

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 02:27 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	12
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	34
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	15
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	61
<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	66

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

## 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: 12

#### 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 builds on an existing successful Early College (EC) model but enhances it specifically for rural high schools, which have been disproportionately impacted by economic challenges and the pandemic (e11-e12).

The applicant proposes a combination of several promising research-based strategies, including: 1) using a network of mentor and partner rural high schools to accelerate Early College implementation, 2) providing extensive professional development and support for rural educators, 3) leveraging Early College as a rural economic development strategy, and 4) adding College Connection Coaches from Ivy Tech Community College to assist students (e17).

#### Weaknesses:

The proposal lacks a clear articulation of how some of the proposed new elements will be developed. For example, Place-Based Education (PBE) (e15, e17, e24) and work-based learning (WBL) (e15, e25, e29) are mentioned throughout the proposal. This type of pedagogy often requires high levels of pedagogical knowledge, networking, structures and training but there were no artifacts in the appendix to show how this would be scaffolded or scaled.

Another area where the idea was strong, but the articulation lacked a complete vision, was the claim the program would leverage [Early College] EC for local economic development (e8) through strategies like having one HS (high school) from [Rural Early College Network] RECN open a coffee shop in its tiny town to employ students and provide work-based-learning (WBL) (e15). One coffee shop does not make a strong case for local economic development.

Reader's Score: 12

### 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: 34**

**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 clearly identifies specific barriers that have prevented scaling in the past, including costs for college, time to Early College endorsement, dual credit teacher supply, funding, sustained leadership, and post-pandemic issues. For each barrier, the applicant outlines specific strategies to address those concerns (page e19-e22).

The idea articulated on e12 to design wide-ranging PD, coaching, and support mechanisms for all educator groups to mitigate leadership changes by casting a wider net for the work is a wise solution to the high rates of leadership turnover.

On e20, the applicant mentions funding and tuition support or salary schedule incentives for teachers to continue their education and get credentialed for instruction. These sound like promising interventions to experiment with especially if the lead university or partner universities can offer credits at a discounted rate.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant proposes a plethora of meeting structures on e19 but does not articulate when overburdened staff will find time for these meetings, if subs will be allocated, or how they will recruit teachers and administrators to do this work.

Similarly, other convenings (e.g. mentoring, counselors renewal and support (e21) do not have clear plan for how these will be fit into schedules.

**Reader's Score: 8**

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 includes a detailed management plan with a timeline that has clear milestones, activities, and responsibilities assigned for accomplishing key tasks over the 5-year project period (e24-e25). Of note, the team presented on e136 and e137 includes a robust operation / project support team that is one of the most powerful elements of this proposal.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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

Sub

period.

**Strengths:**

The applicant demonstrates strong capacity through its experienced staff (resumes in Appendix B), track record implementing Early College programs, and partnership with Ivy Tech Community College (e25-e26). The partnership with Ivy Tech is extremely robust, thoughtful and innovative as Ivy Tech has reach across the state, focuses on career and technical education and creates economies of scale by using Ivy Tech colleges to support multiple high schools in any given area / region.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant's strategy for expanding the project to a national scale lacks sufficient detail. While the proposal acknowledges the potential for widespread impact, noting that nearly 30% of U.S. high schools are rural and describing the Rural Early College Network (RECN2) as a "game-change" that can be validated and scaled across the nation (e14), it does not provide a concrete plan or specific steps for how this national scaling process would be implemented. The application might be strengthened by outlining a more comprehensive approach for replicating the program beyond Indiana and adapting it to diverse rural contexts across the country.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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 describes multiple dissemination mechanisms, including conference presentations, white papers, a project website, social media, and an annual summit to share practices and advocacy effort with legislators, policy makers, and external funders (e26-e27). There are communications people in place on the staff to help push this information out.

**Weaknesses:**

Many of the avenues for distribution of information are passive distributions of knowledge and are not necessarily active ways to bring other stakeholders into the work, such as social media and blogs.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 proposes several products with potential for broad use, including updated Early College rubrics and endorsement procedures, documentation of strategies for rural school collaboration, and webinars/trainings on Early College practices (page e27-e28). The endorsement process is an ingenious way to engage partner schools in a meaningful professional growth process that improves engagement and allows the grant team to guide and track partner progress.

