

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2024 07:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	68
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	76	74

Technical Review Form

Panel #20 - Early Tier 1 - 20: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has proposed to create an arts-infused, inquiry-based STEM curriculum for K-5 elementary students supported by an evidence-based professional development program to train teachers and school leaders in three communities with identified need. The development and implementation of a series of training workshops, an intensive coaching program, and leadership development for teachers is an outstanding strategy for addressing the needs of their selected schools in three different states (e14-17). The proposed program builds on referenced evidence-based strategies as well as their own preliminary educational research on arts-integrated and inquiry-based STEM instruction (e15-16). Most importantly, their strategy of implementing the new paradigm for instruction focuses on implementation using a teacher and school leader professional development that will train all educators in the participating schools. This is a very strong strategy and should have a significant impact on the selected participating K-5 schools.

A central strength of the proposal is the strategy of integrating arts into the entire curriculum and providing training and coaching to ensure that teachers are confident in their ability to use the new strategy. Evidence that both the arts-infusion in instruction and extensive professional development program should successfully provide the needed training is referenced (e15-18). Another important strength is that the participating partners have demonstrated experience and success in developing art-integrated lessons aligned with core content standards. Furthermore, they have provided evidence of the effectiveness of similar teacher development programs improving teacher effectiveness and self-confidence (e16-17).

The proposal includes three selected participant schools in three different states with demonstrated need and evidence of learning deficits worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. These participant schools are especially strong candidates for the proposed project, as they have documented disparities in STEM performance, demonstrated financial need, and large percentages of English learners and students of color. The proposed strategy of incorporating arts into the entire curriculum and lesson design that embraces active learning and critical thinking skills development are evidence-based interventions that have been successful in similar student populations in the past. A strength of the proposal is that this evidence-based approach of engaged learning is very likely to be successful and should be easy to translate to other schools after the project ends.

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Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a helpful diagram depicting the conceptual framework for the project (Logic model, e18) identifying appropriate key support components, direct components and core activities, important mediators, and both short- and long-term outcomes. The references used for the proposed evidence-based strategies of the project are identified and appropriate (e18-19). The decision to generate key support components for teachers and principals will be important to sustaining the effort to integrate the arts into STEM curriculum. Furthermore, the professional development design including content development, coaching, and ongoing support mechanisms has a high likelihood of success as the strategy was previously successful in improving math achievement in grades 4-8 (e19). The proposed professional learning plan has an outstanding mix of training for project lead teachers, professional development for all participating teachers, and sessions for principals. The mix of types of participant educator training activities should be helpful to sustain a widespread adoption throughout the participating schools and building a community of practice.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The goals, objectives, and outcome measures for the proposed Arts-integrated K-5 curriculum are identified in a table on pages e20-21. Outcomes measures contain specific identified benchmarks of success that are ambitious but attainable. Goals, objectives, and outcome measures for the proposed professional development program are very well defined and should help ensure success for the ultimate goal of the project. There is a good mix of project objectives and activities related to both the curriculum development and the development and implementation of the teacher and school leader professional development programs. Both components of the proposed project are well planned with specific goals, objectives, and activity measures that address the ultimate success of the project. The table of goals and objectives contains clearly measurable outcomes, each with specific identified benchmarks e20-21). For example, for Objective 2.1 on preparing teacher leaders with effective mentoring skills, the outcome measure benchmark is that 80% of classroom teachers will agree their teacher leader provided adequate support for arts integrated learning (e21). The other outcomes measures are similarly well-defined. An additional table in

Sub

the appendices includes several project program objectives and identified performance measures with quantitative benchmarks (e191-194) that are achievable and appropriate.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant has presented a very thorough needs analysis for the participating schools and school districts (e22-25), identifying the schools underperforming in math and sciences, students with financial need, English learners, and students of color. Test score disparities on the latest NAEP exam for the school partners are documented and show significant gaps that will be addressed (e23). Math and science deficiencies are documented (e24). The data presented here appropriately demonstrates that these schools with student populations from lower socioeconomic populations and students of color had measurable gaps in achievement that were worsened by the pandemic. Most importantly, they documented that younger students experienced less academic recovery than older students following the pandemic and have fallen further behind. Participating school districts were identified based on having unfavorable academic needs that could be addressed with the project activities. Detailed letters of support were included from participating school districts in the project and also confirm the identified needs of their students (Appendix C, e83-89).

