

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/24/2025 03:55 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (S411B250097)

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	35
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	20
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	70
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Returning Educ to States	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Expanding Educ Choice	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Total</b>	115	85

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Midphase - 9: 84.411B

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (S411B250097)

## 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, Strengthening State Infrastructure for High-Impact Tutoring: Scaling Evidence-Based Literacy Support Through Cognitive Science (Tutor-CogSci), will serve 9,000 high-need students in second and third grades (p. e8, pp. e12-e18). High-need students who will participate in the project were identified as those who scored below 85% on a state reading test (p. e8). The narrative thoroughly described the innovative approach that has the primary goal to expand access to high-impact tutoring statewide by connecting tutors and educators to "cognitive science" (p. e12).

The project will scale the Tutor-CogSci capacity-building model implemented in the state of Indiana and will integrate high-impact tutoring and workforce development (p. e8). A well-defined description of project activities will support and guide project implementation. For example, activities include providing professional expert training to college, high school students, and instructional aides to provide intensive high-impact tutoring during the school day rather than during out-of-school times (pp. e12-e14).

A well-defined summary described the innovative project activities. The project will integrate high-impact tutoring with workforce development through interdisciplinary learning design teams. The teams will connect "cognitive scientists," teacher educators, schools, and community partners to implement project activities (pp. e12-e14). By embedding the above service delivery techniques (i.e., high-impact tutoring), continuous improvement activities, and research within implementation, the proposed project will be able to provide critical evidence and strengthen the capacity of the applicant to meet established state reading goals.

#### Weaknesses:

None

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:

A succinct summary identified the extent of the unmet demand for expansion of the project aligned with the level of scale. As the success of the project, Tutor-CogSci, has been publicly shared, the demand for services has expanded beyond the applicant's ability to efficiently provide services. The applicant has, therefore, prioritized-high need schools where test results are below average for expansion services (p. e18). This strategy will address the demand for broader implementation as schools request new and expanded services (p. e18).

#### Weaknesses:

None

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:

A well-defined and highly detailed management plan supported the capability of the applicant and partners to successfully achieve project objectives and goals. The comprehensive and well-structured plan identified expertise, roles, responsibilities, milestones, and communication systems that will facilitate achievement of project goals on time and within budget (pp. e8-e9, pp. e18-e21).

For example, the applicant will provide state-level leadership, supported by the university lead who will provide day-to-day project oversight. The well-qualified research partner will conduct an independent evaluation to design and conduct the impact and cost studies to meet WWC standards (pp. e8-e9, e21). Roles and responsibilities were also identified for regional hubs, the learning design team, and school district and community partners. The highly qualified project partners will provide comprehensive and direct service delivery to expertly support project implementation to facilitate successful outcomes (pp. e8-e9, e21).

The well-developed management plan also identified clear lines of authority, measurements, and milestones that will support project implementation (pp. e23-e26). For example, goals for year 0.5-1.5 include the "launch of design teams in 10 new Cohort 1 treatment schools (plus 10 matched controls receiving light-touch support)" (p. e24).

The management plan also included the curriculum vitae or biographical sketch that identified relevant and expert qualifications of key project personnel. The well-developed description also documented the experience, expertise and responsibilities of key personnel that will facilitate successful project implementation (pp. e60-e113). For example, the project director has more than twenty years of experience as a curriculum and leadership specialist and has provided effective and successful leadership for statewide literacy initiatives that included coordination with

**Sub**

the current regional university hubs (p. e60).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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 provided a well-defined and exhaustive description of the project partners. The description included detailed letters of support that documented the qualifications, shared perspectives, and commitment of each partner for successful project implementation and outcomes (pp. e27-e29). Significant and highly competent partners included the lead applicant (a state education agency), a university implementation lead, and a universally recognized research lead. The highly qualified project partners will provide exceptional leadership to implement the initiative and facilitate successful outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The project's methodology to deliver quality project services at scale is clearly detailed and highly rigorous. Well-defined strategies will support the ability of the applicant to scale the project while efficiently and successfully maintaining effectiveness. For example, innovative strategies include "workforce development," which involves training college students as instructional aides, a two-tiered model that focuses intensive tutoring where it is most needed, and placement of a design-team leader to coordinate the literacy program within each school (pp. e29-e31).

The innovative strategies will also support the maintenance of quality service delivery at scale while maintaining effectiveness. The project university leader will provide professional development and management supervision for resource hubs during the initial years of Tutor-CogSci. As the schools become more expert in implementing the project approach, leadership will be strategically and gradually transferred to the local design teams, who will assume more responsibility for sustaining implementation.