**Weaknesses:**

The team's focus in some areas such as place-based learning and work-based education may be too broad to have an impact in targeted areas.

**Reader's Score: 4**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 15

### Sub

1. (1) The 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 a detailed logic model in Appendix G that clearly articulates the conceptual framework, including key components, mediators, and outcomes across network, school, and student levels (e28 and e119). This offers a strong overview of the sites of study in one place and how they work together.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant's logic model lacks explicit explanations of the connections between some components such as place-based education and work-based learning, and outcomes. The links between the mediating factors and outcomes with the network-wide and school staff support activities lack specificity. For example, Network-wide & school staff support activities are mentioned throughout the application but no clear articulations are shared that model how these support activities will address the mediation factors and outcomes listed on page e112.

Reader's Score: 4

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 specifies measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes. For example, the applicant sets specific targets for the percentage of students earning college credits, graduation rates, and schools achieving Early College endorsement (e19).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant's outcome measures and deliverables are unclear in some cases. For example, on e19 the application states that the School Leadership Teams (SLTs) will meet monthly to guide their EC implementation as well as focus on student needs. In many cases, the applicant lists activities that are not tied directly back to measures linked to the stated goals and post-secondary readiness experiences.

Reader's Score: 4

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 applicant's project design specifically addresses the needs of rural, underserved students through strategies like place-based education, college visits, extensive student supports, and pathways aligned to local workforce needs (e29-e30). The application also looks at promising state data re: Early College participation (e18-e19).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The application goals are clear, but it is not always evident how those goals are addressed in the field. For example, the applicant states that one of their objectives is to have at least 95% of EC students graduate HS on time (e131). However, the application lacks specific details on how schools will implement the proposed frequent, intentional advising by counselors, teachers, and leaders to keep students on track beyond mentioning that this activity will occur. The proposal might benefit from more concrete examples of how these advising sessions will be structured, what topics they will cover, and how often they will occur to ensure students stay on track for on-time graduation.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**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

Sub

**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:**

This area is one of the strengths of the application as the partnership with Ivy Tech articulated on e12 and e13 is robust and appears to be tested during the early phase of this work.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 application includes a strong research base around the power of Early College interventions to a wide range of student outcomes linked to engagement and attainment (e16-e17) including improvements in social emotional factors. Early College interventions that have a career technical education strand are a strong way to avoid tracking and increase student engagement.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not appear to be engaging in community asset mapping or making deep connections to families or a systemic way to look at student wellbeing beyond academic performance.

**Reader's Score: 2**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/02/2024 02:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/29/2024 05:42 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	13
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	32
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	17
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	62
<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	67

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

## 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: 13

#### 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 project team proposes to build on a mid-phase grant with another one that continues to expand its work in Indiana before moving to scale. (e13) The rationale that despite impact there are more lessons to learn and adjustments to make within a regional context before moving to scale seems reasonable, especially given how a subsequent mid-phase project would serve approximately 11,000 high school students in Indiana. (e11) The proposal makes a compelling, evidence-based argument that Early Colleges (ECs) increase postsecondary access and enrollment to underserved student populations. (e16) Partnering with Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) is not only responsive to the project competition but strategic given its substantial enrollment, dual credit provider status, and cadre of coaches. (e12) The project reasonably accounts for various configurations of meetings, convenings, and trainings to bring rural educators together in role-alike ways to improve instruction. (e13-14) The proposed intervention also creatively increases student postsecondary access through project-based learning opportunities, advisory programs, and college coaches. (e17) Increasing rural student access to and enrollment in postsecondary seems achievable given the proactive steps identified in the proposal.

#### Weaknesses:

This project proposal does not sufficiently differentiate what is different in the Rural Early College Network 2.0 (RECN2) with the prior RECN project. The proposal's discussion of place-based learning could have been discussed more. It is a substantial undertaking that receives relatively little attention.

