

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/23/2022 11:34 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	106	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #17 - EIR Early Phase - 17: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

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. (20 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provided an exhaustive description of the unique approach to be implemented in the proposed project that builds upon Freshman Success (FS), which demonstrated "initial promise" (e21) in academic and social-emotional outcomes for 9 th grade students to address the Florida (and national) challenge of student dropout. Student dropout "continues to be a major concern" (e22) and is a "gradual process that begins during 9 th grade" (e22). The applicant states: "further iterative development and evaluation, implementation, and feasibility testing are needed with a larger and more diverse range of high schools and students to ensure the intervention is ready for scale-up and dissemination" (e21-e22).

To address the challenges faced by 9 th graders and school dropout, the applicant provided a summary of the goal and strategies to be implemented in FS: (1) "The overarching goal of FS is to optimize outcomes for each and every student entering high school" (e21) and provide support needed for successful graduation and (2) FS provide high schools with a systems approach for improving academic and social-emotional outcomes through the implementation of (a) school leadership teams who monitor critical academic and behavioral outcomes of 9 th graders, (b) instruction using a prevention-orientated engagement curriculum and (c) utilization of engagement focused peer support (e21).

To support the need for the project, the applicant provided a thorough discussion, supported by research, of the challenges that affect school engagement and student drop-out. For example, the applicant provided the following information regarding the documented reasons for student dropout: "Lack of school engagement" (i.e. Mizelle, 2005) as students are not prepared nor supported to make the transition from middle school to high schools (that are less flexible) and inadequacy of current practices (i.e. Calderon, et al) of orientations and school tours, etc.) to support transition into 9 th grade which do little to help engage students or provide skills to be successful (e23-24).

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Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a thorough discussion of the conceptual framework underlying the proposed FS project, which is built on existing research on student engagement for retention in high school and school-wide prevention models to support student success. In support, the applicant provided supportive documentation of successful research on factors such as school engagement and the "critical links among students' social, emotional, and academic development" (e29). This research indicated that through implementation of a preventive model such as FS, there has been demonstrated success in reducing maladaptive behavior, increasing attendance, and improving student access to needed interventions, and reducing dropout rates (e 29).

The applicant provided an in-depth description of the conceptual framework underlying the proposed research, with a focus on building on school engagement and preventive support, documented by a detailed logic model. In support, the applicant stated that the FS intervention is designed to "utilize promising strategies" (e29) based on inputs of the leadership team, clear instruction using the FS curriculum, and peer support delivered to achieve outputs. This will lead to outcomes such as improved school attendance, student engagement (short-term outcomes), and ultimately, to improved rates of high school graduation, employment, and engagement in postsecondary education (e29-e30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a thorough discussion of the two-phase Continuous Improvement Process to support achievement of project outcomes such that it can be

Sub

scaled up to serve a larger number of students. The applicant provided the following documentation of the two-phase implementation process: Phase 1-Review and Revise: Design Team will evaluate and document the level of effectiveness of the components and materials-relevance, feasibility and whether they meet the needs of a diverse group of students; and Phase 2: Implement, Evaluate and Refine: Project staff will summarize feedback and collaborate with the Design Team to refine FS components and materials as needed (e30-e31).

The applicant provided a detailed description of the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved in the FS project, documented by Table 1: (i.e., Goals & Objectives Outcomes Goal 1: Refine existing FS components to enhance scalability; Obj 1.1 Review and revise FS with Design Team) (e31-e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a compelling discussion to support the extent to which the proposed project design is appropriate and will successfully address the needs of the target population. Because FS is designed to support all 9th grade students, regardless of skill level, it provides an extensive level of support and is aimed at preventing problems before they occur (e32).

In support of the appropriateness of the project to meet the needs of the target population, the applicant provided a comprehensive summary of the intended support, including the following documentation: Poor outcomes, racial disparities in graduation rates, harmful impacts of COVID-19 on student engagement in school, and negative impact of high school dropout demonstrate a need to implement a promising intervention such as FS to improve student outcomes for every 9th grade student, while monitoring and fine-tuning for student subgroups (e32-e33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a comprehensive summary that stated the process for employing persons who have been underrepresented in employment. As documentation, the applicant provided the following information: "Our hiring processes continue to include active recruitment of a diverse workforce, which included the percentage of employees from underrepresented groups (36%)" (e33).

