

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 08:37 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	18
Sub Total	20	18
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	16
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	19
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	
Sub Total	65	35
Total	100	66

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant offers strong evidence of the significance of the proposed project. The proposed project aims to address the lack of proficiency in writing in students with a special emphasis on the disparity between black and white students, The applicant supports their assertion with recent and relevant research that indicates that proficiency in writing is a gateway skill that increases reading comprehension, content knowledge and critical thinking skills (E25). The applicant also includes a research finding that indicates that 27% of all eighth-grade students are proficient in writing compared to only 10% of eighth-grade black students (E25). The proposed project seeks to address the low level of writing proficiency in the target population by promoting teacher training in writing instruction coupled with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) (E26).

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to include a sufficient amount of information on Social Emotional Learning and offer recent and relevant research on how this intervention would aid in the development of proficiency in writing.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant has displayed a comprehensive understanding of the problem they seek to address and the implementation of the proposed project will increase understanding of that problem and offer an effective strategy to address it. For example, the applicant plans to develop a project that improves the writing instructional skills of teachers by offering tailored support and training that includes SEL (E27). They offer recent and relevant research which successfully illustrates the current challenges of preparing teachers in the current COVID pandemic instructional settings (E28). Because the proposed project seeks implementation on a much larger scale and with a more diverse target population; there is an increased probability that it will lead to a much more in-depth understanding of how to address substandard writing in distressed school settings.

Sub

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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 applicant has clearly identified barriers that may prevent the proposed project from reaching the projected level of scale. The applicant has also matches strategies to each of those identified barriers and offers an explanation on how those strategies will effectively mitigate the aforementioned barriers. The applicant list the barriers; depth; ownership; sustained support; sustainability; and spread which are all clearly defined and are often impediments to increasing the scale of a project of this type (E29). The majority of the strategies chosen to address these barriers are research-based and have been successful in other projects of this type. For example, the applicant will address the barrier of sustained support by developing networks that embed the services within each school curriculum (E30). The utilization of proven strategies that have proven to be successful in addressing these barriers increases the probability that they can be overcome.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to include information or data collected during past implementation that led to the identification of the barriers that would prevent reaching a larger scaled audience.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant has identified several mechanisms and strategies that they will use to effectively disseminate project information. They will utilize conference presentations, produce manuscripts and a video designed to transmit their findings to a broad audience. These and other strategies listed will offer multiple opportunities for them to share their findings and lessons learned with supporters and other partners, stakeholders including practitioners and policymakers who focus on Pre-K-12 education. They also state that they will continue to communicate with an established regional and national network of similar projects (E32). This will increase the likelihood that their research findings and best practices will support additional development and possible replication.

Sub

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 16

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has developed a very detailed conceptual framework (Logic Model) that clearly represents the recent and relevant research that supports the proposed project. The applicant also explains how the logic model will guide project implementation and scaling of the proposed project by embedding targeted activities (coaching, data use, & networking) to build capacity, develop the model and scale implementation. The quality of the framework is enhanced by its division into short and long-term outcomes that are based on the project participants (inputs) and activities that are organized by level (E34).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant has developed a set of definitive goals, which are linked to objectives and outcomes that are clearly specified and measurable. The goals are aligned with the overall purpose of the proposed project (E37). For example, the primary goal of the proposed project is to improve student writing and several objectives aim to offer targeted professional development to teachers as well as implementing strategies within the classroom to students to achieve that goal (E37&E38). The objectives are measurable as evidenced by their language and include changes to both adult and student behavior. For example; the measurable outcomes include both the frequency of teacher-targeted implementation of strategies and the specific data collection intervals which depict student outcomes on assessment instruments (E38).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

- 3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will**

Sub

successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

Strengths:

