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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	0
Sub Total	50	0
Resources & Management Plan		
Resources & Management Plan		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	0
Sub Total	25	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	20
Sub Total	25	20
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP3		
CPP3		
1. CPP3	5	
Sub Total	5	
Total	115	20

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - EIR Early Phase - 13: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: **0**

   Sub

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

      Strengths:

      Weaknesses:

      Reader's Score:

   2. **The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.**

      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: 0

    Sub

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

      Strengths:

      Weaknesses:

      Reader's Score:

    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:

Resources & Management Plan - Resources & 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: 0

    Sub

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

Sub

    Strengths:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

2. **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

    Strengths:

    Weaknesses:

    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:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

4. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation 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: 20

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

   Strengths:

   The methods of evaluation are clearly stated and the proposed RCT has the potential to meet WWC standards without reservations.
   The power of the test in Appendix J10 is well-explained. The use of academic scores as a control is important (as most studies are designed to be over-aligned to SEL measures). Two years of follow-up is also helpful so that fade-out can be tested.

   Weaknesses:

   The teachers are critical to the implementation of the intervention. But there may be some practical challenges. First, basic management of the teaching teams may be difficult: 66 teaching teams is a lot for a yield of only 400 students.
   Second, there is no model of how students are selected into pre-schools. Third, the sampling for the intervention is complex (there are students, teachers, parents and staff to be evaluated). Fourth, the DECA measure is self-report and teachers are not blind to the evaluation. Finally, many teachers are placed in different classes and are not consistently assigned.

   Another weakness is that there are too many outcomes: 7 for the students. This raises the possibility of cherry-picking outcomes, or having too many collinear outcomes, and of having an overly complex theory of change.

   A third weakness is the lack of information on business-as-usual. BAU may be highly variable (affecting external validity as well as the power of the test) and require very different resources (undermining the opportunity of schools to shift to this intervention). Treatment contrast is important and the study does not address this sufficiently.

   Reader's Score: 12

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

   Strengths:

   There are good uses of fidelity measures as feedback and that team leads are met. Good focus only on design and implementation (and not on outcomes).

   Weaknesses:

   It may be confusing to implement (or re-implement) or ``highlight opportunities for refinement''. Also, teachers are not provided with feedback. Given the number of agents and agencies involved, the use of performance feedback might be limited.

   Reader's Score: 4

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

Sub

Strengths:

The focus on ''cultural competence" would be new evidence for the field, which has typically focused on individual performance. Important to focus on high-need African American communities and on building partnerships across agencies.

Weaknesses:

The significance description is terse, particularly given the complexity of the intervention. Also, it does not investigate what might happen in schools to undermine (or support) the intervention.
The complexity of the intervention means that other communities may not be able to replicate the same partnerships, joint activities, or family engagement activities.

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through…[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

CPP3 - CPP3

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following…[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

   Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/10/2021 09:53 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)
Reader #2:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	0
Sub Total	50	0
Resources & Management Plan		
Resources & Management Plan		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	0
Sub Total	25	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	20
Sub Total	25	20
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP3		
CPP3		
1. CPP3	5	
Sub Total	5	
Total	115	20

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - EIR Early Phase - 13: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 0

   Sub

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

    Strengths:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

  2. The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

    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: 0

    Sub

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

    Strengths:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

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:

Resources & Management Plan - Resources & 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: 0

    Sub

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

Sub

    Strengths:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

2. **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

    Strengths:

    Weaknesses:

    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:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

4. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation 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: 20

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

   Strengths:

   The proposed evaluation is a cluster-level randomized controlled trial (RCT) where teacher teams (multiple teachers assigned to one classroom of students) are randomly assigned to condition. This design can allow for the highest possible What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Meets Standards without Reservations rating to be achieved (pages e39).

   Additionally, the proposed student-level outcomes (both direct student assessments and teacher ratings of student social-emotional competence) are standardized measures that meet WWC standards for reliability and validity (page e12-13 and e41-42). The measures do not appear to be overaligned with either study condition and there do not appear to be confounds that would affect WWC rating (page e38-42. These are noted strengths and demonstrate potential to achieve the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations.

