

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 11:05 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

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

	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	40	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	25
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	0
<b>Total</b>	106	25

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

## 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 factors:

Reader's Score: 0

#### Sub

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

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the strategy to scale 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 extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Sub**

**Reader's Score: 0**

2. (2) 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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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 extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

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 and measurable.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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.

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

**Reader's Score: 25**

**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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

**Strengths:**

The proposed evaluation plan will utilize an RCT design and confirmatory impact analysis, both meeting the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. These rigorous methods will generate strong evidence about the project's effectiveness in improving student attendance, behavior, SEL competencies, academic achievement, and teacher retention. Additionally, the evaluation plan describes a detailed attrition management plan to minimize attrition and support school participation (p. e40).

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 15**

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

**Strengths:**

The results of the proposed implementation study will be helpful in providing support to other districts wishing to replicate this program. The implementation study will include interviews with site leads, coaches and others to help explain variations in program implementation. Additionally, the cost effectiveness study will provide useful information for potential replication efforts. The study also considers both rural and urban schools, which will aid in program replicability (p. e42).

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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.**

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan adequately describes the key project components, mediators, and moderators (p. e44). The application includes a well-defined conceptual framework that explicitly outline how enhanced teacher and student well-being will mediate improvements in areas such as student attendance, SEL competencies, academic achievement, and teacher retention.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/02/2024 11:05 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 06:57 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

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	40	40
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	19
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	74
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	1
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	1
<b>Total</b>	106	78

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

## 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 factors:

Reader's Score: 15

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The significance of the project is appropriately described as the applicant intends to expand on their previous early-phase EIR grant through the proposed mid-phase grant proposal. The plans are clearly outlined and include developing a Whole Child Model approach which will include train-the-coaches strategies and producing stand-alone toolkits. The applicant clearly describes four innovative strategies designed to build school capacity regionally. For example, Strategy 3 focuses on the well-being of both the student and teacher, and programming will include strategies that promote calmness and regulate the mindset to reduce classroom stress (pgs. e16-e22)

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 40

#### Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant appropriately describes four distinct barriers that have prevented scale and clearly states how each barrier will be addressed. For example, the applicant states that there is a lack of local capacity as districts do not have access, expertise, and financial support for support professional development. The applicant presents a comprehensive approach to address the barrier through the implementation of a community design process utilizing a diverse set of school staff participating on a design team to test, refine, and implement practices. The model will provide orientation and training including direct professional learning, shadowing of coaches, observation and feedback, and a national network community of practitioners resulting in national certification of the coaches (pgs. e22-e26).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**Strengths:**

The management plan is detailed and the timelines and milestones are clearly identified. The roles, responsibilities, and activities are aligned with each phase of the project and will ensure on-time, on-budget results. For example, conducting ongoing training, observations, and feedback will be the responsibility of the Co-Project Directors, Project Lead, and Site Leads. The strategy described will help to address the need to build local capacity (pgs. e28-e29, e111-e114).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's capacity is fully demonstrated and supporting information indicates that the organization nets around \$30M yearly and has over 100 school partnerships supporting over 60,000 students nationally. The description of the partners is thorough and demonstrates how they will help bring the project to scale. For example, the University of West Alabama 's Center for Rural Education (CRE) will address critical issues such as rural poverty, teacher shortages, and community vitality across the South. CRE is a national leader in rural education as demonstrated by its flagship programs, including The Black Belt Teacher Corps, Teach for Alabama, and The Center for Rural Education (pgs. e29-e31, e111-e114).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its**

Sub

**project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Strengths:**

The dissemination plan is fully developed as the applicant describes multiple approaches to be used including their website which currently has thousands of users, and other social media including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The online Resource Library is accessible for public use, and over 500 open-source resources are readily available. The applicant clearly describes plans to present project findings at multiple venues including regional and local conferences for practitioners and researchers. The applicant appropriately proposes to submit to journals such as Child Development and the Journal of Research in Rural Education. The applicant appropriately describes plans to support development and replication through firsthand visits, social media, open-source library, conferences, and other venues. For example, educators, funders, and other stakeholders can participate in half-day site visits to observe programming to better understand and implement the project model (pgs. e32-e34).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly identifies two distinct types of products school districts, teachers and stakeholders can adapt to their specific needs to build field knowledge. The Implementation Toolkit is an innovative, standalone tool grounded in foundational research of the model and coupled with a summer orientation for educators provides an overview of critical practices they can use in their communities. The second type of product includes journal articles, conference presentations, and media content to share findings and build an understanding of what works with a wide range of educators; community members and partners; researchers; policymakers; and funders (pgs. e29-e34).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**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: 19**

