

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/19/2019 11:07 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** IDEA Public Schools (U411C190117)

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

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Scored</b>
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	17
<b>Total</b>	20	17

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - EIR Early Phase Tier 2 - 12: 84.411C

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

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U411C190117)

## 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:

(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).

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

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) 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 developed a very good proposal that addresses the four evaluation criteria well. The applicant proposes a mixed methods evaluation design that monitors project implementation fidelity and impact. The evaluation research design should meet WWC standards without reservations as the applicant proposes a Random Control Trial (RCT). The applicant proposes a mixed methods approach to the evaluation that includes monitoring project implementation fidelity and an impact study that measures multiple treatment effects. The research questions in the table on pp. 18-19 are clearly stated and align with the project implementation plan described on pp. 11-15. The applicant discusses the instrumentation validity issues on p. 20 that demonstrates they are thoroughly considering the differences in instrumentation and other measures for determining project impact. The applicant also clearly describes the need for purposive sampling of interview respondents to ensure diversity of respondents (p.20). The impact component of the evaluation includes a paired random assignment of schools and offers a clear plan for comparison group selection/inclusion. The impact design should meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. The discussion of power and effect sizes are clear and demonstrate a strong project design that should provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings. The DID design provides a strong control for the lack of pilot school randomization. The applicant will implement the project in three (3) diverse states that should provide results that are applicable to inform different contexts and settings where IDEA schools are located.

### Weaknesses:

The outcome table on p. 13 would be improved by adding the benchmarks for each of the outcomes based on the historical data on pp. e-217-e-222). Also, more details on the continuous quality improvement plan need to be included in the application. For example, how often will feedback be provided to stakeholders, what stakeholders will be included in the monitoring and feedback loops and what will happen with the lessons learned from the challenges and successes of the program implementation. The logic model in the appendix (p. e-155) is very difficult to read and does not include benchmarks or measurement indicators. The application would be improved by including rollout dates in the evaluation

timeline in the appendix (p. e-147). It is unclear how Austin was chosen for the work-study component of the project. Since all the schools included in the research are IDEA schools, generalizability of results may be limited to IDEA schools.

**Reader's Score:** 17

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**Status:** Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** IDEA Public Schools (U411C190117)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	16
<b>Total</b>	20	16

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - EIR Early Phase Tier 2 - 12: 84.411C

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

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U411C190117)

## 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:

(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).

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

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) 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 randomized control trial (RCT) described on page 21 includes a random assignment component that should qualify the project evaluation as meeting WWC standards without reservation.
- The discussion provided about attrition (p. 22) addresses expected subject loss based on previous project experience and how unexpectedly high levels of attrition will be addressed to ensure valid comparisons between groups.
- The use of a difference-in-difference procedure with the baseline equivalence procedures described (pp. 23-24) will provide sufficient sampling controls to meet WWC standards for research with reservations.
- The qualifications presented for the external evaluator (e114-e121) show extensive experience in assessing CTE projects based in public school settings. This experience will facilitate the efficacy of carrying out the evaluation procedures described in the applicant's proposal.
- The research power analysis (e154) contained in the proposal projects that the variance explained by covariates will produce a minimum detectable effect size of sufficient size to indicate significant differences between treatment and control subjects.

### Weaknesses:

- References to effectiveness (p. 42) in I-4 (e377-e380) are extracts not the content of the previous research. This limits the ability to interpret how they can be applied to understanding the likelihood of achieving project objectives.
- Evaluation is not represented on the EIR Executive or Project Management Teams (pp. 13-14). This omission limits the means by which process evaluation information can be communicated to project implementers and can impact

the achievement of project objectives.

- Validity and reliability of the survey described as being used to assess implementation fidelity is not established (pp. 19-20). If items from instruments with established validity are to be used then those instruments (and their measures of validity/reliability) should be presented as well as the process by which hybrid instrument will establish validity/reliability.
- It is unclear if the interviews with teachers, principals, and staff and program documentation discussed (p. 20) will be used in calculating a fidelity score or if their use will be limited to interpreting survey responses used in creating a fidelity assessment. The method for how these individuals will be selected for interview is also not provided and whether the selection is controlled for bias is not provided.
- The confidentiality of interviews of central office, teachers, school leaders (p. 20, e143) is not provided in the applicant's proposal. The sharing of this information may create the possibility of negative consequences or intimidation for subordinate staff in school settings.
- The comparisons that the applicant proposes include three treatment conditions (p. 23) however all treatments are in schools with IDEA compute science programs. The applicability of findings to schools that are not IDEA (charter school) participants or who do not have existing CS classes may be limited due to self-selection.

**Reader's Score: 16**

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