments to support and enhance clarity and consistency of the design (e37, e40, e134).

The specifics of analytic techniques (e.g., handling clustering, missing data) are underdeveloped in the evaluation design plan (e42-47).

That evaluation design does not explicitly state the minimum detect effect size, as it only references an assumed effect size ($\delta .25$) and power (1.0) It does not state the smallest effect size the study is powered to detect (e41-42, e142). Overall, the evaluation plan does not provide sufficient information to verify whether the study is sensitive enough to detect meaningful impacts. Without a clearly stated minimum detectable effect size (MDES), it is difficult to determine the precision and adequacy of the proposed sample and design.

The plan does not address attrition thresholds (e46), as it only includes adherence thresholds related to program delivery and omits acceptable levels of overall and differential attrition between treatment and control groups. (e48-49).

The evaluation plan does not clearly explain how changes in teacher practice will be analytically linked to student outcomes, which weakens the causal connection between professional development and student impact. It also lacks subgroup or moderation analyses that could uncover important differences in effectiveness by grade level, subject area, or teacher experience. The plan does not detail how attrition will be addressed analytically or how instructional fidelity will be measured beyond participation rates for teachers (e41, e44, e47, e142).

Sub

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The theory of change explicitly positions the intervention as adaptable across disciplines (e.g., STEM) and grade levels, which supports scalability and contextual flexibility (e47).

Involving ELA and multi-subject-certified teachers enhances the transferability of the model to varied instructional settings and school types (e47).

The inclusion of educator toolkits designed for adaptation strengthens the case for replication and customization in new contexts (e38-39, e47, e49).

The evaluator's role in documenting and sharing effective strategies during implementation reflects a design-based research approach, which is well-suited for iterative refinement and scaling (e42, e47, e50).

The plan to conduct a systematic cost-effectiveness study using established methods (Levin et al., 2021), including tracking costs across settings and calculating return on investment, adds practical value for decision-makers by enhancing feasibility analysis for scale-up and broader adoption (e47-48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were detected.

Reader's Score: 5

3. (3) The quality of the evaluation plan for measuring fidelity of implementation, including thresholds for acceptable implementation, to inform how implementation is associated with outcomes.

Strengths:

Adherence, exposure, and quality are well-defined using established implementation science frameworks (Weiss, Bloom, & Brock; Gage et al.), and paired with clearly articulated thresholds across multiple fidelity indicators, including teacher retention (85%), professional learning completion (90%), curriculum delivery (90%), student participation (50%), summer institute delivery (95%), curriculum unit completion (90%), and positive teacher feedback (80%) to provide meaningful benchmarks for interpreting fidelity and identifying potential threats to internal validity (e48-49).

The evaluation plan combines quantitative (analytics, surveys) and qualitative (observations, interviews) data, allowing for triangulation and richer insights into implementation fidelity. Further, observations and interviews with multiple stakeholders (teachers, coordinators, administrators) enhance contextual understanding (e48-49).

Fidelity is assessed at multiple time points, such as after the summer institute and curriculum delivery, enabling course correction and responsive program management, while planned remediation strategies reflect a strong commitment to maintaining implementation integrity (e48-49).

Weaknesses:

Without the logic model in Appendix G, it's unclear whether the fidelity indicators align with the program's core components or theory of change. The absence of this framework limits transparency around how implementation is expected to influence outcomes. It also weakens the justification for the selected thresholds and reduces coherence

Sub

across the evaluation design (e48, e134).

Reader's Score: 4

4. (4) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including valid and reliable information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

Strengths:

The use of a design-based implementation research (DBIR) model fosters iterative learning, problem-solving, and continuous improvement, while collaboration among EVALUATOR, state coordinators, and the Center provides multi-level oversight that enhances both the validity and practical relevance of the evaluation and strengthens the reliability of implementation and assessment processes (e19, e49-50).

All project deliverables, instruments, and assessments will be publicly accessible through the CERL website and publications, supporting transparency and replication, while the inclusion of reliability and validity checks for study instruments enhances the credibility and rigor of the findings (e42, e50).

De-identified data will be stored in the ICPSR DataLumos archive, enabling future researchers to conduct replication studies or customized analyses, reflecting a strong commitment to open data that enhances the project's contribution to the broader research community (e.50).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were detected.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Returning Education to the States (up to 10 points).

Project or proposals that will be carried out by one or more of the following entities:

- (a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49))
- (b) An Indian Tribe (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(e)), Tribal organization (as defined in 25 U.S.C. 5304(l)), or Tribal educational agency (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7452(b)(3))
- (c) Consortia of the entities identified under this priority.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Expanding Education Choice (High-Impact Tutoring) (up to 5 points).

Projects or proposals that will expand access to education services that accelerate learning such as high-impact tutoring.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to review the evidence related to education services that accelerate learning, including high-impact tutoring, and to cite the highest-level of evidence supporting their response to the competitive preference priority in their application.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/19/2025 10:40 PM