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

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/12/2024 10:52 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)
Reader #1:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

    Sub

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

    Strengths:

    Teach for America (TFA) proposes a promising new strategy that builds upon an existing strategy. The Cultivate System (CS) is significant because it is designed to enhance post-pandemic attendance and academic performance by improving students' classroom learning conditions, refining teachers' instructional practices, and strengthening students' academic mindsets and strategies through a professional development program that emphasizes student voice (p. e9 - p. e10; and p. e100). The CS encompasses several key components that support the significance of the project. For instance, the program offers targeted training for novice teachers and TFA coaches, focusing on student mindsets and effective learning environments. It includes biannual surveys to assess student perceptions, personalized reports for teachers highlighting improvement areas, and two years of professional development and coaching. Teachers also receive access to research-based resources, and ongoing data collection ensures the program's implementation and continuous improvement (p. e13 – p. e22). Additionally, TFA cites robust research-based evidence to support the significance of the CS (p. e13 – p. e22).

    TFA's initiative is significant because it directly addresses the critical challenges of post-pandemic education by focusing on areas that are fundamental to student success: attendance, academic achievement, and the overall learning environment. By centering the program on student voice, it ensures that the needs and perspectives of students are at the forefront, leading to more relevant and impactful improvements in classroom practices (p. e13 – p. e22).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   Teach for America (TFA) has a conceptual framework that will guide the activities of the Cultivate System (CS) (p. e26 – p.e27 and p. e113) . The applicant provides an explanation of the key components of the framework that highlight the CS survey, CS report, learning experiences for the TFA Corp members, learning experiences for the TFA coaches, and coaching conversations using the coaching framework (p. e26 – p. e27 and p. e113). Each of these components is embedded within the inputs, outputs, activities, and implementation outcomes within the CS's Logic Model (p. e101). A further strength is the alignment of the CS Framework is the Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, Instructional Support and Student Engagement (CLASS-S) (p. e127 – p. e129). CLASS-S is an observation tool that certified TFA CLASS-S observers utilize to measure the impact of professional development programs on the instructional quality in classrooms (p. e127 - p. e129). All in all, TFA's framework is designed to ensure that the strategies of the CS are responsive and relevant and lead to meaningful learning experiences for the students and the teachers of the students being served through this project (p. e26 – p. e27 and p. e127 – p. e129).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 10

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

   Strengths:

   The goals, objectives, and outcomes of the Cultivate System (CS) project are clearly specified and measurable. For instance, throughout the five-year grant period, Teach for America (TFA), in collaboration with The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (TCC) and American Institutes for Research (AIR), seeks to evaluate the impact of the Cultivate Framework when integrated into the TFA model, and to assess its influence on corps members' teaching practices and its role in fostering positive learning environments in underserved urban and rural schools nationwide (p. e9 - p. e10 and p. e29 . Additionally, the goals and objectives of the Cultivate System focus on three key groups including, TFA coaches, corps members, and their students. For TFA coaches, the objective is to equip them with the skills to guide teachers in using student survey data to create more rigorous and equitable learning environments. For corps members, the goals and objectives are to leverage insights from the CS student survey to enhance classroom conditions, thereby positively impacting student mindsets, behaviors, and development (p. e9- p. e10 and p. e29). For students, the project aspires to cultivate stronger social-emotional learning mindsets and strategies, improve academic behaviors, and increase engagement and motivation, ultimately leading to higher academic achievement (p. e9-p. e10 and page e29).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Teach for America's (TFA) project will reach a target population of 350,000 students in grades 5 – 12 and their teachers (p. e9 – p. e10 and p. e29 – p. e30). A complete listing of all of the participating school districts and their geographical regions have been provided by TFA. Each participating school district has agreed to administer TFA's Cultivate System (p. e130 and p. e131). A further strength of the application includes a focus on providing training to the teacher population on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) (p. e29 – p. e-30). By recognizing the significance of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), TFA's corps members are better prepared to lead classrooms where the target population of high-need students can achieve rigorous standards, and where those students' identities and strengths are valued and affirmed.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

Key personnel for the Cultivate System (CS) project include a team comprised of executive leadership from the Teacher for America (TFA) team, The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (TCC) and American Institutes for Research (AIR) (p. e9 – p. e10). This team of collaborators has been piloting the program and the framework for the past two years (p. e25). There is a project director, co project director, senior advisor, and an implementation lead (p. e25). The professional resumes and biographical sketches of personnel is included in the application indicate personnel with diverse skills including K-12 education and institutions of higher education, with an emphasis on social emotional learning (p. e64 – p. e90). All personnel have experience with grant management.