Another important aspect in the needs identified in the participating schools was their current lower availability of arts in their schools, and lack of ability of current teachers to find mechanisms to incorporate arts into their curriculum. The applicant states this deficit in arts education arises from either a lack of trained art teachers or consulting artists with expertise in arts integration in the classroom. This proposal addresses that deficiency and should assist the participating teachers with developing skills to incorporate art into inquiry-based activities in their teaching.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

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

Sub

personnel. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant has committed to hiring a Program Coordinator using a process that intentionally addresses diversity, equity, inclusion, and access best practices in hiring. (e78). The included job announcement has an appropriate description of job requirements and responsibilities as well as educational and job experience requirements. It is a significant strength that they have identified specific strategies they will use to solicit a diverse pool of qualified candidates for the Program Coordinator position (e79).

The leadership team from the three partner organizations are outstanding, with each leadership member having a wealth of pertinent experience in curriculum design and commitment to arts integration in effective teaching strategies as identified in the attached CVs (e25-27, e52-77). For example, the project PI from Arts Now currently oversees \$5.5 million in grants from the U.S. Dept. of Education transforming education through Arts integration in partnership with elementary schools across two Southeastern states (e52). The selected external evaluation team is similarly well qualified.

It was a strength that the applicant provided samples of individual resumes for the proposed Arts consultants/coaches, as they will play a crucial role in the teacher development program (e88). Even though full resumes were not included, and only a handful of the consultants were named, the information on the experience and expertise of those individuals was useful.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not included any sufficient information regarding the personnel from Georgia Institute of Technology and Xavier University who will participate in the project as content consultants. Therefore, it was difficult to judge how their past academic experience will serve the proposed project.

It is not clear how the applicant will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as no information was presented on how teacher leaders will be recruited, selected, and hired. Furthermore, no strategies for recruiting diversity in those teacher leaders were identified.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has included a very detailed list of personnel responsibilities, including roles for the leadership team members and contributing project partners (e123-124). The list is thorough, and the tasks appropriately distributed amongst the participants. The included timeline (e125-127) very thoroughly documents each activity in the project with milestones and identifies responsible parties. Activity responsibilities are detailed and include external

Sub

evaluators, university consultants, district liaisons, and arts consultants/coaches. The list is exceptionally well put together and thoughtfully addresses the activity needs and timing of the project.

The applicant has also provided a list of teacher leader expectations/responsibilities that is appropriate to the needs of the project and does an outstanding job of providing a detailed picture of how teacher leaders will contribute to the project (128-129).

The included professional development learning plan provides a very detailed picture of the plan for content will be designed, implemented, evaluated and improved along with a detailed table depicting the most salient activities in the professional development plan (e130-132). The activities are well described and address the objectives of the project.

The included lesson plans demonstrate the high expectations of the applicant for curricula developed as part of this program (e134-155). It was valuable that all the activities were appropriately correlated with State standards for each of the participating states.

The budget is appropriate considering the scope of the project (e181-190). Travel funding is reasonable considering the project spans a large Southeastern region of the U.S. Stipend support for the teachers and teacher leaders in the project is justified considering the amount of effort that will be required.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

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 has partnered with Xavier University, a private historically black university in New Orleans, LA. As a content specialist, Xavier will serve to assist in creating and editing lesson plans which specifically address the needs of the targeted needy student audience. In this capacity, Xavier University serves as a valuable asset to the success of this project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified for this Competitive Preference Priority.