   Finally, the proposed evaluation recognizes the potential for selection bias that could result from attrition of students during the transition from prekindergarten to kindergarten (page e38) and have indicated that baseline data will be available for evaluating baseline equivalence (if needed) in order to still have a design that can meet WWC standards with reservations (page 43). Additionally, multiple imputation models will be used to address missing data, which is an appropriate procedure for teacher-level random assignment studies (page e39).

   Weaknesses:

   The proposed cluster-RCT evaluation should recognize the data collection process that is necessary to evaluate whether the analytic sample of individual students is representative of all students present in the clusters. The lack of explanation of this data collection step is a noted weakness because it critical in obtaining the highest WWC rating.

   The proposed evaluation does not address the potential for contamination or bleed over that can occur when teachers who work in the same school (and often-in team settings, such as during planning times) are randomly assigned to conditions. Likewise, contamination amongst families whose students are participating and because they attend the same school, potentially communicate with one another outside of the context of school. This is a noted weakness could influence the results of the study.

   Reader's Score: 12

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

   Strengths:

   Measures to address implementation fidelity, that is, percentage of educators, school leaders, and families who participate in all components, will be developed and thresholds for low, moderate, and high fidelity have been identified based previous RCTs and will be used initially (page e43). This allows continuous monitoring of use of the program elements and is a noted strength.

   The evaluators plan to provide interim and final reports to the design team that will address findings about implementation fidelity, barriers and facilitators and suggest opportunities to refine (page e44). This performance feedback will allow the design team to improve the program in order to achieve the intended outcomes and is a

noted strength.

Weaknesses:

The proposed evaluation plans to use formative data to have quarterly data dialogue meetings that will take place with school leaders, educators, and families (page e44). However, the formative data is not described in the proposal or indicated on the timelines in appendix J7 and J8.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The proposed evaluation describes the key components of the study and the outcomes are well aligned and described (exhibit 1-3). The alignment demonstrates a clear coherence for the evaluation elements and the analysis of project outcomes in support of the improved preschool to kindergarten transition that has the potential to increase knowledge of the field and/or allow researchers to be better able to replicate or build on the research findings.

The proposed evaluation targets stakeholders at multiple levels (teacher, school leader, and family) in an effort to triangulate resources and data in the support of a successful transition from preschool to kindergarten and support of a culturally competent PreK through grade 12 system. Likewise, includes parents in a way that, if proven to be successful, will allow advocacy for their own children that has the potential to transcend the PreK to Kindergarten transition and be more impactful than the scope of this evaluation.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through…[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

CPP3 - CPP3

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following…[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/11/2021 10:18 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/10/2021 06:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)
Reader #3:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	19
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Sub Total	50	47
Resources & Management Plan		
Resources & Management Plan		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	24
Sub Total	25	24
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	25	0
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP3		
CPP3		
1. CPP3	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	115	81

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)

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: 19

> **Sub**

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

> **Strengths:**

> The Ready, Set, Succeed (RSS) Project proposal will be an outgrowth and extension of the Flint Research Partnership Project (RPP), to address a need for better kindergarten transitions (p. e22) and follow-up on 2017 community efforts to facilitate change (p. e24). The ecological systems theory of family engagement will be used to develop the program, and support student transition from high-quality PK programming to kindergarten. In terms of innovation, the project will address needs for African American families, specifically, and focus in on SEL competence, racial attitudes, identity (p. e16), and equity (p. e25).

> **Weaknesses:**

> No weaknesses were noted.

> **Reader's Score:** 15

> 2. **The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.**

> **Strengths:**

> The proposal included a dissemination plan that identified exactly how materials, training supports, and outcomes would be made available to the public. The project expects to leverage agency partnerships, weekly and monthly stakeholder meetings, and professional learning networks (p. e28).

> **Weaknesses:**

> The proposal only identified the Educare Learning Network as the only national network it would use to disseminate project outcomes.

> **Reader's Score:** 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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 presented a conceptual framework closely aligned with the ecological systems theory of family engagement and is solution-focused. The project expects to address challenges on multiple levels with interventions designed to promote agency collaborations, stakeholder engagement, and systemic change (pp. e28-29). The logic model (p. e136) outlined proposed inputs and hypothesized outcomes.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were noted.