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.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The conceptual framework of the Whole Child Model project model is grounded in brain-based research and influences every part of the student experience, resulting in increased prosocial interactions and academic learning in an inclusive environment. The model addresses the national challenges of decreased student well-being, and proactive academic engagement. The proposed mid-phase project will expand this initiative by reaching more students through expansion to two rural regions and a district with a high number of English learners (pg. e11-e12, e119).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant appropriately describes clearly specified quantifiable objectives with long-term goals for each of the goals which will help to track the project's outcome. For example, Goal 5: Deepen educator knowledge to spread student well-being to the whole school, and the measurable goals include teachers receiving 3 observations with feedback; 80% of teachers reviewing Leaps survey data and student interview data; and 90% of design teams conducting 3 data step backs per year (pgs. e35-e36).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**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.**

**Strengths:**

The proposed project design is mostly appropriate to address the needs of the target population. The project design is convincingly supported by data. For example, the data show that students within the targeted areas have higher school absenteeism and are performing below grade levels in core subjects (pgs. e36-e38, e111).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide data regarding the mental health needs of students within the targeted schools to be served by the project which somewhat diminishes the quality of the project design.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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: 0**

**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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

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

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or**

in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant appropriately addresses Competitive Priority Preference 1 by partnering with the University of West Alabama (UWA), a minority-serving institution where approximately 40% of the students enrolled identify as Black. The plan is to partner with the UWA's Center for Rural Education (CRE) which supports 67 counties in one of the most rural and high poverty areas of the south. The representative from this university will serve on the Advisory Board for the project (pgs.e15-e16).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

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

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

- (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and**
- (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant appropriately describes plans to use a community design process to understand needs and adapt the model to the local context. The applicant will engage in the community design and asset-mapping process that includes identifying a design team to lead change efforts, articulating a case for change, building conviction in a shared vision, and building a coalition to support innovation toward this vision. The inclusion of a diverse group of educators and stakeholders will elicit various perspectives to help adapt the model (pg. e24).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide detailed information that would describe how the project is designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself.

**Reader's Score:** 1

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/02/2024 06:57 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 05:03 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

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

	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	40	40
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	20
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	75
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	2
<b>Total</b>	106	80

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

## 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 factors:

Reader's Score: 15

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant provides comprehensive evidence of the development and demonstration of promising new strategies that build on the Early Phase existing strategies such as: (1) Community Design Process, (p. e19 & 20), (2) Adaptable and Integrated Whole School SEL Practices: (3) Focus on Student and Adult Wellbeing, (4) Developmental Brain Science-Based Model (e20 & e21).

The Whole Child Model (WCM) early phase comprehensive model (p. e16) includes three components: (1) Compassion, Assertiveness, Relationship & Environment (CARE), Tier 1 strategy. (2) Boost, Tier 2 and 3 strategies for students needing extra support to feel safe, build trusting relationships, and learn to self-regulate, and (3) Family Circle (family engagement strategies). (p. e17)

The proposed Whole Child Model v2 (WCMv2) aims to develop regional networks and district staff to support elementary schools in ensuring student and teacher well-being and academic success across diverse areas. This project will shift from direct support by Transcend staff to building local capacity, enabling regional networks and district staff to sustain and expand WCMv2 implementation beyond the grant period.

#### Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 40

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Strengths:**

The applicant identifies four barriers to scaling the project: (1) Interventions often lack adaptability for local contexts, so we develop customizable solutions; (2) Districts lack local capacity and expertise, so we provide sustainable professional development and support; (3) Remote areas face operational constraints and shared responsibilities, so we offer targeted support for unique needs like high English Learner enrollment; and (4) Access to online resources is limited by paywalls and fragmented materials, so we ensure comprehensive, freely accessible resources.

