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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)
Reader #1:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	8
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	15
	Sub Total	35	23
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	16
	Sub Total	20	16
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	21
	Sub Total	25	21
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	19
	Sub Total	20	19
	Total	100	79

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)

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: 8

> **Sub**

> 1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

>> **Strengths:**

>> The applicant explained two barriers impacting underserved students: student achievement gap and teacher effectiveness (pg.e26). The issues would be addressed by implementing the Optimal Learning Environments (OLE), professional development model. The applicant clearly provided the teachers and students to be targeted by the intervention (pg.e34).

>> **Weaknesses:**

>> Although the applicant described the two barriers impacting underserved students, it was not fully explained why the issues still persist in the targeted population and how the OLE model is an effective strategy to address the educational problems. The applicant indicated statistics about the student achievement gap (pg.e33) that were not clearly explained in the context of "underserved students." Regarding teacher effectiveness, the applicant did not clearly identify the issue(s) about this construct neither provided citations to identify it as an educational problem within the context to be studied. The applicant did not clearly articulated how the proposed coaching would impact teachers' teaching effectiveness, students' academic achievement and teachers' lower attrition as well as the connection to SEL competencies (pg.e27-e29).

>> **Reader's Score:**   8

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**

Sub

1. **(1) 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 stated goals, objectives, and proximal outcomes (pg.e30-pg.e32). The applicant provided measurable targets for proximal outcomes. The theory of change provided the outcomes of the proposed project (pg.e113). The applicant also indicated the implementation of highly-quality training and support would be tailored based on the unique needs of each school (pg.e33).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant did not match the four outcomes stated on pg.e29-e30 and the three outcomes detailed in the theory of change (pg.e113). In addition, the language utilized in both sets of information varies providing a different meaning about the desired outcomes. It is not clear how the proximal outcomes are connected to the outcomes of the proposed project.

   Reader's Score: 6

2. **(2) 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 provided statistics about the target population (pg.e32-e34). For example, New York City's Community School Districts (CSD) information presented FRPL data student race distribution; EOREN's data included FRPL and achievement gap; and SWWC's information included FRPL and achievement gap (pg.e33).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant did not indicate or define "underserved students." The information provided about the target population was not similar across to comprehend the magnitude of the academic achievement issue. The applicant did not connect the proposed activities to address the needs of the target population.

   Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant detailed the five components that include a Building Conditions for Success, Preparing Instructional Leaders, Supporting Teacher Development, Build the Capacity of School Leaders, and Formative Feedback and Evaluation to Measure Outcomes (pg.e35-e40). As part of the components, the proposed activities were detailed.

   Weaknesses:

   Although the applicant explained the five components and proposed services, it was unclear the connection between the training of instructional leaders through coaching and teachers coaching supports. The component of the capacity of school leaders was also unclear because leaders would perform component 1 to uncover gaps and needs. The applicant did not clearly convey a coherent program to develop the field by adding to an ongoing line of inquiry.

   Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provided information about staff/time efficiency through the use of instructional coaches and an ROI of 22% for the district (pg.e40-e41). The ROI determined by an NTC 2019 study seems to indicate it is due to higher teacher retention (pg.e41).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant indicated the use of instructional coaches to increase efficiency in staff's time, it was not clear how training teachers would increase teachers' efficiency in time. The applicant did not clearly indicate how the estimated cost of $225 would increase the financial efficiency of the schools/districts (pg.e41). It is not clear how higher teacher retention is due to the proposed program.

Reader's Score: 3

Scaling - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 16

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 stated four barriers with the district to implement the proposed project (pg.e42-e45). Each of the barriers were explained including the strategies to be used to address them. For example, the strategy "Integrate SEL skill development into teacher practice" would use the OLE model for teachers to embed SEL skills as part of the curriculum (pg.e42-e44); the strategy to adapt supports to local contexts due to the diverse contexts among the partners (NYCDOE, NTC, EOREN, SWWC, and NTC) (pg.e44-e45); and the strategy to provide online and flexible delivery options for participants in urban and rural areas accessing the different proposed activities.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant did not clearly explain the purpose of the coaching cycles when teachers would be trained to be able to implement the proposed project with fidelity. The applicant did not clearly indicate the integration of SEL skills into the curriculum.