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:

a) In the project design, the applicant has proposed that during the teacher professional development phase, teachers will be taught to identify the specific needs of their students, the assets available to them, and to implement arts and content area connections to utilize resources available to them to address deficiencies (e22).

b) The applicant referenced several educational research studies and their own preliminary studies indicating that this art-infused, inquiry-based educational approach is likely to provide the necessary interventions to improve academic performance in their participating schools (e14-18). Furthermore, the proposed teacher and school leader professional development program with training and coaching should improve teachers' abilities to construct and implement lessons which utilize arts-integrated curricula that motivate learning and help students learn contextually. The strong support system that is proposed with teacher leaders and consultant/coaches should improve both teacher effectiveness and confidence. It is especially important that they propose to train all teachers and school leaders, which should positively impact the greatest number of students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified for this Competitive Preference Priority.

Reader's Score: 3

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2024 03:42 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	67
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	76	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #20 - Early Tier 1 - 20: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes integrating arts into STEM to increase student interest and engagement in STEM, noting previous studies that show engaging students' STEM interest in earlier grades is linked to increased likelihood of pursuing STEM careers later in life (e14-15). Though Arts integration in STEM, often called STEAM, has existed as schoolwide models for at least twenty years, the applicant is correct that much of the literature to date has focused on improved literacy outcomes in these models. The applicant's proposal to more explicitly link arts integration to improved STEM outcomes is building on these existing strategies and fills an existing research gap in the field. The applicant further notes they will also be building on recent success in developing arts-integrated STEM activities that showed promising achievement gains in 5th grade math and science outcomes (e17). The applicant's three-state strategy is an innovative strategy to widen the impact of the proposed project (e10). When coupled with partner institutions of higher education in these target locations, The applicant is setting the stage for more efficient dissemination and the ability to better meet the needs of their target populations by establishing partnerships proximal to those populations.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not propose promising new strategies or build on existing ones for professional learning, instead relying on the well-established methods from Darling-Hammond (e16) and evidence that engagement with the arts fosters development in social emotional learning (e15)

Reader's Score: 18

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: 29

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes a logic model (e18) that describes a well-articulated conceptual framework. The applicant proposes to begin with a pilot study, building teacher capacity to implement the proposed program, summer training, and even pre-planned release time during the school year. Building teacher expertise prior to project execution greatly increases the fidelity of project implementation and will likewise increase the probability of the project achieving its intended outcomes: improved math and science achievement. These project activities are justified by evidence-based research (e.g. inquiry-based learning, eMINTS) and content standards that will provide the project with a clear focus.

For example, the applicant provides a summary table of professional learning experiences to reinforce the logic model's emphasis on building teacher capacity. These experiences are targeted at specific stakeholder groups, such as principals or lead teachers, and include activities critical to the success of any classroom intervention such as lesson modeling, structured lesson planning, and dedicated lesson design time (e20). The applicant's inclusion of unit templates and specific learning standards provides even more detail regarding their curriculum, such as aligning arts standards for relevant math standards (e135).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides goals and objectives that are specified and measurable for the project's stated purpose. For example, Goal 1 aims to development materials for arts integrated instruction, and Objective 1.1 will measure this by developing a standards crosswalk for arts and math/science standards in Year 1, which will later result in 18 content-aligned and crosswalked instructional units by Year 3 (e20). Likewise, Goal 2 is to build capacity of teachers to implement arts integrated instruction through their professional learning model, and Objective 2.1 will measure this by evaluating teacher leaders on the Teacher Leader Readiness Survey. Similarly, Objective 2.3 will measure teacher capacity using the Arts Integration Rubric and observing the number of arts integrated lessons delivered per month. Furthermore, their measures are also benchmarked, such as having "Stage 3" or "increase 10%"

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant's stated target population is elementary schools across districts in three states (e21) and teachers in these districts who will be implementing arts integrated instruction. The latter will not be successful without substantial training and support, so the applicant smartly included over 60 hours of professional learning available for teachers, including training for campus principals to better support their teachers and ongoing support throughout the grant period (e18-19).