   Reader's Score: 15

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

   Strengths:

   The goal, objectives, and outcomes presented in the proposal were clearly specified and measurable. The performance indicators are observable, quantifiable, and usable in terms of facilitating monitoring activities and ultimately determining project success. The embedded timeline provided context as it relates to activity planning during the grant's life cycle (pp. e30-e32).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were noted.

   Reader's Score: 5

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

   Strengths:

   The application provided substantive research to support the project's design. The proposal presented data regarding the target population clearly identified its needs and described how the project would address them.

   Weaknesses:

   The proposal did not specify what the next steps would be in terms of how they planned to utilize the formative data collected from families. The proposal did not include plans to survey research participants to establish a baseline. Instead, it appeared as though information garnered from the previous study would be generalized to inform this work.

   Reader's Score: 8

Resources & Management Plan - Resources & 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: 24

   Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The proposal included a management plan (p. e32-33) and presented a comprehensive management structure (p. e154). The timeline outlined the objectives, along with project milestones (p. e 156 – 159). Responsibilities were clearly identified for the appropriate team members and partners.   In terms of resources, the proposal has input and support from the community (RSS expert panel) and state level as it intends to address issues presented directly from area residents (RPP workshop), as it relates to early childhood education programming (p. e32). The project will leverage existing agency partnerships (p. e32, pp. e152 – 153).

   Weaknesses:

   It was unclear how expert panel members would be selected or recruited to serve in this advisory role to help direct project work.

   Reader's Score: 9

   2. **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

   Strengths:

   The application identified key project personnel (pp. e34 – 35). Detailed resumes for staff members who would be engaging on this project on behalf of Community Foundation of Greater Flint (CFGF), AIR and HighScope were also provided (pp. e69 – 116). The proposal also noted HighScope's existing involvement in the data collection effort for the existing RPP program (p. e34).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were noted.

   Reader's Score: 5

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

   Strengths:

   The application provided a budget narrative that detailed project expenditures for each phase of the grant, to include the cost per student (p. e35). The financial plan included a description of contractual relationships along with a narrative identifying expected services, cost-sharing strategies, and staff time commitments (pp. e193 – 195).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The proposal presented feedback and a continuous improvement strategy that highlighted a carry-over communication plan currently being used with the RPP project, to include regular meetings that are familiar with many of the stakeholders (p. e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

   Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through…[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   The proposal expects to address the stress and issues related to kindergarten transitioning that have been intensified by COVID-19 (e.g., low enrollment; p. e25) by providing support to Flint families, with sensitivity to the ways in which racial challenges are exacerbated by the pandemic.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

CPP3 - CPP3

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following…[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   The project expects to address challenges and provide the necessary supports related to African American family engagement in the kindergarten transition process for high-need learners (p. e18). The applicant presented plans to foster experience sharing and knowledge development to address concerns directly identified by the community.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/10/2021 06:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)
Reader #4:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	27
Sub Total	50	45
Resources & Management Plan		
Resources & Management Plan		
1. Resources & Manag. Plan	25	24
Sub Total	25	24
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	25	0
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	
Sub Total	5	
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP3		
CPP3		
1. CPP3	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	115	79

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - EIR Early Phase - 13: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (S411C210032)

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: 18

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   A clear strength of this proposal is the extent to which the authors argue for not only the need for exemplary Early Childhood Education, but the project's systemic approach to the needs of children in Flint. Ready, Set, Succeed does not position parents, schools, or children as in need of remediation, but rather presents needs as systemic and shared among students, schools, parents, teachers, the community, and society at large. The attention to systemic racism is also a strength. The length of a follow up is a strength is as well. This is a community engaged project.

   Weaknesses:

   There are no weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 15

2. **The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.**

   Strengths:

   The proposal successfully argues for local dissemination strategies across involved entities in Flint. Specific local entities suggest an emphasis is on local dissemination.