An outstanding and impressive strategy includes the "Hub-and-Spoke Infrastructure for Cost-Effective Scale" (p. e29). The hubs are statewide coordinated resources located at partner universities (p. e29-e30). They will serve as connections to design teams and are comprised of leaders from local schools and community organizations. The resource centers will also provide schools with ongoing training, information regarding data systems, and open-access to materials (p. e29). The comprehensive approach to deliver services more efficiently and at scale will also support project fidelity, quality, and continuous improvement of the individual tutoring program for each target school (pp. e29-e31).

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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 provided a highly detailed description and comprehensive summary of specifically designed mechanisms to effectively disseminate project outcomes and resources. Dissemination is one of the primary purposes of the proposed project. High quality strategies include a statewide campaign that will build awareness and demand for the resource hub. The state learning lab has more than 100,000 subscribed educators and will significantly expand access to information on project outcomes. Signature literacy events will also support expansion of knowledge for project resources. For example, the university partner will host and expand an annual "Unlocking Literacy Symposium" (p. e32). Collaborations with regional partners will expand the symposium and replication opportunities in additional settings (p. e32).

Additional comprehensive strategies to facilitate replication include dissemination of project results through national practitioner and research networks. Strategies to share relevant project information also include making presentations at conferences and submitting manuscripts to top journals and practitioner events (p. e32-e33).

Important to further development, adaptation, and replication is the sharing of information to advocate for policy support and change. The applicant will co-lead targeted outreach strategies that will impact policy dissemination. Strategies include legislative briefings, roundtables, and contributions to national education networks (p. e33).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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: 20**

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 two logic models expertly identified the implementation strategies that will support successful project outcomes. The logic model for project approach as a whole was accompanied by a graphic that identified "sound partners as originally designed" (pp. e72-e73). Each model explicitly described the relationship between inputs and outcomes

**Sub**

(pp. e34-e35, p. e72). The models identified well-defined and relevant inputs, activities, outputs, and short-term and long-term outcomes that will facilitate successful project implementation (pp. e34, p. e72).

Significant inputs include a “program structure that is aligned with design principles for effective tutoring” and strategies and resources for identifying and training high-quality tutors (p. e72). Activities to support the output of professionally trained tutors include developing ads and partnerships with colleges and community programs and selecting tutors “whose values align with public service motivation and an ethic of care” (p. e27). As a result, a long-term outcome is that “tutors develop a lasting appreciation of the role of science in educational decision making” (p. e72). The highly defined logic model will guide project implementation and facilitate ongoing monitoring of progress.

A well-developed summary described the process to be implemented that will connect the project tutors to cognitive science. The innovative project approach seamlessly integrates established evidence-based practices for effective tutoring with strategies that can be adapted to community and participant demographics. The process will facilitate expanding the proposed high-impact model and maintain quality and relevance (p. e34, p. e72).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 15**

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 application identified four project goals with clearly defined specific, measurable, and achievable objectives aligned with the purpose of the project (pp. e35-e36). The well-defined objectives will facilitate monitoring of activities to determine project progress. Each goal was further defined by supportive objectives that will enhance ongoing measurement of project activities. For example, goal three—to foster continuous improvement and cost efficiency through data use—was supported by objective 3.1—use program data to evaluate and improve program quality and cost (p. e36).

Detailed measurable outcomes further defined each project goal and will facilitate effective monitoring of project activities. For example, outcomes for objective 3.1 identified highly specific measurement strategies (i.e., 85% of tutors complete their end of semester feedback survey; 85% of tutors complete their mid-semester progress reports) (p. e36).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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:**

A succinct summary documented the project leadership by a state educational agency. The Indiana Department of Education will serve as the leading agency to facilitate leadership for the proposed project. The agency will facilitate all activities to achieve the project's overall goal to "expand access to evidence-based literacy tutoring for high-need students while strengthening the state's educator pipeline" (p. e9, p. e12, pp. e110-e113).

The applicant will partner with a consortia of highly competent institutions of higher learning and research organizations to accomplish project outcomes. Consortia partners include the University of Notre Dame, West Ed, and South Bend Community School Corporation (pp. e8-e9, p. e12).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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 provided specific details of the project to expand access to education services that accelerate learning. Project activities are designed to expand the network of university-trained tutors, aides, and parents who are skilled in the science of reading. Expanding the number of professionally trained reading experts will result in the accompanying expansion of education services for high-need students.