The applicant has designed a project that will somewhat effectively address the needs of the target population by combining strategies that will improve academics outcomes.. The primary focus of the proposed project is to improve teacher writing instructional techniques and part of their plan is to implement and scale the project within a model that is grounded in a local context (E39). The teachers (participants) will model lessons that use local curricular materials, prioritizing those that are the most complex, culturally responsive, and maintain high rigor (E39). These lessons will be drawn from their school-developed curricula, core reading programs, or social studies programs (E39). These specific and localized efforts will increase familiarity and possibly promote acceptance of the proposed project strategies.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to include specific information on how Social Emotional Learning would successfully address the needs of the target population. In addition, there was lack of information on the target population that will be served in the proposed project.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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 clearly outlined their capacity to effectively bring the proposed project to scale on a national level (E40). Evidence of this capacity is illustrated in the qualified personnel chosen to lead the proposed project. The applicant lists prior team-led Institute of Educational Science contracts that evaluated Literacy and SEL Interventions and include AIR personnel and their accomplishments in program evaluation and implementation (E41). The utilization of personnel with these qualifications increases the likelihood of effective implementation and management of the proposed project. The applicant includes a list of lead key personnel who will direct the implementation of the proposed project. Each personnel listed has direct experience contributing to the components of the proposed project and/or has relevant experience leading a grant-funded project of this kind (E41). The personnel listed have the relevant training and expertise to implement the proposed project effectively.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has developed a comprehensive timeline, which effectively illustrates how the proposed project will be implemented. The timeline includes time frames as well as the key personnel positions responsible for the implementation of the activity. For example, the timeline is divided into years 1-5 and the applicant lists the activities that will occur in each of the project years. Year 1 includes activities like recruitment and preparation, while subsequent years focus on implementation and evaluation (E43). The activities are aligned to the project goals and objectives which increases the likelihood that the project will be completed on time and within budget (E42).

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to sufficiently list specific milestones that would be met for each phase of the proposed project. While there are milestones listed in the headings throughout Exhibit 5 (E43); the applicant fails to align the specific activities that will lead to reaching specific objectives.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant offers clear evidence that the costs outlined in the proposed project budget are reasonable in relation to the objective, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The Budget Narrative illustrates how the project seeks to benefit a target population of 2,000 lead teachers and 50,000 students with plans to build capacity that will extend into the future making it cost-effective (E160).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 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:

Sub

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

Strengths:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2021 08:37 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	
Sub Total	15	
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	
Sub Total	20	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	18
Sub Total	65	18
Total	100	18

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score:

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

Sub

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Sub

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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: 18

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

The independent evaluation specifies a delayed treatment randomized controlled trial with 100 schools selected from a total of four states and then blocked by district prior to random assignment into treatment and comparison conditions (e45) with a total of 50 schools in each condition. This approach is aligned with the requirements to meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations and, if implemented well, will yield estimates of the project's effectiveness. Student and teacher outcome measures are aligned to the domain of interest providing evidence of face validity (e46-47). The measures chosen for teacher and student outcomes show general evidence of reliability (e145-148). The effect size calculations are clear and appropriate for the specified research questions (e149-153). Randomization will occur after teachers have provided informed consent to participate (e15) and at the beginning of the first intervention year (e48), both of which will minimize attrition. Data will be collected for baseline equivalence, if needed due to high attrition, and to use in the estimation of treatment effects (e49). The handling of missing data is appropriate and includes imputing missing values on covariates using multiple imputation by condition (e153). Teachers and students with missing outcome measures will be excluded from impact analyses. Teachers who join the school after the start of the study will not be included in the analytic samples, which presents a clear strategy (e47-48). A comprehensive discussion of the power analysis is presented and includes information on the key assumptions and the impact of different levels of attrition up to 20 percent (e138-140). Hierarchical linear modeling will be used to estimate treatment effects for the primary impact questions (e49). This is an appropriate approach given the design and the need to account for the effect of clustering. Models appropriately include fixed effects to account for the randomization blocks.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The comparison condition is business-as-usual (e45). However, because this study will be implemented in four states, business-as-usual may vary greatly. This application might be strengthened by describing the comparison condition in each state and contrasting this with the treatment condition. The plans do not include a discussion of collecting student rosters to assist with tracking of students from year to year. If attrition is high, teacher and student rosters will be needed to examine nonresponse rates and representativeness of the analytic sample. Given the intent-to-treat analysis, it is not clear whether teachers moving within the district will remain in the sample. This application might be strengthened with more information on how students will be included or excluded in year 2, since only students taught by teachers participating in the study will be included in the analytic sample (e48). It is not clear if the student sample is a longitudinal sample or an annual cross-sectional sample. Reliability data is provided for each type of measure but is not comprehensive to address all measures. For example, reliability data is provided for the Michigan state assessments but not for the other state or district assessments (e145-146). This application might be strengthened by providing more information on the district assessments and, more importantly, how assessment data will be combined across all districts and states into a single valid and reliable outcome measure for use in answering the respective impact question. The WWC requires the Benjamini-Hochberg correction to account for multiple confirmatory comparisons within the same domain and this correction is missing in the analysis discussion.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The plan demonstrates the feasibility of providing guidance about effective strategies through the multiple sources of implementation data collected from both teachers and school-level Point Person Coaches (PPCs) (e142). PPCs will complete logs throughout the study period, surveys in the fall and spring each year, and interviews each spring. A random sample of teachers will participate in interviews each spring as well as complete a survey of writing instruction. Data collection will come from four very diverse states with varying numbers of high-need schools (e141), with many rural high-need schools eligible to be included in the sample. This diversity will provide a rich sample for understanding the effectiveness of the intervention in multiple settings. The approach includes both qualitative data (interviews and surveys) as well as quantitative data (moderation analyses). The use of the differential impact analyses to assess the extent to which the impact of the program is moderated by the characteristics of students, teachers/classrooms, and schools will help to triangulate the results of the findings from teacher and coach interviews and surveys.