   Reader's Score: 7

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant clearly explained two levels of dissemination of the information. The first level is a cycle of continuous learning for partners throughout the project to identify what activities have worked and why or what activities need to be adjusted (pg.e45-e46). The second level of dissemination would occur through publications, national events, conferences, and social media (pg.e46).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not clearly explain how the dissemination of the information produced by the cycles of continuous improvement would be shared among the partners.

Reader's Score: 9

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and Quality of Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and 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: 21

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly provided information to demonstrate the capacity to manage the proposed project due to the expertise and financial resources to meet the desired goals and objectives of the project. The applicant provided management roles and staffing information for each of the key personnel of the proposed project (pg.e68-e70). The applicant provided resumes of the key personnel for SRI International and New Teacher Center (pg.e71-e104) to demonstrate the skills and experience to manage and scale the proposed project. The applicant also provided letters of support (pg.e105-e110) to demonstrate working with partners during the grant period to meet desired goals and objectives. The applicant presented resumes (pg.e100-e101) to connect partner institution to the narrative.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant indicated the developing partnerships during the five years of the proposed project, the applicant did not clearly explain how the current conditions would allow for scalability in the region to be served.

Reader's Score: 9

2. **(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicated the federal funds requested would build capacity for the districts involved in this project during the first three years (pg.e48).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provided a budget (pg.e176-e185), the applicant did not provide a budget narrative to understand the different activities such as uncovering needs and gaps and teacher training. The applicant did not provide enough information to evaluate the cost of the proposed project in relation to the objectives, design, and

potential significance.

Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicated that the implementation responsibilities would be transferred to the partners using methods to support highly effective teachers (pg.e48). The applicant indicated building partners' capacity through the life of the proposed project (pg.e41).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide enough information regarding the continued support from the partners and their commitment. The applicant did not indicate how the transitioned activities to the schools would be monitored to ensure the implementation process continues as designed.

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) 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 clearly provided a management plan including goals, objectives, milestones, measures, activities, timeline, and responsible personnel (pg.e155-e159). The applicant stated the responsibilities and FTE for each of the key personnel for the five years of the proposed project (pg.e176-e177). The management was adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project including defined responsibilities and timelines for accomplishing project tasks on time and within budget.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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: 19

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 this notice).**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant clearly indicated a cluster-randomized control trial (RCT) assigning schools to control and intervention groups (pg.e49). The applicant includes mechanisms to avoid joiners (pg.e50). Statistical analysis to estimate the impacts on students, on teachers' outcomes, and on school climate were provided (pg.e168-e173). Power analysis calculations were also presented to achieve the WWC standard without reservations.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not clearly explain how the teacher and student attrition parameters calculations to be within WWC boundaries as well as bias due to non-responses.

Reader's Score: 9

2. **(2) 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 clearly provided a logic model including the key components, outputs, and outcomes (pg.e51). The applicant provided a mediation research question to explain the relationship between teacher practice outcomes and coaching and student outcomes variables (pg.e49). The applicant clearly stated the individual and site thresholds of implementation by component (pg.e160-e162). For example concerning coach assignment the fidelity of indicator is "Coaches assigned limited 1:1 caseloads," the individual threshold is "15 or fewer teachers on 1:1 caseload," and the site threshold is "80% of coaches." The data sources of each of the project components were provided to monitor the achievement of the threshold of implementation.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly explained the data to be collected from students (e.g., state assessment scores, SEL-C survey (reliability measures (pg.e166)) and teachers (e.g., 7Cs survey (reliability measures (pg.e167)) to measure the performance of relevant outcomes. Additionally, a school climate measure would be added to the student survey with a reliability measure of 0.72-0.79 (pg.e55).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/24/2020 12:34 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	8
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	18
	Sub Total	35	26
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	16
	Sub Total	20	16
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	21
	Sub Total	25	21
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	20
	Sub Total	20	20
	Total	100	83

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)

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: 8

  Sub

  1. (1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

  Strengths:

  The applicant identifies the achievement gap and teacher effectiveness (page 3, e28) as the areas in which this study will provide increased knowledge and effective strategies as a result of this work. Specifically, the applicant states that by improving SEL skills and learning through increased teacher effectiveness this project will enable partners to narrow the student achievement gap (page 4, e29).