The initiative incorporates support for students into the school day (rather than out-of-school time activities) through high-impact tutoring and literacy support (pp. e8-e9, p. e12). The knowledge gained by this study may also provide replicable models to increase the quality, effectiveness, and availability of high impact tutoring and evidence-based literacy supports to increase elementary literacy rates (p. e12).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 11/24/2025 03:55 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/24/2025 03:55 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Indiana Department of Education (S411B250097)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	15
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	35
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	20
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	70
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Returning Educ to States	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Expanding Educ Choice	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Total</b>	115	85

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Midphase - 9: 84.411B

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (S411B250097)

## 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 innovative strategy brought forward by the applicant is Tutor-CogiSci. This program focuses on expanding evidence-based literacy tutoring for high-needs second and third grade students in schools with an IREAD pass rate of below 85% while concurrently addressing the teacher pipeline. Program components include building capacity of tutor recruitment and training and developing a sustainable system for continuous improvement. Thus, workforce development will be integrated with high-impact tutoring in interdisciplinary design teams involving cognitive scientists, teachers, schools and partners (p. e8).

#### Weaknesses:

No weakness.

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.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant presented robust evidence regarding demand for the Tutor-CogiSci program. The state has adopted a Science-of-Reading policy and currently there are 361 schools that meet criteria for the program. The school sites need at least 40 third grade students. The goal is to serve 9,000 high-need students. Included in this number are 2,000 very high-need students who will receive tutoring during the school day (pp. e8-e9; p. e30).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**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 applicant's sound management plan is based on established communication pathways. The three main partners, Indiana Department of Education, University of Notre Dame, and WestEd, conduct regular monthly conference calls. A state leadership team and their responsibilities are well described (p. e60). There is a data-sharing agreement among the partners. Four main goals and related objectives are listed that align with the stated program goals (p. e35). A clear implementation timeline is outlined with detail on program expansion milestones (pp. e23-e24). There is a plan for quarterly progress reviews and workshops or colloquia each semester on the science of reading at regional hubs. All partners will participate in the annual conference (p. e25).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**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 included a complete list of committed partners. These include Indiana Department of Education, University of Notre Dame, West Ed, and South Bend Community School Corporation. The program is poised to grow from 10 to 34 treatment schools during the funding period. Upon review and approval, several other universities in the region may be selected to join the program as regional hubs (p. e9, pp. e23-e24). Each potential regional hub has submitted a letter of support (pp. e90-e97).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

A quality plan was presented by the main partners who have a strong history of collaboration and implementation of literacy improvement projects. Products from earlier efforts can be adapted and scaled for Tutor-CogSci (p. e26). To develop the local workforce, college students, high school students and instructional aides will be recruited and trained as staff (p. e 29); a comprehensive hybrid training sequence is described (p. e30). Tutoring will be delivered

**Sub**

by a tiered model, to optimize tutoring resources. Partner schools are deemed eligible if they have at least 40 third-grade students and an IREAD pass rate lower than 85% and are located near a project hub (p. e40). High-needs students identified through standardized assessments will receive high-impact tutoring during the school day. Other students receive evidence-based reading instruction (p. e30).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**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 included a good plan to broadly disseminate results of the Tutor-CogSci project through outreach activities targeting national literacy practitioners (p. e 32). To inform researchers, presentations will be submitted to national conferences, such as the American Educational Research Association, Cognitive Science Society, Society for Research in Child Development, and Society for the Scientific Study of Reading. Manuscripts will be submitted to the top journals in education, child development and reading research (p. e33). Policy briefs will be produced, and the leadership will contact policymakers to contribute to national education networks (p. e33).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**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: 20**

**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 basic logic model is aligned with the goals and based on the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes for the Tutor-CogSci project (pp. e72-e73). Inputs are stated in detail; the activities are those required for implementation, such as recruitment, training and tutoring. Outputs include on boarding and training the tutors, holding science of learning events, working with schools and community, and conducting tutoring in schools. The outcomes are related to growing the number of tutors and expanding their professional knowledge, in addition to the gain in reading skills of the students who receive the services (p. e72).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness,

**Reader's Score: 15**

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:**

An appropriate table of performance measures guides the project and provides essential details on the performance measures associated with each goal and objective (pp. e35–e36). The target measure is stated for each objective with the data to be used for that calculation. Data collection intervals are given to indicate the person responsible (pp. e96–e97).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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:**

Sub

**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:**

**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 proposed Tutor-CogSci project will be carried out by Indiana Department of Education as lead applicant, with main partners University of Notre Dame (implementation) and WestEd (evaluation). This state-led effort aligns with their Science-of-Reading policy. There are a high number of schools that meet criteria for the program. Evidence-based literacy tutoring will be expanded through regional hubs to high-needs second and third grade students in partner schools with low pass rates on the IREAD state assessment (p. e8).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**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 ambitious goal stated by the applicant is that 95% of third-grade students will pass the IREAD assessment by 2027 (p. e27). To meet this goal, the Tutor-CogSci program must expand across the state. The main partners have a long-standing relationship and experience with similar projects. They are well equipped to implement and expand access to the Tutor-CogSci program using high-impact tutoring in grades two and three. The program will have central coordination with local implementation through hubs that coordinate tutoring activity with regional partner schools (p. e29).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness,