Additionally, a team comprising diverse and highly experienced researchers, subject matter experts, teacher preparation designers, coaches, operations managers, and evaluators will execute the Cultivate System (CS) and the project plan in a timely manner and within the allocated budget. As noted in the application, TFA corps members, who will participate in the Cultivate System as teachers, are selected through a rigorous admissions model that prioritizes diversity in lived experiences and a commitment to TFA's mission to expand opportunities for all children (p. e32).

Overall, the applicant demonstrates that members of this leadership team are highly qualified to adhere to the

requirements of this project and provide necessary support to ensure successful implementation of the project as outlined in the grant application.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

Teach for America (TFA) provides a management plan that is comprehensive in nature and clearly articulates how the Cultivate Systems (CS) project will be implemented. For instance, the roles and responsibilities of key team members, including the University of Chicago Consortium (CCR) and the American Institutes of Research (AIR) are outlined and defined in depth (p. e37 – p. e39). Each partner shares a responsibility to ensure successful implementation of the plan. A further strength is the budget narrative. This applicant's budget outlined the allocation of resources for a five-year period and provided a detailed breakdown of the budget, which included personnel with clearly defined responsibilities, network systems, program support, training, curriculum, travel, school level support, and coaching (p. e116 – p. e121 and p. e135). An implementation framework is also included that highlights key indicators, participants, the fidelity markers of implementation, and data sources (p. e126). The management plan also states how TFA intends to monitor the processes each year.

Weaknesses:

More information is needed to clearly describe the inclusion of voices that represent classroom teachers, parents, and students as part of its leadership team. Additionally, the application identifies that the targets such as project goals, objectives, and metrics for year one will be implemented beginning the 24/15 school year, which occurs before the grant will be awarded (p. e116 – p. e.118).

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

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

(up to 3 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:
(a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
(b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
(c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
(d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

   Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).

   Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

   (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

   (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

   Strengths:

   Teach for America (TFA) recognizes and discusses the impact that COVID-19 had on the student population. Using empirical research, the organization found that during and after the pandemic surge. The applicant notes that it will focus on schools that have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cultivate System directly addresses the ongoing educational challenges while also establishing a foundation for sustainable, equitable, and inclusive learning environments (p. e10).

   Weaknesses:

   More information is needed regarding how the applicant will incorporate community asset-mapping and needs assessments for Competitive Preference Priority 2.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)
Reader #3:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Early Tier 1 - 15: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

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

    Strengths:

    The Cultivate System emphasizes student voice to drive educational improvement, which is a novel strategy compared to traditional methods (e9). The project includes ongoing professional development and coaching for teachers, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptation (e13). This project builds on existing strategies by integrating student feedback into teaching practices, offering a promising alternative to traditional educational methods. For example, the project includes biannual surveys to gather data on student mindsets and classroom perceptions (e13). Then, teachers receive reports based on survey data to identify areas for improvement (e13). The system is based on extensive research, including studies on learning mindsets and strategies that positively impact student outcomes (e14).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The conceptual framework for the proposed research, as outlined in the proposal, is robust and well-structured. The framework clearly outlines the goals of improving student attendance and academic achievement by enhancing classroom learning conditions and instructional practices (e12-e13). The framework is grounded in extensive research, as evidenced by works cited, to support the importance of academic mindsets and strategies (e14-e15). The use of student surveys to gather data on mindsets and strategies ensures that the framework is responsive to student needs and experiences (e15-e16). The framework is designed to ensure that the strategies of this framework are responsive and relevant (e 26-27, e127-129).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The project goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly outlined, focusing on improving post-pandemic attendance and academic achievement through enhanced classroom learning conditions and instructional practices (e13). Specific activities, such as training for novice teachers and surveys of students' mindsets, are detailed (e13). The project includes measurable outcomes, such as the number of teachers and students involved, and the specific improvements in student mindsets and academic strategies (Page e12). The use of biannual student surveys provides a quantifiable method to assess progress (Page e13).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The project focuses on high-need students who would benefit significantly from practices that elevate student voice and create equitable learning environments. The project emphasizes student voice by incorporating biannual surveys to gather data on student mindsets and strategies, which informs teacher practices (e12-e13). This would help bridge the engagement gap and foster a sense of belonging and empowerment among students. The design is grounded in empirical research, creating inclusive, equitable, and rigorous learning environments for the academic and social-emotional development of these high-need students (e12).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