The applicant provided a detailed summary of the training and experience of key project staff, documented by resumes that supported the qualifications of the two Principal Investigators who will serve as project leads. Kent McIntosh, PI, Project Director, who is the chair of the OU Special Education Department, has successfully managed over \$70 million of federal funds and I. Brigid Flannery (Co-PI), Associate Director, Education and Community Supports, whose experiences include serving as the project coordinator for an IES grant (e34, e64-e65).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan, the Secretary considers:**

Reader's Score: 10

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. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed management plan to achieve timely objectives, which included specific monitoring activities, including "bi-weekly meetings" (e37) to monitor and discuss objectives (e36-e37).

To support the extent to which costs are reasonable and adequate, the applicant stated that the FS project will include 18,800 students in 40 schools and shared additional information to support that costs are "conducive to its overall cost" (e39). The three project partners also have extensive experience in grant development and management; staff from the three partners have previously worked together, and USF

Sub

has also previously work ed with the participating school districts (e38-e39).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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). (20 points)**

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. (5 points)**

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. (5 points)**

Strengths:

Sub

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

- (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.**
- (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.**
- (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.**
- (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.**
- (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a comprehensive discussion of the proposed project, FS, a “novel universal” (e21) intervention designed to support student access to the educational opportunities they need to succeed in high school. FS is designed to address educational equity for underserved 9 th grade students (the target population) and provide high school approaches to learning. The project will employ: (a) school leadership teams who monitor critical academic and behavioral outcomes of 9th graders, (b) instruction using a prevention-oriented engagement curriculum, and (c) utilization of engagement-focused peer support (e21).

FS has a goal to “optimize outcomes for each and every student entering high school and provide support needed to equip 9th graders for academic and social-emotional success so that they graduate and achieve improved longer-term outcomes. The project is well-positioned to help address the negative impacts of racial inequity” (e21-e22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through:

(a) conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

(a) FS includes a plan for a needs assessment of ALL 9 th grade students in the selected school to support identification of the target population, which includes students who have become disengaged from learning due to factors such as poor school engagement, poor attendance and academic achievement, and inadequate preparation for high school, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families (e24-e25).

(b) The applicant's proposed project is designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by implementing the promising practices of FS and the foundation of evidence-based strategies with "supports that do not segregate or stigmatize students and that target the most critical factors related to school engagement and retention " (e25), which have demonstrated success to "help address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and long-standing racial disparities on graduation rates" (e25).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	106	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #17 - EIR Early Phase - 17: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

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. (20 points)

Strengths:

The proposed project involves the development and demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. The applicant includes partnerships between two higher education institutions and 40 schools in a single state. The project's aim is to extend Freshmen Success, which is a novel universal intervention delivered to all 9th grade students to ensure they succeed in high school by helping to improve their academic and social-emotional outcomes (p. e21). The applicant seeks to build upon its initial success with Freshmen Success through further iterative development, evaluation, implementation, and feasibility testing with a larger and more diverse range of high schools and students. Through the iterative development, the applicant would determine whether Freshmen Success can be implemented at scale and effective across a diverse range of schools and students (p. e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

The conceptual framework underlying the proposed research is grounded in existing research on student engagement for high school retention and school-wide prevention models to support success (p. e29). The applicant included in-text citations and relevant research to support the connection between school engagement and students' social, emotional, and academic development (p. e29). Based on the conceptual framework, the Freshmen success intervention will employ promising strategies to achieve identified outputs and support the valued short-term outcomes, such as increased course completion, course performance, attendance, and student engagement (p. e30).

Figure 2. FS [Freshmen Success] Logic Model displays resources (Expertise of higher education faculty at two institutions regarding grant/project management), activities (Train teachers and peer navigators on roles and responsibilities for curriculum implementation), outputs (14 teachers per school trained and delivered per school trained and delivered FS curriculum and boosters), short-term outcomes (9th grade student outcomes lead to increased engagement and attendance), and long-term outcomes (Improved attendance, course performance, course completions in 10th grade) (p. e30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable in Table 1. Project Goals (Goal 1: Refine existing Freshmen Success components to enhance scalability), Objectives (Objective 1.1: Review and revise Freshmen Success with Design Team), and Outcomes (Revised, confirmed Freshmen Success components) (pp. e31-e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The design of the proposed project is appropriate and should successfully address the needs of the target population for all 9th graders. The applicant referenced research to demonstrate the need for universal support among this targeted group to prevent problems before they occur. As intervention programs are implemented with fidelity, the applicant states that more targeted and intensive support would be reduced. The proposed project is appropriate to address the negative impact of high school dropout and the racial disparities in the graduation rate. (p. e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Sub

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant states it is committed to ensuring equal access to and treatment of individuals that have traditionally been underrepresented. Currently, 36% of its employees are diverse.