**Reader's Score: 5**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 11/24/2025 03:55 PM

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Indiana Department of Education (S411B250097)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	28
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Returning Educ to States	10	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Expanding Educ Choice	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	115	28

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Midphase - 9: 84.411B

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (S411B250097)

## 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: 28

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 proposed effort seeks to scale the Tutor-CogSci, an evidence-based, high-impact tutoring intervention that integrates a workforce development and capacity-building model across regions in Indiana to improve reading fluency among second- and third-grade students and partnering schools' IREAD pass rates (pp. e8-e9). If well implemented, the randomized control trial (RCT) with a staggered rollout process is designed to produce evidence about the effectiveness of the project on relevant Grade 3 reading outcomes that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) 5.0 standards without reservations (pp. e36-e49). In fact, doing so (including specifying key components, mediators, outcomes, and fidelity thresholds) is specified as objective 4.1 under Goal 4 (p. e36).

The planned sampling and randomization strategies will minimize confounding factors (p. e38).

A conducted power analysis revealed sufficient power to detect the anticipated effect size (pp. e38-e39).

The eligibility criteria for the participating schools are appropriate and clearly specified (e40). Use of intent-to-treat analysis and planned attrition monitoring (at both the school and student levels), analyses, and adjustments are consistent with WWC protocols.

WestEd will serve as the project's independent, external evaluator (pp. e19-e21) and is well-qualified with WWC-aligned educational research methods expertise and cognitive science knowledge. WestEd has collaborated previously with partner Notre Dame on studies funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), including an efficacy trial that met WWC standards without reservations (pp. e28-e29).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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 evaluation includes both user-design research and A/B experiments (p. e34). There is intentional attention to quality, relevance and generating appropriate contextual evidence alongside causal evidence with context-driven adaptation. This will increase the ability to provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing and potential implementation in other settings (p. e34-e49). Measurable outcomes for objective 4.2, "Generate replicable knowledge and scaling guidance," include publicly sharing the final evaluation report and annually producing implementation and fidelity reports, cost-effectiveness memos, and scaling recommendations (p. e36).

**Weaknesses:**

The logic model (p. e72; pp. e34-3e5) for Tutor-CogSci as a whole (p. e72; pp. e34-e35) is generally well specified. It would be strengthened by more explicit connections within and across columns and specification of critical mediators, moderators, and assumptions.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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:**

Fidelity monitoring is listed in the plan for AY1, AY 2, and AY 3 (p. e24). Monthly coordination calls and quarterly progress reviews with the evaluation team include fidelity metrics review. Measurable outcomes for objective 2.2 include that “≥ 85% of learning design teams meet fidelity thresholds for training and data use” (p. e35). Fidelity reports will be produced annually, and objective 4.1 includes “fidelity thresholds among the independent impact evaluation components to be implemented to meet WWC standards without reservations (p. e36). A table (p. e36) clearly specifies appropriate fidelity thresholds for tutor training, informal educator training, parent support, identification and assignment, dosage, quality, and data use. It is important to note that multiple purposes for fidelity data uses are well-specified with fidelity profiles planned to be linked to outcomes to empirically validate thresholds for success to inform future implementation (p. e47).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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:**

Aligned with Competitive Preference Priority 2, the proposal is thoughtfully structured to build capacity and infrastructure at the state level for high-impact tutoring to meet Indiana’s reading goals (p. e8). The study will be registered with Registry of Efficacy and Effectiveness studies (p. e47). Embedding continuous improvement and research within implementation, investigating cost effectiveness and examining minimum viable school, district, and state infrastructure needed will guide possible replication of project activities or strategies (p. e48). The primary outcome measures (IREAD and DIBELS ORF) demonstrate validity and reliability consistent with WWC standards (p. e37-e38), with additional instruments undergoing testing and validation prior to implementation (p. e47). The intervention design integrates developing the educator pipeline (p. e48). It also intentionally fosters a “non-hierarchical culture of collaboration, support, innovation, and excellence” (p. e9) to promote sustainability. The regional quadrant recruitment strategy to be utilized will ensure statewide representation, including rural and urban participation, and enhance generalizability (p. e38).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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(I)), 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**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 11/24/2025 03:55 PM