  Weaknesses:

  A clearer connection between the proposed coaching and how it supports SEL competencies is needed. In addition, a connection between the proposed coaching and increases in student achievement that address the achievement gap is needed.

  Research that supports integrated SEL strategies with content as a strategy to increase teacher effectiveness is needed.

  The applicant notes that research on PLCs and 1:1 coaching leads to less attrition (page 4, e29). Additional information is needed about retention of teachers as a strategy for increased teacher effectiveness.

  Reader's Score: 8

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: 18

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant concisely states the overall outcomes of this work (page 4, e29). With table 1 on page 5, e30 clearly outlining goals, objectives, and proximal outcomes. The applicant includes appropriate measures and data sources for outcomes.

   The applicant provides substantial detail on the overall activities they will carry out related to this work (page 12, 338-14, e39).

   Weaknesses:

   Because this is structured a whole school strategy, in schools across three states, additional details on how the applicant will learn to understand the local and school context is needed. Knowing the local context can help avoid missteps such as introducing strategies the school already uses or have used in the past and stopped using for specific reasons.

   The overall reach to 1,366 K-8 teachers in 124 high-needs schools to implement a whole-school professional learning model (page 1, e26) over the five years seems extremely ambitious. More details on how this coaching model will impact all teachers is needed.

   Reader's Score: 7

2. **(2) 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 provides general data about the schools that may be included in this study (page 7, e32).

   Weaknesses:

   Demographics on teachers are needed. It would be helpful to know the how long teachers have been in the schools, their retention rates, along with the number of coaches available.

   Details on the ratio estimates used to generate teacher and student estimates (page 9, e34) is needed.

   Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant outlines a comprehensive plan for continuous inquiry for themselves as part of the structure of the grant (pages 10, e36 – 14, e39).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address how this project will provide a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry for the general public. The applicant provides many details on information sharing with participants in the study; however, details about how information from this study will inform future research is needed.

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

Strengths:

The applicant cites a previous ROI study that indicates their support yields a 22% return to the districts for their work resulting with increased teacher retention (page 16, e41).

The applicant indicates the structure of this model is to build sustainability in the schools that are part of this study through the gradual release approach (page 16, e41).

Weaknesses:

Additional details on how the applicant's coaching model is different resulting in increased retention is needed.

Reader's Score: 4

Scaling - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 16

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 provides a number of appropriate barriers (page 19, e44).

Weaknesses:

The strategies presented by the applicant are not specific enough to address the barriers presented. For example, siloing of SEL skill development from teacher routines is identified as a barrier, with the strategy to address it as integrate SEL into teacher practice. The applicant notes they will address this coaching sessions, but specific details about how they will integrate SEL into practices across the board needs to be addressed.

The applicant might consider addressing strategy 3 first in future applications. Understanding the local context is needed to define the role of instructional coaches is needed to adequately address the first strategy presented – integrating SEL skill development into teacher practice. The applicant may need to know what already exists at the school level before determining the need to change everything.

The applicant does not clearly indicate how this application is structured to be scaled beyond the partner schools in this study.

Reader's Score: 7

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant outlines a variety of dissemination strategies to share the results of this work including social media, publications, national events, and conferences (page 21, e46).

   Weaknesses:

   Additional details are needed on the types of publications and conferences that will be part of this plan. Also a timeline for the development and dissemination of these products is needed.

   Reader's Score: 9

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and Quality of Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and 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: 21

1. **(1) 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 key personnel identified have the skills, capacity, and resources to bring this effort to scale (page 22, 347), citing their growth in managing partnerships over the past ten years.