The applicant presents comprehensive strategies to mitigate barriers to scalability: (1) Establish structures to engage the community, especially students, in setting and maintaining the vision, ensuring ownership and local adaptation of the model. (2) Develop a regional capacity-building model where local coaches undergo WCMv2 orientation and ongoing training, including professional learning, shadowing, feedback, and a national practitioner network, leading to national certification, (3) Expand the Whole Child Model (WCM) to diverse and remote areas to test generalizability, helping partners sustain efforts and share lessons to accelerate progress, leveraging rural communities' unique assets and, (4) Provide an open-source resource library with guides and toolkits for differentiated model implementation, accessible to non-grantees to replicate the model beyond the grant period. (p. e23)

**Weaknesses:**

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. (2) 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's proposed management plan is well-structured, presenting with detailed activities, responsible parties for leadership, coaching and evaluation with an extensive grant timeline. (Exhibit 3: Activities/Milestones, p. e28 & e29). Furthermore, the management plan also includes a well-developed scaling strategy 1) preparation for launch and ongoing progress checks, 2) implement scale strategy - regional capacity building model, 3) implement phase 1 program (build early conditions and coalition for the WCM), 4) implement phase 2 program (Advance & Spread the WCM), and 5) implement phase 3 program (Sustain the WCM). (Appendix JB Management Plan, p. e111)

**Weaknesses:**

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale nationally and regionally based on personnel, resources and management, is a recognized strength. For example, the applicant is a well-funded national non-profit supporting over 100 school partnerships and 60,000+ students, with successful WCM early-phase implementation. (p. 29) Furthermore, the applicant has gained letters of support for the project from The University of West Alabama's Center for Rural Education (CRE), The Black Belt Teacher Corps and North State Together (NST) and SRI as the external evaluator with expertise in large, complex studies and randomized controlled trials to the project. (p. e29).

The leadership team includes a well-defined leadership team with experience in evaluation, management of federal grants including SEED, and EIR/i3 projects. (p. 30). The advisory group consists of experts in the areas of rural education, school leadership, and community engagement. (p. e30). Furthermore, the applicant also demonstrates the strengths of the implementation team noting experience and well-defined roles and responsibility such as directing, project leads, and site leads, and researchers (p. 31).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

**4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant identified several ways to broadly disseminate information about the project and the Whole Child Model to support further development and replication through the following mechanisms: Transcend will disseminate the Whole Child Model (WCM) through various methods: (1) Regional site visits, and stakeholder visits, (2) Social media leveraging the applicant's already robust community of followers, (3) Presenting at major conference, (4) Publishing in Journals of Research on Rural education, (5) Providing access to a comprehensive library with facilitator and participant guides. (p. e31)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

**5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's proposal demonstrates a well-thought-out plan for sharing information, materials processes, and techniques for effective use in other settings. The strategies include local and national opportunities for dissemination: (1) Produce resources for local implementation and materials to build field knowledge, and (2) Toolkits to guide educators in adapting key practices locally, and (3) Field knowledge products include journal articles, conference presentations, and media content to share findings broadly. (4) Evaluation findings aim to highlight the WCMv2's effectiveness in diverse contexts for educators, community members, researchers, policymakers, and funders (p. 33 & 34).

Sub

**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 extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides the conceptual framework of WCMv2 (See appendix G) and a comprehensive plan noting regional scaling, producing a toolkit, coaching and specific components of a community design process, CARE practices, Boost strategies, and the use of family circles to make changes in school culture, increase wellbeing, and family connectedness. The applicant's outcome measures are also well-defined: (1) reduce disciplinary events, increase attendance, build on SEL competencies, secure teacher retention, and improve ELA and math achievement (p. e35)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant's project plan is well-designed, demonstrating clear, concise, and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes. It demonstrates a comprehensive approach to action planning, ensuring that each objective aligns with specific deliverables and outcome targets. The plan is comprehensive emphasizing developing resources, building capacity, centering student needs, generating shared ownership, and deepening educator knowledge. (p. 36)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's project design effectively addresses the needs of students in partner schools across Alabama, California, and Texas, specifically targeting high-need, low-income, Black, Latino, and English Learners in diverse regions, including six rural counties and an urban district bordering Mexico. The WCMv2 model aims to address student mental health, lack of engagement, and academic challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, particularly in high-poverty communities. National trends show alarming declines in student well-being and performance, with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and learning loss, particularly among low-income and minority youth. (p. e36)

The proposed project leverages early-phase EIR findings, scaling to new demographics while addressing these critical needs through a community design process that integrates Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and incorporates student and teacher input. (p. e36-e37).