The applicant notes systemic needs in their target schools, such as high rates of free and reduced lunch, along with the math achievement gaps for socioeconomically disadvantaged students and English Language Learners (ELLs) (e24). The proposed project states one of its intended outcomes is to improve math achievement, which addresses this need. Similarly, the applicant provides evidence of improved literacy outcomes for ELL students in arts-integrated classrooms (e16).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide achievement gaps for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in science (e24), although improved science achievement is a goal of the proposed project (e18). It is thus unclear whether the proposed intervention will be meeting all of the applicant's identified needs

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant notes that the National Project Coordinator position to be hired will prioritize applications of "an individual who identifies within a community that has been historically under-represented" modeled after best practices implemented by ArtEquity (e27, 77)

The applicant notes a project team that has a wealth of experience and expertise that will be able to implement the proposed project with fidelity. The Co-Project directors have decades of art education experience (e25-26); the Project Manager has significant experience operating federal grants for nationally-based organizations (e26). Similarly, the external evaluator has extensive experience reviewing and working on federal grant projects, including IES grants.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a robust management plan that is very likely to accomplish its defined project tasks. This includes a multi-tiered management approach that includes the project co-directors, regional project managers, and a core development team (e28-29). The applicant provides a five-year timeline, supported by a detailed management plan that includes due dates, specific project activities, and individual project personnel responsible for those activities (e125-128). These activities are also linked to individual project objectives, where appropriate. The budget is appropriate for the proposed project and well-described. Importantly, teachers are compensated for their training and implementation efforts (e187), which will reduce teacher attrition and increase the likelihood of implementing the project with fidelity.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 is partnering with Xavier University of Louisiana for STEM content support (e14). Xavier is an HBCU. Xavier will be providing content specialists to design lessons for arts integrated instruction specifically for target schools in

Louisiana (e132). Finding proximal partners to target schools demonstrates an effort to build sustainable partnerships.

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:

(a) The applicant notes existing assets are not currently sufficient to meet the academic needs of their target population (e23), exemplified by math achievement gaps between white and black students. The applicant states they will conduct a needs assessment at target districts to establish their STEM achievement needs and the degree to which they have become disengaged from the learning process due to COVID (e15). Additionally, the applicant's ongoing commitment to annual needs assessments (e16) shows an impressive commitment to continuous project improvement and being responsive to their target population.

(b) The applicant notes one of the goals of their proposed project is to increase teacher engagement through job-embedded coaching and modeling (e20), which they note will begin with an educator needs assessment (e16) and by encouraging engagement throughout the grant (e21) using evidence-based instructional approaches such as inquiry-based learning.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	67
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	76	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #20 - Early Tier 1 - 20: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

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

Strengths:

The application builds upon previous educational research on arts integration which demonstrated enhancing the social-emotional learning (SEL) environment leads to improving school attendance and engagement. The importance of SEL strategies in the post-COVID school setting has been a significant focus of the research community (e15). The application cites numerous recent studies showing positive results from integration of the arts in literacy with primary grade students and English language learners (ELLs) with recent research extending the integration to STEM (e16 and e17). The project design includes extensive professional learning and collaboration with district leaders to build a sustainable program that is responsive to the needs of each individual partner school representing three states (e17). The professional learning structure is somewhat unique. The integration consultants will model the lessons to the teachers and then present the lessons in classrooms as the teachers observe. This is a time intensive process, making the commitment to robust teacher professional learning a substantial addition to past practice (e131).

Weaknesses:

In many places, the application does not include specific strategies that will serve as the foundational instructional framework for the project. The application suggests that the program will demonstrate promising new strategies that are alternatives to passive, direct instruction without offering substantial details on what the new strategies would entail (e18). As an example, the project claims to use the arts integrated in high quality inquiry that would deepen STEM and arts knowledge through engagement in creative projects but what engagement in creative projects entails is lacking details (e19).