Weaknesses:

Information on the final planned composition of the study sample is not provided to ensure that a diverse sample of schools is nominated and selected from the diverse set of states.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The research questions provide a meaningful framework for the evaluation (e44-45). The evaluation plan is aligned to the key project components and short-term and long-term outcomes specified in the project's logic model (e112). A research question is devoted to understanding whether the effect of SRSD on student outcomes is mediated by classroom instruction as measured by the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) (e151). Important information will be gleaned from the use of two mediation models: a single-mediator model that estimates the overall mediating effect of classroom instruction (using the CLASS overall score) and a multiple-mediator model

Sub

using each of the three CLASS domains.

Weaknesses:

Measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation are not provided in the evaluation plan. Details are provided on the steps that will be used in the future to identify quantifiable implementation indicators for the key activities in the logic model (e50). As such, the thresholds and their appropriateness could not be evaluated.

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	
Sub Total	15	
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	
Sub Total	20	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	19
Sub Total	65	19
Total	100	19

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score:

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

Sub

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Sub

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

The research methods described by the applicant (e51) for the collection and analysis of the quantitative outcome measures for this study are stringent and in compliance with the WWC (What Works Clearinghouse) standards for a rigorous study with reliable results. The Hierarchical Linear Modeling (e49) proposed for teacher, school, and student outcome analysis is an effective tool for the analysis of nested data and covariates as described by the applicant. The procedure has the potential to allow the researchers to accurately describe significant differences between treatment groups.

The instrumentation validity is presented in Appendix J.11(e146-e148) for the non-ELA/writing measures to be utilized. This assures that the data collected via these measures can reliably be used to capture statistically significant differences between treatment groups.

The applicant has planned for significant participant attrition levels and demonstrated acceptable Minimal Detectable Effect Size(e48) levels for up to 20% attrition (e139-140). The reality of frequent teacher/student mobility within the public-school setting is addressed by these activities and should assure that findings are valid.

Weaknesses:

The research methods described by the applicant (e51) for the collection and analysis of the quantitative outcome measures for this study are stringent and in compliance with the WWC (What Works Clearinghouse) standards for a

Sub

rigorous study with reliable results. The Hierarchical Linear Modeling (e49) proposed for teacher, school, and student outcome analysis is an effective tool for the analysis of nested data and covariates as described by the applicant. The procedure has the potential to allow the researchers to accurately describe significant differences between treatment groups.

The instrumentation validity is presented in Appendix J.11(e146-e148) for the non-ELA/writing measures to be utilized. This assures that the data collected via these measures can reliably be used to capture statistically significant differences between treatment groups.

The applicant has planned for significant participant attrition levels and demonstrated acceptable Minimal Detectable Effect Size(e48) levels for up to 20% attrition (e139-140). The reality of frequent teacher/student mobility within the public-school setting is addressed by these activities and should assure that findings are valid.

Weaknesses: The applicant's proposal discusses using "qualitative analytic procedures" to examine teacher interview data (e51). The applicant does not specify the qualitative data analysis procedure to be utilized or how the results of the analysis are to be validated. This calls into question the utility of the data derived from these interviews in explaining differences in implementation and/or impact.

The applicant proposes in Exhibit J.11.1 (e145) that standardized Michigan Department Of Education ELA and Writing tests be used to collect student achievement/progress data. The applicant does not present a discussion of how students in the other participating states (AK, CN, MA) will access the Michigan assessments if that is plan or data regarding other state ELA/Writing instruments if the applicant plans on using these (e47). In the first condition there are threats to data validity in issues such as the impact of previous testing experience/preparation; in the latter case testing fatigue for students outside of Michigan could also threaten the comparability of scores across states.