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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: 0**

**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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

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.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

##### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant's proposals demonstrate well-developed partnerships with two rural organizations and their member districts in Alabama and California, as well as a remote Texas district serving English Learners. Partner 1, the University of West Alabama (UWA), is a Predominantly Black Institution with about 40% Black students. The applicant will collaborate with UWA's Center for Rural Education, and support 67 counties in the high need region. The applicant also partners with North State Together K-16 Collaborative (NST), which includes ten counties and rural districts in northern California. The applicant's third partnership will be with, El Paso Independent School District (EPISD), borders Mexico and serves 43% English Learner students. Furthermore, the applicant plans to also partner with Sumter County School District in Alabama, whereas two-thirds of our school partners are rural, serving high-need students.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 3

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

##### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

**Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-**

**Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).**

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

- (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

**Strengths:**

The applicant's proposal includes supports such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, and a community-centered design process, practices, and strategies. (p. e16)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant refers to a community design process although details are lacking regarding the overall design and the extent to which it aligns with community asset-mapping and needs assessment to identify specific strategies to support families and students.

There are broad references made regarding the impact of COVID to student wellbeing rather than specific to local community data. (p. e187)

**Reader's Score:**     **2**

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**Status:**             Submitted  
**Last Updated:**    08/02/2024 05:03 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2024 01:30 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

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

	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	40	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	25
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	0
<b>Total</b>	106	25

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

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

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

## 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 factors:

Reader's Score: 0

#### Sub

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

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the strategy to scale 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 extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Sub**

**Reader's Score: 0**

2. (2) 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:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 0**

3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 0**

4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 0**

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

**Strengths:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**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 extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

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 and measurable.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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.

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

Reader's Score: 25

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

The proposed evaluation plan is fully articulated and designed to generate evidence about the intervention's efficacy which will meet WWC standards without reservations. The evaluation succeeds at this through proposing a school level RCT (including randomization and blocking), that is independent, and includes power analyses with manageable MDES, adjustments for clustering, plans for multiple comparisons with the same domain, and efforts to assure baseline equivalence using blocking (p.e39-42). The plan addresses joiners and attrition and includes plans to minimize attrition during collection of non-administrative data.

A thorough list of outcome measures and their WWC eligibility details is provided in Appendix J2 and J3.

This plan proposes multiple outcome measures for students and also examines teacher outcomes, making it possible to generate WWC evidence across multiple domains.

**Weaknesses:**

none

Reader's Score: 15

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

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan is designed to provide robust guidance for future replication and testing of the intervention in other settings.

The implementation study described would generate detailed evidence via interviews and observation, accompanying the quantitative data analysis, to understand how the intervention occurred (p.e42-3).

The plan also includes clear descriptions of moderator and cost analyses which can provide guidance on how the program impact varies and thus provide guidance for future replication efforts (e43-44).

The sample is also diverse, including rural and urban schools across multiple settings, enabling an estimate of impacts about other settings.

They also include an effort to use "common measures" (i.e., those widely used) which generates evidence more comparable across settings (p.e44-45).

**Weaknesses:**

None

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.

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes in the conceptual framework (e35) which are further described on p.e44-45.

Thresholds for acceptable implementation are discussed meaningfully in the evaluation plan (p.e44). Further

**Sub**

specific definitions of thresholds are provided in Appendix J (including p.e131-4).

**Weaknesses:**

none

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/05/2024 01:30 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 08:21 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

	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	40	40
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	20
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	75
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	3	2
<b>Total</b>	106	80



# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Transcend Inc. (S411B240010)

## 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 factors:

Reader's Score: 15

#### Sub

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

#### Strengths:

The proposal clearly outlines the building on of new and evidence-based practices that stem from existing SEL programming. The goal for this project is "to develop the capacity of regional networks and district staff to support elementary schools to ensure student and teacher well-being and student academic success across diverse geographies and populations" (p. e16). The focus and the significance of the project is to build the capacity of regional and district staff to ensure that SEL programming can scale beyond what the applicant is able to provide in the long-term. The applicant further justifies the significance of this proposal citing that pre-pandemic 5% of students needed 'Boost' a tier 2 and 3 intervention suite to nearly 20% of students post-pandemic (p. e17).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses needed.