   The applicant includes the local partner sites as part of the overall management plan (Appendix I).

   Weaknesses:

   Although their resumes are included in Appendix B, the inclusion of the evaluation partner as members of the key personnel would have strengthened this section.

   Reader's Score: 9

2. **(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

Sub

Strengths:

Local partners are included as sub-awardees in the budget narrative, with adequate funds to support the efforts of this project (page e179).

Weaknesses:

Rationale is needed for why the NYC program lead will be paid directly by NTC and not through the subaward being made to the district (budget narrative).

Details on the assumptions used to come up with the estimated costs per student for this study are needed. In addition, because this is a whole school intervention, details on the costs per school are needed.

Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

Strengths:

With the focus on building school capacity, it is reasonable that some of the efforts presented over the school year will continue to be implemented.

Weaknesses:

The intervention is designed as such that the schools take on the costs beyond the life of the grant; additional details on those ongoing costs are needed. Without knowing the scale of those costs it may be difficult for districts to be able to commit to participating in this work.

Additional details on the number of schools that have successfully completed this model of working with NTC for a set amount of time and then taking on the recurring costs successfully would have strengthened this section.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes acceptable FTEs to oversee this work (budget narrative).

The applicant includes a comprehensive and reasonable management plan on pages e155 – e159.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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: 20

   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 this notice).**

      Strengths:

      The evaluator cites previous studies in which they were able to achieve attrition rates within the boundaries set by the WWC (page 25, e50).

      Evaluation design does include measures inclusive of student, teacher, and school characteristics (page 24, e49).

      Weaknesses:

      No weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score: 10

   2. **(2) 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 identifies the project's key components, mediators, and outcomes (page 26, e51).

      Weaknesses:

      No weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score: 5

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

      Strengths:

      The applicant identifies reasonable, valid and reliable data sources, including contracting with a partner to administer a student survey (page 28, e53). The applicant also identifies the use of the Tripod 7Cs Framework of Effective Teaching to measure teacher outcomes, which is recognized as an eligible teacher outcome in WWC's Teacher Excellence review protocol (page 29, e54).

      Weaknesses:

      No weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/24/2020 02:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)
Reader #3:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	7
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	20
	Sub Total	35	27
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	18
	Sub Total	20	18
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	19
	Sub Total	25	19
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	19
	Sub Total	20	19
	Total	100	83

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)

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: 7

> **Sub**

> 1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

> **Strengths:**

> The proposal cites compelling evidence that SEL is important, that SEL in rural schools is additionally important because of population characteristics, that improving teaching by integrating SEL practices is promising, and that this project targets students who would benefit from more effective teachers. The proposal cites research indicating the value of high-quality coaching and the value of incorporating SEL components in that process.

> **Weaknesses:**

> The specific contribution of this intervention upon SEL outcomes is unknown, though the proposal makes claims that assume a known impact. The key intervention appears to be the "Knowing Students" approach for assessing student needs as a basis for responding to them. But the proposal provides no evidence of the impact of this approach or other specific planned SEL supports.

> **Reader's Score:**   7

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 20

> **Sub**

> 1. **(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

Sub

Strengths:

Goals are clearly identified and logically linked to objectives and proximal outcomes.

Weaknesses:

None observed

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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 project is targeted at school districts with high proportions of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, and who are therefore both more likely to need and to benefit from improved instruction emphasizing social and emotional skills.

Weaknesses:

The claim that the processes used for training and supporting coaches has the "proven impact" of supporting teacher "to integrate academic and SEL in daily instruction" is not warranted. The proposal refers to these processes as consistent with those used to demonstrate changes in academic outcomes.

Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

Strengths:

The proposal identifies important contributions in this model at several levels in schools (i.e., school leaders, instructional leaders, coaches, teachers) and the conditions for supporting individuals in each of these levels. This work incorporates structures and processes that have been a part of earlier efforts that improved student academic performance.