In the description of the sampling technique to be used in selecting control and participant schools (e47) the applicant does not describe how cluster sampling will be used to select the 100-school sample. It is unknown whether sampling will be proportional to eligible/nominated schools within a state or some other (rural/urban; FRL level, school achievement status, etc.) independent variable. Without this knowledge the ability of the applicant to provide comparisons between demographic groups will be constricted and outcomes may not validly capture differences between groups.

The schools to be included in the study are "nominated" by their state. Teachers selected within schools must agree to participate in the evaluative process. These two factors limit the "randomness" of the sampling process and can introduce sampling bias into the data collected.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes several steps to protect the outcomes of their evaluation against threats to validity that might limit the applicability of the findings across settings. Among others, these activities include delayed implementation with control teachers (e45), protection against intra-teacher contamination (e45), a pre-determined standard for effective implementation (e50), and the inclusion of multiple school settings and varied participant demographics (e52) in the research sample.

The applicant also provides for reliability of data through multi-observer checks on classroom observation (CLASS) (e46) and student writing samples (e47). The validity/reliability of these two measures is critical for any statistically valid outcome of the research findings.

The data sharing and dissemination plans described by the applicant (E134) will assist other researchers in

Sub

interpreting and replicating the findings provided by the applicant. Exhibit J.6.1 (e134-e136) delineates data sharing availability and demonstrates the willingness of the project to provide information that can assist in external replication.

Weaknesses:

The inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative techniques by the applicant requires a plan for how the mixed methods are to be integrated in the analysis of the data and interpretation of the results. Lacking this plan, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of the evaluative operation or the reliability of the findings in interpreting the outcomes.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a description of the implementation measures to used in the interpretation of research findings on differences in performance between groups(e50-e51).

The analysis and modeling of mediating and moderating variables (e151-e152) that can impact project outcomes described by the applicant assure that predictable intervening effects are accounted for and that conclusions regarding the impact of the intervention are interpreted accurately.

The outcome and intervening measures that are described as constituting the analysis plan are aligned with the program theory model (e112) and will validate or challenge the model effectively based on findings of differences within and between research groups.

The objectives table (e37-e38) describes project outcomes that are connected with the proposed activities and reflected in the project logic model. The establishment of the parameters to be included in the evaluation analysis supports the evaluation plan and increases the likelihood of that any findings accurately reflect the result of the intervention.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant describes the collection of implementation data, the explicit criteria for establishing the 60% threshold are incomplete (e50-e51). More information is required to assess whether the effective implementation level can be substantiated for the study. The implementation variable therefore may not accurately establish the degree of fidelity in the impact analysis.

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2021 01:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 12:49 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	20	18
Sub Total	20	18
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Quality of the Management	20	19
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	
Sub Total	65	34
Total	100	65

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion - 1: 84.411A

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Providence College (S411A210005)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

1. (1) The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant includes elements that support a national significance for the writing issues among students (p. e25). The application includes research from the National Clearinghouse that reports statistics for all students and for black students in the United States, which demonstrates the national level of need for writing (p. e25). This project, if successfully implemented, would significantly address these needs. In addition, the project notes the lack of impact that current teaching practices are having on writing aptitude in students (p. e26), and demonstrates how this project will impact participating students.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include sufficient discussion surrounding the national significance of SEL (social emotional learning), which is a primary component of the project (p. e26). For example, the applicant simply includes a recommendation based on a single article noting that it is imperative to include SEL but does not provide specifics around need or justification (p. e26).

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The project includes a clear justification for continued research to provide research data regarding the impact of the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) approach (p. e27). The application notes that previous studies have not been conducted in a manner that would provide clear guidance to future researchers and those who would like to implement the SRSD program. In addition, the designed approach takes into consideration potential barriers to sufficiently scale the data collected from the project (p. e27). For example, the study will include a large, diverse sample, which will increase the power of the statistical analysis and improve upon previous studies that have been small and uniform (p. e27).

Sub

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

Strategy to Scale - 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 applicant includes several specific barriers and proposed solutions to address the potential concerns (p. e28). The barriers presented address both attitudes (p. e29) and teacher practice (p. e28) that could impact the scaling of the intervention. The strategies presented are focused and clearly articulated in a manner that would allow for thorough implementation. For example, the project addresses concerns directly related to teachers (p. e28) such as buy-in and ownership by recording success stories from previous teachers. In addition, the project addresses concerns directly related to administrators (p. e31) by building strong networks and integrating the work into normal routines and systems.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear what data or information was used to identify the barriers discussed in the application (p. e29). For example, the applicant notes that Barrier 2 – Ownership Buy-in is generally experienced by all types of programs (p. e29).