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 40

#### Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly outlines the barriers to scale and solutions associated with them (Exhibit 2). It is evident that the applicant addresses the barriers thoroughly. As a result, the proposal names 4 existing practices that take place in schools regularly and they outline an innovative practice that has a stronger impact on student development (p. e20-21).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 2. (2) 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 proposes a comprehensive management plan to achieve the objective of the proposed project on time. The proposal outlines the five major activities in the project and the associated progress checks (p. e27). The proposal breaks down each of those activities, articulates each of the responsible parties and includes when those actions will take place (p. e28). For example, during the preparation for LAUNCH phase, the PD and PL are responsible for establishing leadership and advisory teams and this will take place each year of the project (p. e28).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 3. (3) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) working directly, or through partners, during the grant period.**

**Strengths:**

The application outlines the qualified personnel through their partnerships with UWA, and NST (p e29). Both NST and Transcend have the financial resources to support the scale of this proposal and have designed the project to meet the scaling goals for both national and regional levels.

The proposal also outlines the leadership that will support this project. The management team has extensive experience such as ten plus years managing and implementing \$120M in federal grants (p. e30). The proposal states that the team of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have 45 combined years of education experience and supporting the implementation of numerous federal grants (p. e30).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 4. (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has a thoroughly developed plan to broadly disseminate information and the findings of the project. The applicant will leverage a very strong experience to help disseminate the information through “first-hand inspiration visits” (p. e32). This unique and powerful dissemination approach will have a strong impact on the replication and further development of this project. The applicant will also rely on social media to share information. The applicant has a strong background in social media dissemination and include past campaigns as evidence (Appendix JD).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

5. (5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

**Strengths:**

In the early phase grant the applicant focused on two urban high-need community. Through this project they will expand to two rural areas and focus on increasing local capacity and test the generalizability of the model (p. e25). Focusing on two different population types increases the potential for effective utility of products in various settings.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**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 extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

**Strengths:**

The conceptual framework is clear and outlines the key and direct components, mediators and outcomes (p. e35). The applicant has justified the framework with research to justify the key components and how they will lead to the desired outcomes. For example, one of the outcomes is teacher retention and one focus is adult well-being. The approach includes building educators’ mindsets about well-being, helping them identify strategies for coping with stress, learning about needs that the school can support and piloting new responsive strategies (p. e21).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly specified six goals for the project and includes measurable outcomes or deliverables for each of the objectives. For example, Goal 1 has three deliverables identified: 1. Participant guides 2. Turnkey toolkits 3. IDEA compliant materials (p. e35). For goal 2, the applicant outlines the four measurable outcomes necessary to achieve the objectives (p. e35).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

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.

**Strengths:**

The design of the proposed project is appropriate to and will successfully address the needs of the target population due to the design and work with community needs assessment. The proposal also aims to scale the strategies that were used in early-phase EIR to new geography and demographics (p. e37). The community design process was formatted to address the targeted need of the population in the study (p. e37).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

**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: 0

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Sub**

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant will be actively partnering with University of West Alabama, a Predominantly Black Institution (p e15). In the proposal it justifies that it meet the criteria of partnering with a Minority-serving institution as about 40% of the students enrolled identify as Black (p. e15). UWA's Center for Rural Education is a major asset to the project because of the extensive knowledge and expertise it brings to the work rural poverty, teacher shortages and community understanding (p. 29).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

## Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

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

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

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

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant conducted a community-based needs assessment to assess "local needs exacerbated by the pandemic" (p. e16) The proposal plans to implement a community-centered design process that WWC has named to have 'strong evidence of positive impact (p. e 16).

The proposal thoroughly explains each strategy and specifically address CPP 2 in strategy 1 (p. e19).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant did not clearly provide local data on how COVID-19 impacted the communities in this project.

Reader's Score: 2

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/02/2024 08:21 PM