Reader's Score: 13

### 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: 32

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 proposal clearly identifies and articulates a number of significant barriers, including access, teacher retention and quality, leadership retention and quality and costs. (e19-e21) The identified barriers are intuitive and supported by sound evidence (e21-e22), as well as information relevant for the rural Indiana context. (e19-e21) The proposed intervention is intended to be responsive to all of these various barriers. (e22) The response strategies seem to be appropriate.

**Weaknesses:**

The number of barriers is significant and perhaps too numerous for them to all be sufficiently addressed in the project. The project team seems to identify these barriers from research literature, rural Indiana context, and experience from the previous project. (e22-e23) The seemingly divergent nature of the barriers' foundations, however, appear to muddle the overall picture. Given the constraints already placed on rural high schools (e.g., teachers with limited time due to many varied responsibilities), a proposal focused on fewer barriers that are more fully detailed and will be more completely addressed would likely be a more reasonable approach.

Reader's Score: 7

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 makes a reasonable attempt to delineate objectives by year (e24) and report milestones with activities, responsible parties and timelines. (e24-25) Key personnel are identified and their key functions match relatively well to their roles and responsibilities. (e136-e137)

**Weaknesses:**

The presentation of milestones separate from goals, objectives, and other aspects of management planning and oversight makes it difficult to determine how all of these moving pieces fit together. (e24-e25, e136-e137)

Reader's Score: 4

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 proposal successfully demonstrates project personnel with experience leading and managing large, complex projects. (resumes beginning on e51) Further, the personnel identified for their various expertise (e136-e137) all have experience aligned with their roles. Aspects of the project conveyed in the project timeline and management plan are appropriately considered. Key partners are strategic selections that appear to advance the overall project, including continuing to build key relationships (e.g., Ivy Tech for services and SERVE Center from the University of North Carolina – Greensboro for evaluation). References to the experience of project personnel previously leading a mid-phase project successfully and Ivy Tech's role hiring college coaches (e25) are important information that increases confidence in the project team's capacity to oversee this work and ensure the work is completed on time and on budget. Based on their location, relationships, and history, the project team's proposal to focus on

**Sub**

expanding reach within Indiana, now, and then scaffolding regionally or nationally is appropriate.

**Weaknesses:**

The amount of coverage—FTE of 1.00—for just a couple of key roles (e208) seems to put the project at immediate risk because the possibility of turnover would potentially result in considerable loss of knowledge and leadership capacity.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**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 project team proposes a good blend of presentations and publications to inform both researchers and practitioners about findings and lessons learned. (e26) The presentations and publications also deliberately account for an array of consumer backgrounds, including focuses on research, instruction, rural settings, Indiana networking, and more. (e26-e27) The focus on networking within Indiana to continue to build high school networks, collaborate with Indiana Department of Education, and build on lessons from the first RECN project (e26-e27) promotes a change within the state that is potentially comprehensive and collective. In that vein, the proposal includes an appropriate distinction that dissemination efforts are, in part, about scaffolding toward scale, which might later be regional or national. (e26) The partners also appropriately note previously successful and ongoing efforts to disseminate at state and national conferences, as well as leverage various multimedia platforms for broader reach. (e27)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not sufficiently align possible project outcomes and studies with specific conferences, journals, multimedia, etc.—similar to what was reported for Indiana collaborations and practitioner uses (e26-e27)—to demonstrate an understanding of product relevance for national audiences of various backgrounds.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**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 project team introduces some innovative possibilities to increase product utility, namely sharing programs and staff as well as testing interest through webinars. (e27-e28) They also intend to continue to build and refine products they have already developed in their previous mid-phase project, products that they note are regularly requested. (e27) It is worth noting that a number of the products identified in the dissemination section also have considerable practical utility. (e26-e27) For example, they will produce a guidebook developed by coaches to “assist schools with student advising and credit transfer needs.” (e27)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were identified.