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes clear strategies that will be used to disseminate the information collected in the project which will allow for others to use the data towards replication. For example, the applicant will build on developed networks in state education agencies to share practices and receive feedback from recognized experts (p. e33). The variety of mechanisms used to disseminate the findings from the project will be beneficial to future users, such as videos and presentations (p. e34).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 15

Sub

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

Strengths:

The project includes a clearly defined framework that will guide the implementation of the proposed activities (p. e123). The inclusion of an instructional model, specific implementation practices and assessment data from participating students will serve as a useful guide and metric for the applicant (p. e33). The logic model (p. e112) and the implementation model (p. e35) demonstrate clear activities associated with expected outcomes that are driven by the proposed framework.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Most of the project goals and objectives are clearly outlined in the proposal and are associated with outcomes that are measurable (p. e37). For example, the project includes a goal to support preparation to implement, redeliver and entrench SRSD in schools at scale and provide 5 objectives that address this goal (p. e37). One objective relates to professional learning delivery and will be measured by surveys to teachers, Point Person Coaches (PPC) and Local Education Agencies which will provide data related to effectiveness and satisfaction (p. e37). The objectives include language that addresses both adult and student behavior which will support implementation with all groups by future users (p. e38).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear if some of the outcomes are rigorous enough for a project of this magnitude. For example, during a 5-year project only 3 attempts will be made to reach out to surrounding districts (p. e37). With the size and number of states and schools involved in the project, it would be expected that there will be many opportunities to share and disseminate information which would create many recruitment opportunities, but the authors will only attempt 3 such outreach activities. Also, it is only expected that 60% of trained teachers will implement learned strategies (p. e38). It is unclear how the 60% threshold was obtained and if this would constitute a significant impact.

Reader's Score:

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

Sub

Strengths:

The project design is clearly aligned to the needs of teachers who would be involved in the project (p. e38). For example, the project will include local context into the implementation plan to allow for adaptation in a variety of situations (p. e39). In addition, the design will highlight instructional activities that would adapt to teacher needs to address unique students (p. e39).

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes that the proposed project will address the needs of high needs students, particularly those negatively impacted by the pandemic (p. e39), but there is no data to connect specific needs identified in these students with the project activities. For example, it is unclear what specific issues students who were impacted by the pandemic will be addressed by the proposed intervention. It is unclear who the target students are or if they are simply all students in the United States.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 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 proposal clearly identifies personnel with sufficient capacity and expertise to manage a project of this size and scope (p. e41). For example, the application, thinkAUM has extensive experience with the proposed intervention working with over 50,000 teachers (p. e41). Also, the Project Director (PD) has served as a PD on other grants of this scope and size and will bring experience needed for direction and execution (p. e41). The inclusion and involvement of state education agencies to recruit and provide some level of professional development will serve to allow for adaptation to the local context and embed the work in other state level initiatives (p. e40).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The proposal includes an outline of each objective when the objective should be addressed during the project activities and the generally responsible parties (p. e43). For example, student outcome data (Objective 3.3) will be

Sub

collected by teachers, PPCs, and the LEAs on an identified schedule during the grant period (p. e43). The outlined process of formative evaluation during the implementation of the project will address barriers and ensure activities are occurring on schedule and within budget (p. e42).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not include clear milestones for the implementation of the planned activities. For example, Goal 2.2 notes that networks will be operated to sustain the intervention, but it is unclear how the identified years in Exhibit 5 (p. e43) will guide the implementation of these networks. The proposal notes on pg. e33 that these networks are already in place, but the management plan does not provide the detail necessary to guide the implementation through milestones.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The proposed costs associated with the project are reasonable and fully explained in the budget narrative (p. e159). The budget clearly outlines how funding will be used to provide resources to adequately implement activities that will address desired outcomes identified in the project (p. e158). For example, funds will be used to purchase supplies, manuals and books necessary to provide the planned Professional Learning (p. e160). The expenditures appear to be adequate to achieve the goals of the project. For example, sufficient funding is allocated to salaries which would allow for the expertise needed for the project (p. e160). In addition, the American Institutes of Research (AIR) budget proposal addresses all of the required evaluative and data collection activities that would be required to scale this grant (p. e163).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

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:

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

NA

Sub

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2021 12:49 PM