Reader's Score: 18

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: 29

Sub

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

Strengths:

The logic model (conceptual framework e18) is grounded in the human assets at the core of the project. The key inputs are all related to humans from arts integration experts to teacher leaders responsible for training and supporting participants to school administration who will dictate how professional collaboration time can fit into the traditional school day. All of the human components lead to the development of two core activities that begin with extensive curriculum development of integrated STEM units (12 math and 6 science) that provide the essential framework for teacher training and ultimately dynamic instruction that students experience in the classroom (e18). The first stage of anticipated outcomes is identified as changes in teacher practice. These changes logically lead to long-term outcomes that promote enhanced student engagement and achievement in the target subjects of math and science. The overall logic model represents a reasonable and ordered progression from project design to desired gains in student achievement.

Weaknesses:

Although the logic model demonstrates a commitment to professional learning, the project framework does not substantially clarify what innovative instructional components will undergird the project and offer alternatives to more traditional instructional models. The application discusses modeling pedagogy in the context of teacher professional learning; however, the absence of an underlying pedagogical model for classroom instruction weakens the overall logic model (e22).

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

The application presented two major goals with a total of eight objectives closely linked to outcome measures that succinctly capture the essence of the project. The first goal represents the foundation of the project with a two year initiative to develop the 18 integrated arts math and science units with deliberate effort to incorporate state standards from the three different states represented in the partnership (e20). The applicant demonstrates a careful and comprehensive commitment to developing the units with precise measurement goals that are both achievable and ambitious. This is exemplified through several capacity building objectives. One involves supporting administrators as they modify schedules and revise observation protocols so that integrated arts is possible and recognized as educational best practice (e21). Under the same goal. The application presents an objective that focuses on developing personnel who are well-trained, knowledgeable, and confident to carry out the project. The outcome measures also demonstrate a patient and progressive approach with increasing expectations for staff competencies and leadership growth trajectories (e21). Each of the stated measures has reasonable and precise timelines. For the teachers, this growth trajectory is measured using climate surveys that assess perceived administrative support for the implementation and for the administrators the progression is documented through increasing scores on an implementation leadership scale (e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant identifies two distinct target groups for the project: teachers and students (e21-e22). The purposeful approach to addressing both the adult and child learners is essential to the full implementation of the program. The focus for the adults is appropriately placed on providing professional learning on how to effectively implement integration strategies and build up content knowledge specifically for those that are not trained in the arts (e22). The project includes substantial professional learning time and embedded coaching that replicates research-based best practice for professional development (e19-e20). The applicant front-loads the training time, structuring the majority of the training in the first two years before implementation begins. This careful strategy should offer ample time for lessons to be developed, refined, and reviewed. Additionally, the project allots time for lead teacher training with the intent to prepare these staff members to turnkey the professional learning in their local school setting. The project also identifies the target student population that is considered high-needs based on percent of students considered economically disadvantaged, low baseline performance on state math and science assessments, and in many of the schools a significant percentage of the population are classified as English language learners. The applicant cites research demonstrating gains in achievement when integrated arts approaches are implemented. In addition to providing arts education to students who often do not have access to the arts because of financial limitations, the applicant demonstrates a commitment to equity by using only ADA compliant facilities, connecting Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to the curricular components, and making sure translation services are available for students and parents who are English learners (e171) Recognizing and designing for the target groups is an important feature that links the project to demographic data that indicates the target student population often has significantly less access to arts education (e24-e25). The application presents ample data as evidence that the target population is high-needs and suggests implementation strategies that will increase the students' access to the arts.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant encourages candidates for employment from underrepresented groups in the job description for the national project coordinator included in the application. The applicant presents a detailed job description with specific strategies and statements that overtly encourages applicants from historically underrepresented groups. The application also states an open desire to hire team members that are representative of the students that would be involved in the integrated arts program that is confirmed by the job posting included in the application (e77-e80). The applicant lists six key techniques that represent an antiracist recruitment philosophy. The guidelines provided demonstrate a full commitment to equitable hiring practices (e81). The project team consists of an extensive list of key personnel who bring unique expertise to the program. Notably, the co-project directors have experience managing significant grant programs and expertise as arts educators. The team also brings an experienced STEAM educator to fill responsibilities related to project implementation and the leadership structure includes regional directors who will facilitate the program in the large geographic area covering three states. The make-up of the leadership team demonstrates complementary skills modeling STEM and arts integration as mirrored in the program (e25-e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The application presents a detailed timeline for key activities with assigned responsibilities. The deadlines and schedule are varied based on the task. Some activities list annual events such as the principals' retreat (e19,e30, e126). The plan also includes specific dates for the summer workshops and defined milestones for completing the curriculum development and review (e125). The detailed plan clearly defines responsibilities and timelines and identifies key milestones marking significant shifts in the project. The management plan also presents an associated and reasonable budget providing evidence that the activities have sufficient funding and that resources are directed toward the two major goals of developing the curriculum and training personnel (e180-e190). Notably, the project provides significant stipends for teachers, lead teachers, and budget resources to support collaboration. The detailed plan provides a high-level of confidence that the program is well planned and will have the resources allocated appropriately to complete the project on time and within budget.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 project includes a substantial support partnership with Xavier University of Louisiana, an eligible HBCU. The partner would provide significant guidance and expertise in STEM content-area support. The university will collaborate with a technical institute to advise the design team on arts integration in STEM. This is a vital partner to the project and represents a significant contribution (e14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