**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:** 17

**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 proposal team has developed a comprehensive, logical framework that details activities and outcomes for all three layers—network, school, and student. (e110-e119) The representative models are exhaustive, both connecting the layers overall and diving deep into each layer separately. Key components are clearly laid out and easily identifiable and understood, and activities are aligned. Discussing each layer in turn is also a clever way for the project team to not only distinguish between the level and activities, but also the evaluation (e.g., school-level meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) with reservations while student-level will meet WWC without reservations). (e113)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness identified.

**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:**

Goals and objectives (e34, e131-e134) are appropriately aligned to intervention content and stated significance of the project. The outcomes (e131-e134) are reasonably clear and measurable. The presentation of goals, objectives, and outcomes is easily followed and understood, demonstrating clear overall logic.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal does not convincingly tie student needs to deliverables.

**Reader's Score:** 4

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 proposal successfully demonstrates a need for this intervention to influence networks/schools and teachers in rural Indiana high schools to reach student populations “who have not considered themselves college material.” (e29) The resources and strategies, and especially the scaffolding of them (e29-e30), provide clear ways forward for educators and students from rural communities. Partnering for early college in rural schools with Ivy Tech and continuing to build infrastructure demonstrate a strong logic to make college accessible to high school students while building their skills. The project team strategically notes at different places their prior success in helping students realize and achieve postsecondary possibilities. (e30)

**Weaknesses:**

A number of seemingly important components of the overall early college (EC) model are only introduced at the end of the proposal (e.g., social/emotional support) (e29-e30). There is some lack of detail about their content and how they fit the overall intervention structure. Clearer ties between components of the EC model and student outcomes

**Sub**

would be helpful.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 proposal includes Ivy Tech as a partner to hire and oversee college coaches. Ivy Tech is likely to be an effective partner because it is the key dual credit provider in the state. (e12) The coach role is a critical lynchpin within schools to develop, train, and support teachers and students. (e17) Ivy Tech is also a critical partner to disseminate knowledge within Indiana. (e27)

##### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were identified.

**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 proposal underscores the impacts of COVID on student outcomes, clearly demonstrating the need for re-engaging students (e13). The project team makes reasonably clear connections about the need to increase student postsecondary outcomes throughout the proposal.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal's responsiveness to COVID and its impact on student outcomes is passive, noting overall changes in Indiana (e13) but nothing specific about the schools potentially served in this proposed project.

**Reader's Score:**     **2**

---

**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   07/29/2024 05:42 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2024 11:02 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	13
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	30
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	20	16
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	59
<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	64

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

## 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: 13

#### 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 application adequately describes promising strategies such as: (1). Providing teacher professional development on place-based education (PBE) which connects educators to their communities, (2). Developing teacher education pathways in high schools to offset the low number of teachers willing to work in rural areas, (3). Implementation of the Early College approach to help high schools to become effective Early College preparation schools and embedding early college within high schools to offer rural students opportunities to earn postsecondary credentials. (4). Adding/enhancing an advisory program to offer social-emotional support and college and career readiness. Data was also provided in the application to support the success of the early college program in rural high schools. (p. e8). The program will stay in the state of Indianapolis and will also scale up to the regional level.

#### Weaknesses:

The application does not provide specific details on how the teacher education pathways will create a teacher pipeline and/or a concrete example from the previous Rural Early College Network (RECN) program. Project Based Education is an extensive undertaking requiring teachers to have a prerequisite of pedagogical knowledge to implement successfully. The application might be strengthened by providing a description of the effectiveness of networking or specific data to support this strategy (p. e8).

Reader's Score: 13

### 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: 30**

**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 identified barriers, provided specific strategies to address them, and provided the rationale for each strategy for the proposed project. Examples of barriers and strategies addressed in the application are: 1) cost for college is decreased by providing high school students with an opportunity to complete dual credit/Advanced Placement courses in high school, 2) time for attaining endorsement to be an Early College is solved by providing structured time and coaching to ensure endorsement is achieved in an accelerated manner so students will not miss the opportunity to earn college credit and 3) addressing the barrier of the low number of teachers credentialed to teach dual enrollment courses due to the increase in requirements. The proposed project would address these barriers by providing tuition support and/or salary incentives (p. e20). Another strategy addresses turnover in leadership by empowering teachers to be trained as leaders and to have input on decisions regarding the curriculum and overall implementation of the early college program.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not state the new requirements from the Indiana Department of Education for teaching dual credit courses. It is unclear if teachers would be willing to take on these additional requirements in addition to their current teaching responsibilities. Rural schools often have only one teacher to teach the dual enrollment course per content area; the proposed project did not address this barrier. The proposed project might be improved by adding partners connected to the workforce within the rural community, such as The Chamber of Commerce, a bank, or a credit union, to assist with implementing the Project-Based Education strategy (p. e20).