Weaknesses:

This proposal identifies a comprehensive range of best practices in school improvement at multiple levels, but the particular contribution to the field is not obvious.

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

Strengths:

This approach sustains attention upon "high leverage practices" that can produce gains in student learning. This approach also appears to reduce teacher turnover.

Weaknesses:

The proposal is optimistic about how much of professional learning can be rationalized and organized to focus on this preferred approach, given the many other competing mandates, changes in curriculum, and training requirements in schools.

Because this general model has been used elsewhere for academic student achievement, it would strengthen the proposal to cite progress in other settings where "partners' capacity" has been built and local partners have successfully sustained this very intensive coaching supports model.

Reader's Score: 4

Scaling - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 18

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 identifies real and important barriers to optimal implementation of school supports for improvements in teacher practices. Flexibility in coaching options is especially important now, as teaching modalities are uncertain.

Weaknesses:

The examples of adaptation to local contexts are also examples of competing frameworks for improvement. Culturally responsive teaching, for example, is a powerful idea that research indicates is difficult for teachers to take up and use regularly. Trauma-informed instruction is a hugely important area that is also very demanding of those who want to implement effectively. Universal Design for Learning approaches ask teachers to rethink how they teach and assess all students in their classrooms. Adaptation risks shifting from the existing frameworks for social and emotional growth as defined (e.g., executive function, perseverance). One advantage of "siloed" SEL efforts is that it does not require teachers to integrate practices into their teaching moves. Expecting teachers to integrate into their existing teaching is a much heavier lift and is likely to require tremendous effort.

This is especially true given the thin resources the proposal identifies in the proposed implementation sites.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The project has a well-articulated process for internal ongoing formative assessment and has identified a broad range of in-person and product-centered dissemination options that have been used in the past and would be appropriate here.

Sub

Weaknesses:

None observed

Reader's Score: 10

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and Quality of Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and 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: 19

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant has prior experience with very similar Federally-funded projects and the institutional resources to manage the project.

   Weaknesses:

   None observed

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

   Strengths:

   Costs of $255 per student are reasonable for impactful programs.

   Weaknesses:

   The proposal makes claims at several points about the impact of this work, without substantial evidence. The program is described as drawing upon elements of other SEL efforts (i.e., PATHS) but the modality of PATHS, for example, is not integrated SEL lessons within existing teacher routines but separate and dedicated SEL lessons. The proposal offers no specific evidence that this proposed intervention is more impactful than other approaches because it provides no grounded evidence of its own impact in the priority domain, SEL.

   The strength of this model is its totality, as captured well in the notion of an Optimal Learning Environment. The comprehensiveness, however, makes it much more difficult to sustain. The risk is that an integrated model that is poorly resourced in the future will be less effective than stand-alone, easier-to-implement SEL modalities.

   Reader's Score: 2

3. **(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

Strengths:

The model targets coaches (or teacher who a school district can assign coaching responsibilities) who are employees of local districts, so these individuals continue contributing to their school districts beyond the term of the grant. To the extent that principal understanding of the importance of SEL and how to structure schools to support it, these efforts can also continue through the principals.

Weaknesses:

The model includes important supports from outside the school itself, and argues successfully that all of these supports (including assessments and feedback) are important to building and maintaining an environment that reinforces good teaching. These supports – including those of NTC's expertise – are not likely be present after the grant. Where the proposal should offer specific details about how to effectively support a transition, it relies instead upon vague language (e.g., "gradually release implementation responsibilities to partner sites using methods that will ensure an aligned, partner-owned strategy…", e48).

Reader's Score: 2

4. **(4) 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 identifies appropriate parties as responsible for each of the areas of work, with appropriate detail on activities and measures.

Weaknesses:

None observed

Reader's Score: 5

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: 19

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 this notice).**

Strengths:

The evaluation is based upon reasonable (and even conservative) estimates of effect size and other elements in the power calculation. Specific requirements to meet WWC standards are raised and addressed.

Sub

    Weaknesses:

None observed

    Reader's Score: **10**

2. **(2) 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:

All data components are identified, and proposed analysis described and justified.