    Sub

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

    Strengths:

The applicant emphasizes recruiting individuals who demonstrate values and leadership necessary to transform high-need classrooms, focusing on equity-oriented and diverse leaders (e32). The project involves experienced coaches who support novice teachers, with a strong emphasis on culturally relevant teaching practices (e33). Coaches are former successful teachers, instructional leads, and school leaders, ensuring they have the necessary experience and training. The applicant states that 100% of the project leadership team is comprised of team members from historically marginalized populations.

    Weaknesses:

no weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 8

    Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The plan clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the project personnel, ensuring accountability (e34-35). The project includes specific timelines and milestones, which help in tracking progress and ensuring timely completion (Appendix J6, e118-119). The plan emphasizes ongoing data collection and feedback to inform continuous improvement, which is crucial for adapting to challenges and optimizing outcomes (p. e16). The plan also emphasizes adherence to the budget, with mechanisms for monitoring and adjusting expenditures as needed. The inclusion of specific roles, timelines, and budget management strategies demonstrates thorough planning. Clearly defined responsibilities ensure that all team members know their tasks and deadlines.

Weaknesses:

The project involves multiple components and stakeholders, which may complicate implementation and measurement (e12). The reliance on various surveys and continuous data collection might be resource-intensive and challenging to manage (e13). The implementation timeline provided is confusing as it starts before the potential grant award (e115).

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

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

   Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:
   (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
   (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
   (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
   (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

   Strengths:

   NA

   Weaknesses:

   NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

   Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).

   Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including

impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

(a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The proposal highlights significant declines in student learning, increased absenteeism, and emotional distress due to the pandemic (e19-e20). The Cultivate System aims to improve learning conditions, teacher practices, and student mindsets through professional development and student surveys (e9, e20). It also utilizes proven strategies and data to inform practices (e12, e19). By addressing the immediate educational disruptions caused by the pandemic, the project also aims to build long-term capacity for fostering equitable and inclusive learning environments.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear as to the extent to which the applicant has conducted community asset-mapping to assess disengagement and address specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/13/2024 06:43 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)
Reader #4:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Early Tier 1 - 15: 84.411C

Reader #4:   * * * * * * * * * *

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

   Sub

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

      Strengths:

      The proposal provides a high level of detail about how the proposed project involves both the development and demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies (e10-11, e14). The applicant presents evidence that they have shown success in the past with a smaller scale version of the proposed project (e19), and plan to build on what was learned in that pilot to expand in a significant way. The proposal notes that the project incorporates both well practiced, research-backed elements, including targeted instructional practice, relationship support between students and teachers, and accountability practices. Additionally, the role of student voice in driving the change represents a potentially new and innovative practice (e22-23).

      Weaknesses:

      No weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

   Sub

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

Strengths:

The conceptual framework underlying the proposed activities draws on significant research around student mindset, student achievement, and the interacting systems in the classroom that support both of these (e24). The proposal notes the inclusion of participant (both student and teacher) perception in their learning experience is backed by research-based theoretical frameworks suggesting this approach will be effective (e29-30). Additionally, the proposal discusses significant research around the critical need for effective teachers in low-income schools (e31), and details how the applicant meets that need in a substantial and evidence-based manner (e31). Finally, the project also identifies Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as an embedded practice in their learning model, and an evidence-based, well researched model for effectively leading classrooms that enable high-needs learners to succeed (e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The proposal has three primary goals identified in the project narrative (e30), and several more cascading goals identified in an appendix (e117-118). Each of the proposed goals has clearly detailed related objectives, with specific measurable metrics and identified data sources (e117-118). Additionally, milestones for the successful execution of project objectives are clearly indicated with responsible and assisting teams specified (e118-119).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The proposed project provides information about its design framework and implementation plan, which convincingly demonstrates the applicant's ability to successfully address the identified needs of the various target populations, including teachers, students, and coaches (e24-29). There are multiple key components of the project's implementation model, with parties responsible for each of these components, including teacher professional development, coach training, effective survey response, and use of information to adjust classroom practices clearly identified (e25). The proposal thoroughly documents how each of the activities and parties will interact and be responsive to each other (e25-27); and the design appears to be reasonable to meet the needs of the target population.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