**Reader's Score: 6**

- 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 successfully lists the objectives of the proposed project with clearly defined responsibilities and timelines, for accomplishing each task (p. e 131-134). The applicant includes a carefully thought out and robust plan to provide full scale operational support for the proposed project (p. e136-137).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant may not be able to reach Goal 3 which is focused on improving efficiencies to build capacity for RECN2 schools if the schools will have to provide the incentives. A possible barrier to achieving this goal is the ability to financially provide these incentives (pp. e23-25).

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 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 listed most key personnel responsible and supporting documentation of their area expertise with resumes and/or curriculum vitae (pp. e51-82). Financial resources to support capacity were provided through the detailed budget narrative (p. e202).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide details regarding the key personnel responsible for training and developing the counselors. It is unclear if the key personnel for this component of the proposed project will have sufficient experience in advising high school students on the various components of applying for college (p. 20).

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 provides examples of the various mechanisms that will be used to disseminate information on a local, regional, and national level. Examples of dissemination of information consist of documenting successful practices that will scale up to regional and national levels, a guidebook for College Connection Coach, and whitepapers and blog posts (p. e25 and Appendix J on p. e201).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not include a parent component to the program that would provide parents with information on how to support their children as they prepare to enter college. Some parents may not have attended college and may not be familiar with the entire college process(p. e25 and Appendix J on p. e201).

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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:**

A detailed list of publications to support replication and expansion was listed in the application. The proposed program also provided examples of products that would be available for use in a variety of settings. A list of best practices that could be used by educators in schools, as well as an implementation guide for other parties who need guidance in implementing an early college program, would be made available by the key personnel for the proposed project (p. e201).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not include a product that would help other school level and/or district leaders interested in implementing the program, such as a list of incentives used to increase the number of educators teaching dual enrollment or Advanced Placement courses (p. e201).

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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: 16**

**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 logic model supports the conceptual framework of the proposed project and clearly identifies concepts, mediators, and outcomes across network, teacher, and student domains (p. e28 and Appendix G)

**Weaknesses:**

The Logic Model did not clearly define the significance between its components and expected outcomes. Project-based Education outcomes and the Logic Model were not clearly aligned (p. e28 and Appendix G).

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. The goals of the proposed project are focused on Increasing student college readiness, strengthening education supports, and improving efficiencies to build capacities (p. e131-133)

**Weaknesses:**

The student leadership team mentioned in the management plan (pp. e23-25) did not focus on student needs. Project Based Education was not supported with evidence or examples of successful Project Based Education outcomes that were completed with fidelity.

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 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 applicant explains how the proposed project will address the needs of the target population, including their academic and social-emotional needs. In addition to the target population, the applicant addresses the need to complete endorsement successfully and in a timely manner (p. e30).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide examples of the new requirements the State Department of Education established for teachers to earn credentials to teach a dual enrollment course (p. e11). The plan did not provide a plan for assisting students who have been identified as English Language Learners and would need support to assist with any problems that might arise due to language barriers. Many of these students take Advanced Placement Courses in their home language.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 demonstrates a partnership with Ivy Tech Community College to assist in the implementation of the proposed project to ensure the target population of students on free and reduced lunch, and bilingual students are prepared for postsecondary education (p. e86).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 used research and state assessment data (pre- and post-pandemic assessment data) to support how the proposed project will provide evidence-based instructional support to help students earn dual enrollment credit. The proposed project clearly defined how it would expand access to rigorous coursework (p. e35).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant needed to provide data to support the number of teachers in rural schools earning the credentials necessary to teach dual enrollment courses would increase after the implementation of the proposed project(p. e35).