    Weaknesses:

The model identifies substantial latitude for local sites to determine priorities. The analysis model notes that researchers will "pay close attention to local contextual factors supporting or inhibiting replication" (e52), but it is not clear how these will be used in analysis since presumably they will not be registered as variation outside of the model itself. It would be helpful if these contextual factors were delineated and their use described.

    Reader's Score: **4**

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

    Strengths:

This study includes outcome measures at several relevant levels for a coaching intervention, including changes in teacher practices as experienced by students, and student outcomes themselves. The measures proposed are all validated and appropriate.

    Weaknesses:

None observed

    Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/24/2020 05:17 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)
Reader #4:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	8
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	22
	Sub Total	35	30
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	17
	Sub Total	20	17
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	23
	Sub Total	25	23
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	20
	Sub Total	20	20
	Total	100	90

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)

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: 8

Sub

1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

    Strengths:

    The project proposes to bridge the student achievement gap and to improve teacher effectiveness by identifying a link between SEL and these two deficiencies. The desired outcome is to develop strategies on how to provide resources to high-risk students in an additional 164 schools, including 1366 teachers and 64,000 plus students (pg. e26 – e28).

    The intentional teaching of SEL lessons will elevate the need as part of the curriculum and the professional development provided to new teachers who are assigned to these challenging schools may result in improvements in practice (pg. e29).

    Weaknesses:

    More information about the strategies for increased teacher retention and improved efficiency – intervention not noted

    Reader's Score: 8

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: 22

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant presents 5 goals to achieve outcomes of improvement in the culture of the schools, systemic improvement of SEL skills for students, and a plan to retain the teachers (pg. e29-e30). Each district's uniqueness was considered in the plan design

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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 implementation plan considers the needs of each individual participating school. The applicant stresses the importance of addresses the unique challenges and the needs of the students because of these challenges. It was noted that each partner school district had differences in student race, areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, and the percentage of low-income students (pg. e33 – e35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed explanation of the components of to research and change in their optional learning environment and theory of change informational charts (pgs. e111 – e115).

Weaknesses:

More specific details on how this would bring new research to the field and the roles and responsibilities in alignment with the overall program goals needed.

Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

Strengths:

The project includes consulting with all stakeholders with identifying achievement gaps, student needs; improvement needed for school leaders and teachers and building sustainability plans (pg. e35). The professional learning and continuous coaching are likely to result in more confident and efficient leaders/teachers. Providing instructional coaching specifically for teachers will provide immediate feedback for performance improvement and provide directions on how to collect and analyze data for research (pg. e37).

Weaknesses:

The goals are lofty and well stated, but without time-specific measurements for achieving the goals, in the narrative (pgs. e30 – e32). The barrier for providing professional learning in rural areas was noted, but not addressed in a

strategy (pg. e40).

Reader's Score: 4

Scaling - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 17

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:

    Previous barriers were clearly identified and aligned with a strategy to remove the barrier (pg. e17). Additionally, the applicant addressed barriers and strategies specific to the partner schools to ensure fidelity and successful implementation of the program across the project (pgs. e17 – e20).

    Weaknesses:

    More specific details on how this project will be scale beyond the partner schools needed.

    Reader's Score: 7

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

    Strengths:

    Many dissemination strategies were suggested – a layered feedback process for teachers and coaches; sharing of this information with colleagues to prompt group discussions and brain-storming about what works; sharing finds at district meetings, national symposiums and events, external partner event information sharing and collectively developing sustainability workshops and action plans at various workshops.

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: 10

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and Quality of Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and 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: 23

Sub

1. **(1) 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 provides supporting documents that indicate strong financial resources, a capacity for growth under the current leadership; strong partner support and a plan for continued collaboration with partner schools and community stakeholders (pg. e48 – e49).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

   Strengths:

   Cost plan was included and indicated that the cost of $255 was reasonable compared to other programs. In addition to a good timeline for the activities, goals, and responsibilities (pgs. e155 – e162).