- a) The project design includes a needs assessment with each partnering school district during the first year of the grant. The information would examine which strategies from the initial implementation are most efficacious in reengaging students post-COVID. The needs assessment combined with community asset-mapping would assist project leaders with the selection of additional partner schools for participation in the latter years of the grant cycle (e15).
- b) The project addresses the impact of COVID through evidence-based instructional approaches including professional development and coaching (e15 and e23). The application cites research showing students from lower social-economic groups and communities of color lagged in STEM achievement pre-COVID.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/16/2024 03:59 PM

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/03/2024 09:20 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	25
Sub Total	30	25
Total	30	25

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Early Tier 2 - 14: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 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 with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)

Strengths:

The proposed evaluation includes multiple confirmatory research questions—teacher professional learning and integration and math and science student achievement (e32)—that tie directly to project goals (e18, e20-e21). The use of a reliable, valid survey (e34) to address teacher outcomes and state testing (e34) to address student outcomes is logical. To answer these research questions, the evaluator reasonably advances a quasi-experimental design that includes nine treatment schools over two years, with 18 comparison schools from the same districts (e32-e33). The use of propensity score matching as a strategy to establish baseline equivalence between treatment and comparison groups is sufficiently explained and justified (e32-e33). The evaluator recognizes the need to not only check for baseline equivalence but respond with covariate adjustments, if necessary (e33). This study can meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations.

The evaluator also provides a thorough presentation of a power analysis, including reasonable assumptions about the numbers of teacher and student participants, assumed power of 0.80, intraclass correlation of 0.20, etc. (e32-e33). Their power analysis results in the determination of sensible minimum detectable effect sizes (MDES) of 0.28 for teacher outcomes and 0.24 for student outcomes (e40, e119-e120).

The analytic design correctly accounts prior student achievement (e33) and the nesting of students to teachers and teachers to schools, as well as controls for observable characteristics across levels (e33-e34). The conversion of scale scores seems appropriately considered (e34). The evaluator proactively recognizes the possibility of attrition (e35), identifying strategic ways (e.g., asking principals to sign MOUs) to reduce it in study schools (e35).

Weaknesses:

The evaluator does not appear to have a clear plan for dealing with missing data or joiners to the study sites (e35-e36).