   Sub

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

     Strengths:

     The proposal explicitly notes the applicant recruits diverse, equity-focused individuals into the education profession through their recruitment processes (e23). The applicant notes more than half of their organization identifies as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) (e33), and include explicit information about the diversity of partnering organizations. The proposal notes one hundred percent of the project leadership team from multiple organizations come from historically marginalized populations (e33-34). In addition, the applicant demonstrates commitment to employing persons from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented. Key project personnel appear to be well qualified to complete their indicated tasks, with significant training, experience, knowledge, and skills necessary to meet the project's objectives (e34-36, e65-92).

     Weaknesses:

     No weaknesses noted.

     Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 8

   Sub

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

     Strengths:

     The applicant provides an extensive and detailed overview of the management plan for the project, including identification of responsible parties and activities of those team members (e37-40). The proposal includes a timeline for the first year of project implementation (e115) and documents comprehensive detailing of specific objectives and when they'll be executed both by metric (e117-118) and by school year and responsible party (e119-120). Additionally, the applicant describes a successful history of managing federal grant funds for more than a decade (e37), providing reasonable reassurance prior success may indicate future performance.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The implementation timeline provided for the first year of the project is confusing, with activities indicated for grant work prior to applicants being notified of awards (e115). Additionally, the proposal provides no evidence of teacher or student voice in the project leadership team, without which the proposal may struggle to achieve the proposed project's objectives.

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

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

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:
(a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
(b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
(c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
(d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

(a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional

development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The proposal discusses the significant and disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on learners, and particularly students from American Indian/ Alaska Native, Black, Latinx, and multi-racial backgrounds (e21). The applicant notes activities in the proposal are both evidence-based and innovative, attempting to accelerate learning for students in a way that ensures all participants have the achieve academic and social-emotional benchmarks (e21-22).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not specifically address asset-mapping or needs assessments, nor does it discuss reengaging students not participating in formal learning.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/16/2024 01:19 PM

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)
Reader #1:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Early Tier 2 - 16: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The proposed evaluation employs a quasi-experimental design (QED) with propensity score matching, which is expected to meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations. By matching treatment Corps Members (CMs) who participate in the Cultivate program with similar comparison CMs, the evaluation aims to ensure a valid contrast that minimizes confounding variables (e40-43).

   While the study does not employ traditional randomization, it proposes to use propensity score matching to create comparable groups adjusting for observable differences in demographics, teaching experience, including prior student achievement mitigating selection bias by reducing the likelihood of confounding variables affecting the outcomes (e42-43).

   American Institutes for Research (AIR), the external evaluator, plans to control for a range of covariates in their regression analyses, including prior year student achievement and attendance, as well as teacher characteristics ensuring that the analyses account for factors that could influence outcomes, allowing for a clearer understanding of the program's impact. Further, the plan includes thorough baseline equivalence checks using standardized mean differences, ensuring that the treatment and comparison groups are similar before the intervention increasing the internal validity of the study (e40-44).

   The evaluation's power analysis estimates a minimum detectable effect size (MDES) of 0.10 for student outcomes and 0.22 for teacher practice outcomes. This indicates that the study is adequately powered to detect meaningful differences between groups, which is essential for establishing the program's effectiveness (e44).

   The evaluation plan incorporates various data sources, as illustrated on Table Exhibit E.1. Research Questions and Data Sources (e.g., administrative records, classroom observation ratings), which enhances the credibility and comprehensiveness of the evaluation (e41-42).

Sub

> **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were detected.

Reader's Score: 20

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

> **Strengths:**

The plan emphasizes biweekly meetings between AIR and TFA, fostering ongoing communication and coordination. This regular interaction can enhance collaboration, ensure alignment on goals, and facilitate timely adjustments based on emerging insights (e38-39; e46-47; e121-122; e127).

The integration of Power BI templates for real-time performance tracking is a significant strength. This allows for automated aggregation of data, providing immediate access to performance metrics and insights, which can inform decision-making and adjustments during implementation (e46-47; e121-122).