   Weaknesses:

   More information on how the cost was derived and about the compared program mentioned but without a resolution proposed.

   Reader's Score: 3

3. **(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

   Strengths:

   The proposal includes highly qualified personnel participation, a strong operating budget and reserve; letters of support for the project and fiscal contributions and experienced leadership (pg. e47).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 5

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

Sub

Strengths:

The management plan comprehensively covers the extent of the project including clearly aligned roles and responsibilities, a timeline of activities and project goals (pgs. e-155 -e162).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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: 20

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 this notice).**

Strengths:

The evaluation plan is designed to include screening to choose participating students; providing systemic professional development, coaching and feedback; and continuous monitoring to meet the WWC standards and to develop a baseline for research (pg. e50).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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 logic model, (pg. e51), includes key components, outputs, and outcomes in alignment with the project goals and with a flow chart to assist in implementation priorities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Sub

Strengths:

The analysis of data includes impact on participants (teachers/students) and the impact on the schools' climate to measure a successful intervention pathway.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/25/2020 10:56 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)
Reader #5:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		10	8
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		25	17
	Sub Total	35	25
Scaling			
Strategy to Scale			
1. Scaling		20	16
	Sub Total	20	16
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
Resources and Quality of Management Plan			
1. Resources and Management		25	23
	Sub Total	25	23
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	20
	Sub Total	20	20
	Total	100	84

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: New Teacher Center (S411B200057)

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: 8

Sub

1. **(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.**

   Strengths:

   The study plans to focus on embedding SEL teaching in each classroom as part of the classroom culture to limit the achievement gap.

   Weaknesses:

   It was not clear what new knowledge would result from the program.

   Reader's Score: 8

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

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

   Strengths:

   Training and development goals are clear.

   Weaknesses:

   There are no goals for student achievement measurements.

   Reader's Score: 7

2. **(2) 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:

   Embedding the SEL teaching is supported with well-trained coaches and the schools represent the target population.

   Weaknesses:

   There is not a direct link from the program to student achievement.

   Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

   Strengths:

   The study focuses on moving SEL training from a siloed program to one where all teachers practice SEL as part of their classroom.

   Weaknesses:

   There is no new approach to SEL training other than embedding into the schools.

   Reader's Score: 3

4. **(4) The extent to which the proposed project will increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources in order to improve results and increase productivity.**

   Strengths:

   NTC reduced teacher turnover, focuses coaching tasks on high leverage activities.

Sub

Weaknesses:

Nothing new is being tried to increase efficiency over their previous programs.

Reader's Score: 3

Scaling - Strategy to Scale

1. **The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to scale the proposed project. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 16

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:

   Four barriers were mentioned: Soloing of SEL skill, fragmented coaching, local need identification and inflexible delivery models and these were addressed.

   Weaknesses:

   Strategy to integrate SEL across the board was not clear.

   Reader's Score: 7

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

   Strengths:

   Dissemination through NTC events and communication channels, four conferences and webinars.

   Weaknesses:

   It was not clear how the information would be disseminated to partners.

   Reader's Score: 9

Resources and Quality of Management Plan - Resources and Quality of Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and 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: 23

Sub

1. **(1) 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:

   NTC has experience managing large programs over a vast physical area (360 districts).

   Weaknesses:

   None noted

   Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

   Strengths:

   Cost per student of $225 is reasonable.

   Weaknesses:

   The proposal does not provide evidence of the effect.

   Reader's Score: 4

3. **(3) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

   Strengths:

   NTC plans to build site specific skills and knowledge to continue the program.

   Weaknesses:

   Program relies on coaches and schools to support the coaches.

   Reader's Score: 4

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

Sub

Strengths:

Management plan over five years is sufficient.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 5

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: 20

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 this notice).**

Strengths:

This study meets WWC standards.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **(2) 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:

Components and mediators listed on p. 26.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The evaluation by Tripod should yield student achievement scores to compare against previous years as well as qualitative data on teacher effectiveness.

Sub

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/25/2020 10:42 AM