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

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

Strengths:

The evaluation includes a number of robust, diverse instruments to collect data about different important components of the project (e36). The surveys, interview protocols, teacher logs, etc. are sufficiently detailed (e36, e104-e122) to suggest that a comprehensive evaluation with many feedback opportunities are in place. The administration timelines and analytic steps are sufficiently explained (e125-e127). For at least the last two years of the project, the evaluator clearly conveys a commitment to ongoing feedback to the programmer, emphasizing opportunities to share learning at monthly meetings (e36) and quarterly reports (e31).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear if the evaluator's role is limited only to providing external evaluation (e29-e30). If the evaluator is not embedded throughout the project, there would be no substantial opportunity for the evaluator to contribute to ongoing feedback or periodic assessment in the developmental phase (e123-e127), limiting their ability to contribute to—and provide a unique lens into—the ongoing learning of other aspects of the project (e.g., feasibility study).

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The evaluation design based on the logic model is robust (e18, e91) and sufficiently inclusive of clear project components, mediators, and outcomes. Survey and testing outcomes (e31-e33) are appropriate. Project components are sensibly aligned to program goals (e20-e21) and professional learning design (e19-e20). The mediators (and moderators) are clearly identified and related analysis well detailed (e39-e40). The proposal includes some explanation about how fidelity implementation thresholds will be developed (e38-e39).

Weaknesses:

A more robust explanation of fidelity implementation seems necessary to substantiate what the programmer believes are the most critical aspects of intervention and how they will be measured (e38-e39), even if they are working thresholds that subsequently require adjustment.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/03/2024 09:20 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/04/2024 10:34 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	27
Sub Total	30	27
Total	30	27

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Early Tier 2 - 14: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Young Audiences, Inc. (S411C240255)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 27

Sub

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

Strengths:

Overall, the information provided in Appendix J (e100 – e102) along with that in the project evaluation section of the narrative (e31 – 40) provides convincing information regarding the study's likelihood to meet WWC standards with reservation. The applicant describes a feasibility study followed by a rigorous cluster-QED impact study in three new schools in each district (e11, e32). The applicant's criteria for selecting schools for replication based on a needs assessment examining STEM achievement and the extent to which students have become disengaged from learning (CPP2) is acceptable. The fact that they draw their model for the curriculum units from related WWC studies is also a strength (e16). Additional evaluation design components that align with WWC are appropriate to the goals and objectives of the project and include the use of treatment schools (9) and comparison schools (18). The covariate-weighted multilevel model proposed to analyze impact on academic success is reasonable in relation to research questions and project goals as is their intention to use one-to-many propensity score matching (e32). An additional strength of the design aligning with WWC is their plan to examine intermediate outcomes after one year of exposure to the intervention prior to the summative outcomes after the full two-year intervention (e34). Additionally, the power analysis is robust, and the applicant addresses teacher attrition and efforts to ameliorate it, acknowledging the negative impact it could have on the research (e35).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address how they will treat the attrition of teachers or students in the data analysis. The applicant does not address joiners (e32-e33).

Reader's Score: 19

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

Sub

Strengths:

Goals and outcomes are clearly stated and the ways in which progress toward outcomes is described and appropriate (e37). There is a well-developed plan to conduct a formative evaluation, and as described, encompasses fidelity of implementation, delivery of, teacher participation, and usability of the resources developed and refined during the first three years (e31). The proposed instruments and methods are strong, and copies of measures and rubrics are provided in Appendix J (e100 – e102). The applicant clearly describes how the project will provide performance feedback to determine periodic progress toward outcomes during the first three years of the project (e36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide adequate information regarding how they will continue to evaluate progress toward achieving the intended goals during the last two years of the project (e32). The Evaluator does not seem to be part of the feasibility evaluation also the feedback loop targets the teachers but not to the project staff (e21, e29).

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. (5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant clearly articulates the key project components and outcomes for acceptable implementation during the first three years of the project (e31 – 32). On e39 measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation are described for years 1 and 2. Additionally, mediation variables, measures and analyses are well described for the 5-year span of the project (e39).

Weaknesses:

There is limited information on how acceptable implementation of key project components and outcomes will be measured during the last three years of the project (e 39 – e40).

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/04/2024 10:34 AM