**Reader's Score:** 2

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/03/2024 11:02 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 05:35 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

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 #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

## 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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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 applicant plans to conduct a randomized controlled trial study examining the impacts on student outcomes (e31) and the proposed randomized controlled trial will integrate several student-level outcome measures that align with approved What Works Clearinghouse outcome domains, including attendance, course completion, college credits, and standardized assessment scores (e31). The applicant will use a within-school randomization design and provide a plan for mitigating crossover between treatment and control students (e33).

The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the What Works Clearinghouse attrition thresholds and provides a contingency plan for assessing baseline equivalence in the event that attrition exceeds those thresholds (e33).

The applicant clearly outlines how each outcome measure will be operationalized and what variables will be used in the subsequent analysis (e32). The applicant provides a robust discussion of the data collection and analysis plan, including how adjustments will be made for multiple comparisons (e138). The applicant provides reliability data for all survey measures (e140).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were observed in the applicant's proposal.

**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 applicant presents an evaluation plan that is designed to provide guidance for replication in other settings through a robust implementation study plan that includes the collection and analysis of a variety of qualitative and quantitative data (e35). The proposed implementation study plan includes an outline of the data that will be collected, how that data will be analyzed to generate findings about implementation quality (e37) and how the findings will be shared with the broader educational community.

The applicant proposes an evaluation design that will collect data on innovative program activities and generate data that will inform continuous improvement and learning throughout the project life cycle (e36).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were observed in the applicant's proposal.

**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.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant outlines outcomes and mediators in the logic model presented (e109-e112) and provides a clear discussion of each component of the logic model, including a discussion of how each component is operationalized and measured through the evaluation plan (e114).

The applicant provides acceptable levels of implementation through clearly defined thresholds for each component in the program model (e38).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were observed in the applicant's proposal.

**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:**

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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score:** 0

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/02/2024 05:35 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2024 10:37 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

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

	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	24
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	24
<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	24

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Mid-Phase - 7: 84.411B

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

Applicant: University of Indianapolis (S411B240051)

## 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: 24**

**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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented are very likely to produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. For example, the applicant proposes an RCT (randomized controlled trial) that will examine school-level and student-level (grades 9-10) outcomes (e31). The applicant will randomly assign 9th and 10th grade students to treatment or control conditions in each study school. A separate quasi-experiment procedure will be used to examine school level data comparing schools participating in early college programs versus those which have not (e34). These procedures should produce data that validly represent differences related to the proposed activities.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

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

**Strengths:**

The proposed activities include engaging the external evaluator in project planning from the initial steps in planning (e24). This should encourage the coordination of project activities with evaluative research and create a clearer picture of both implementation and outcomes for would be replicators.

The outcomes that are discussed as related to project implementation (e32) are referenced as corresponding to domains endorsed by What Works Clearinghouse (e.g., attendance, course completion, college credit, and college readiness exams). Data collection from these variables should assure generalizability of findings to other settings.

A dissemination plan for replicators includes a guidebook to implementation, a list of project resources and posting/publication of findings (e26-e27, e35 and Appendix J, e201). These resources should be accessible to replicators and provide detailed information for replication.

**Weaknesses:**

The evaluation team is not included in the project management plan (e131) and describes only an annual evaluation report (e36) as providing formative feedback to program implementers. This arrangement may result in a deficit of communication about identified issues in implementation and/or evaluation challenges that are not addressed in a timely manner and impact the execution of project components and data collection.

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 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 applicant provides a list of implementation study questions (e37) that are aligned with proposed activities and the logic model (e24). The examples provided for supporting activities (e38) include threshold measures for each

**Sub**

activity. This design should produce both outcomes that are directly associated with project implementation and a valid measurement of program fidelity. The early college rubric (e179-e186) also supports adherence to fidelity of implementation.

The staff and student survey instruments listed (e38) have previously been used in early college research and include measurements of their validity and reliability (e140-e142). The use of these instruments supports their use in exploring differences between treatment groups.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/02/2024 10:37 AM