The fidelity matrix and regular assessments of implementation will provide TFA with actionable feedback, enabling ongoing adjustments to the program as needed, thereby supporting continuous improvement (e49; e100-102). By planning for pilot testing of evaluation instruments and ongoing assessments in summer 2027 and summer 2028, the approach promotes continuous improvement. This iterative process allows for adjustments based on real-time feedback and learning (e42; e47; e119).

The interim reports and summer assessments are designed to inform strategic decision-making, which can enhance the program's adaptability and responsiveness to challenges and opportunities as they arise (e46; e122; e119).

The commitment to a final public-facing report and the use of various dissemination channels (e.g., webinars, infographics) enhances the visibility of the program's impact and contributes to knowledge-sharing in the field (e29; e46).

> **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were detected.

Reader's Score: 5

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

> **Strengths:**

The plan intends to use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS-S) and state test scores, as recognized and reliable measures, enhancing the validity of the findings related to reading and overall student performance (e42-49).
The use of a logic model to outline key components, mediators, and expected outcomes provides a coherent framework for understanding the program's intended impact. This clarity can facilitate effective communication among project teams, CMs and teachers (e100-102; e128).

The evaluation design incorporates multiple data sources, including administrative records, observational data, and surveys, allowing for a robust analysis of both program impact and implementation fidelity (e46; e49).

By explicitly stating that teacher practice mediates the relationship between the Cultivate program and student outcomes, the evaluation plan acknowledges the importance of understanding how the program operates, providing

Sub

a more nuanced analysis (e45-48).

The development of measurable implementation thresholds for core components enhances accountability. Defining what constitutes "acceptable" implementation allows for clear standards against which to assess program fidelity (e49).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were detected.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/06/2024 10:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)
Reader #2:   **********

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

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Teach For America (S411C240317)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: **30**

    Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The proposed evaluation methods are well-designed for the research questions posed in Exhibit E.1 and are likely to produce rigorous evidence of the innovative teacher training system designed to positively impact academic achievement and attendance in high-needs schools.

   The applicant appropriately cites prior research in the well-described treatment condition as well as in justification for power analyses (e18).

   The proposed plan to create a robust matched comparison group using propensity scores is sound (e42). It includes variables to be used (demographics, teaching experience, grade, subject, etc.) and acceptable reasoning for control of confounds.

   The details surrounding the measurement and regular monitoring of baseline equivalence are excellent (e42) and rely upon What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards (e43).
   The analytic samples and power analyses are expertly defined, appropriately justified (e122), and directly linked to the relevant research questions (e42). The statistical model will clearly account for the nested nature of the data (e43 and Appendix J10).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were identified.

   Reader's Score: **20**

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

Strengths:

The plan proposes multiple, varied, appropriate methods for providing performance feedback throughout the 5-year project. Continuous improvement is likely to be well-supported through a clear plan to measure participant perceptions, knowledge, mindsets, and practices (e27-28 and Appendix J5).

The external and independent evaluator is highly qualified to complete the comprehensive evaluation plan. The applicant has more than adequately provided details on the roles and responsibilities of key project staff (and teams) involved in data collection, reporting, and interpretation of results, with set schedules for meetings and data feedback (Appendix J6 and J7).

The use of PowerBI dashboards with real-time implementation data is innovative and a strength of the formative assessment plan (e46).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

A conceptual model is presented on e24, a clear theory of action, well-defined key components and mediators for students and teachers, moderating effects and a comprehensive plan for defining implementation of fidelity.

The planned analyses for mediator and moderator effects are thoughtfully designed and likely to produce robust evidence useful to project staff as well as the larger field of teacher education.

Examples of a well-articulated plan for measuring the fidelity of implementation are found in Appendix J11, where each key component is described, the fidelity markers range from low to high and the relevant data sources are noted.

Key components are well defined and explicitly stated in Exhibit B2, and a timeline for defining implementation fidelity measures is noted in Appendix J3 (e26)

The instrumentation is well defined and the project proposes to use valid and reliable measures of academic achievement, engagement and impact of teacher practice using the CLASS-S an observation tool for effective teaching (e47, Appendix J7) and a strong definition of the Cultivate Survey (e115).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
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