   Weaknesses:

   Only one strategy was listed for national dissemination, the Educare Learning Network. The reach of the Educare Learning Network is not described, making assessment of the program's dissemination beyond Flint difficult. The proposal does not address how might policy makers or school and community leaders in other cities be made aware of the potential successes of the program in Flint.

   Reader's Score: 3

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: 27

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   A strength of the project design is how it is designed based on a known theoretical model of family engagement. This compliments the community-based, systemic approach of the project. Microsystems (job-embedded PD), macrosystems (race relations and history) and mesosystems (family collaboration) and exosystem (broader Flint community) are planned for.

   Weaknesses:

   Critical race theory is implied (racial disparities are historical and systemic), but not included in the project design. Bronfenbrenner is not a theory typically used to address racism.

   Reader's Score: 14

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

   Strengths:

   A variety of instruments are listed in Exhibit 2 on epage 10 that will convincingly lay out a play to produce evidence of the efficacy of the program. High rates of sampling (95% of RPP members and families as noted on epage 10) is a specific strength. A strength is the inclusion of a pilot and fidelity measures, as well as the interim reports and annual memos for formative assessment that suggest a programmatic response to initial data.

   Weaknesses:

   There are no weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 5

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant effectively provides a variety of instruments in exhibit 2 listed on epage 10, which will be used to show evidence of the efficacy of the program. Family feedback will be solicited and discussed in monthly meetings.

   Weaknesses:

   No specific information is provided about how family feedback will be used. No plans are reported to collect initial information from families about their needs prior to the program. The RSS program as described works on assumed need. It's not clear if the Expert Advisory Panel solicits family feedback. No plan is included to address continuity after the grant ends.

   Reader's Score: 8

Resources & Management Plan - Resources & 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: 24

   Sub

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

      Strengths:

      The project partners have sufficiently outlined the numerous groups involved in carrying out the proposed project. This management plan is appropriate and convincing in its potential to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

      Weaknesses:

      No evidence is provided that justifies the statement on epage 32 that families consider AIR a trusted research partner. If the team assumes that the families consider AIR a trusted research partner initially, then they might not need to develop relationships to the extent that they might otherwise.

      Reader's Score: 9

   2. **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

      Strengths:

      This project requires the collective expertise and effort of experienced partners who share a strong history of success in their assigned roles (AIR, Flint RPP, CFGF, GISD). External partners have appropriate expertise.

      Weaknesses:

      There are no weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score: 5

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

      Strengths:

      The proposal demonstrates an appropriate financial argument for this program over the duration

      Weaknesses:

      There are no weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score: 5

   4. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

Sub

Strengths:

The described process includes an effective plan for the ensuring feedback, formative assessment, and continuous improvement. In addition, the applicants provide persuasive descriptions of how information will be shared among project leaders. The plan for continuous feedback is a strength leading to positive results.

Weaknesses:

There are 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: 0

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

   Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

   Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

Sub

   Weaknesses:

   Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Computer Science (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Expanding access to and participation in rigorous computer science coursework for traditionally underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, students in communities served by rural local educational agencies (as defined in this notice), children or students with disabilities (as defined in this notice), or low-income individuals (as defined under section 312(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended).

   Strengths:

   Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to address the needs of underserved students and educators most impacted by COVID-19 through…[refer to the NIA for the full list of potential projects]

   Strengths:

   This proposal addresses Early Childhood Education, which is a critical need. Due to COVID 19, many children were socially isolated and missed more typical opportunities to interact with others. The applicant effectively proposes a plan to facilitate kindergarten enrollment to ameliorate negative trends in this area after COVID. Importantly, the proposal notes that kindergarten enrollment has reduced by 56% due to COIVD as noted on epage 25. This proposal seeks to reverse that trend.

   Weaknesses:

   There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

CPP3 - CPP3

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 5 points).**
   Projects designed to promote equity in access to critical resources for underserved students in

prekindergarten through grade 12 through one or more of the following…[refer to the NIA for the full set of potential projects]

Strengths:

This proposal is explicitly about the promotion of equity. Furthermore, it adopts an informed approach about how social change happens in the context of systems, not individual people or even individual institutions. Low kindergarten enrollment is connected to race and SES and this proposal seeks to ameliorate the need for equitable enrollment.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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