The applicant provided qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel (PI/Project Director, Co-PI, Co-PI, Project Coordinator, Implementation Coordinator, Lead Independent Evaluator, and Lead Data Analyst) (p. e33). For each key personnel position, the applicant stated the amount of time that the individual will spend annually working on the proposed project. Additionally, the narrative contains the individual's primary responsibility regarding the proposed project along with relevant training and experience. For instance, the PI/Project Director will allocate 0.20 of his time annually and is primarily responsible for providing oversight of the project. This individual has managed over \$70 million of federal grant funding. Previously, this individual served as a Co-PI on the previous Freshmen Success Development and Innovation Project (p. e33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 10

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. (10 points)

Sub

Strengths:

The proposed project contains a 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. As demonstrated in Table 2: Activities (Objectives) and Agency Responsible, it outlines activities/objectives for Readiness for Implementation (Recruit and screen schools for readiness), Ongoing Activities to Implement and Revise Freshmen Success (Train leadership team, teachers, and peer navigators) and Data Collection Analysis (Coordinate and monitor data collection to reduce attrition) (p. e37).

Figure 3. Milestones and Timelines (Spring – Jan to June; Fall = July to Dec) provides brief overview of four milestones. For instance in Year 4, the milestone is cohort 2 follow-up analysis (p. e38).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

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). (20 points)**

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. (5 points)**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Sub

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. (5 points)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

- (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
- (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
- (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
- (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
- (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

The applicant provided relevant research addressing the inequity in education, which is demonstrated in the racial disparities in student dropout. For example, the 2018-19 national graduation rate was 89% for White students, as compared to 82% for Hispanic or Latino/a/e and 80% for Black students (p. e22). The applicant cited a major factor in student dropout is a lack of school engagement and the current practices to support 9th grade transition are inadequate (p. e23). To address this issue, the proposed project would implement promising preventive, skill-based practices to increase student engagement and achievement (p. e24). The applicant cited What Works Clearinghouse report on how to prevent school dropout and recommendations for educators (p. e24).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through:

(a) conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and

(b) using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The applicant cited COVID-19 negative impact on student motivation and engagement in schools, specifically having a greater impact on marginalized students (p. e25). For instance, students of color faced more negative impacts from the pandemic due to institutional barriers (i.e., limited access to remote instruction) (p. e25). Recent research on the impact of COVID-19 demonstrates a greater risk for students entering high school, such as school engagement and course completions. Therefore, the proposed project acknowledges that marginalized students are even more at risk for school dropout due to the pandemic (p. e25).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	8
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	68
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	3
Sub Total	6	6
Total	106	74

Technical Review Form

Panel #17 - EIR Early Phase - 17: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

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. (20 points)

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to serve 18,800 students in 9th grade in 40 high schools (20 Freshman Success (FS) participants and 20 control schools) across 10 racially diverse school districts. This broad approach ensures a wide variety of contexts for testing the program. Appendix J2 provides evidence of prior success with the initial Freshman Success program.

The applicant provides a thorough discussion on the justification of the need for this project through analysis of drop-out rates, root causes, and current practices. The applicant intends to conduct activities that will further develop and test this program's ability to improve academic performance and reduce drop-out rates among all 9th grade students. The referenced resources provide evidence to support the premise of the proposal.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a conceptual structure for the proposed work that is based on literature in school engagement. The proposal makes the connection between the cited research and the proposed activities. The framework includes appropriate activities and outputs that logically lead to expected outcomes if successful. These elements work together to create a project design that is likely to be successful in attaining stated goals.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The proposal narrative discusses the need to practice continuous improvement throughout the project term and describes a Phase 1 and Phase 2 to review and improve the program. Appropriate opportunities are planned to allow for curricular and program improvements based on annual feedback. The objectives logically lead to the outputs/outcomes, which measure progress toward goals. The performance measures are logical and reasonable. The applicant will measure success through surveys, implementation tools, and data analysis. Benchmarks are provided, for example, "90% or higher fidelity" on the implementation checklist and 4.5 or higher on an intervention rating scale. This detailed plan provides confidence in the applicant's ability to successfully implement the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Based on the description in the introduction, success or failure in the 9th grade year impacts the likelihood of graduation for all students. This program is designed to support all students for success in 9th grade and track their progress toward graduation in the following year. The FS program will be implemented in schools with diverse populations which will allow access to the program by high need students who are more likely to experience failure in 9th grade. The proposal provides research and narrative to justify the expectation that this program will address the needs of the target population.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides data on current employees from traditionally underrepresented groups (36%) and expresses a commitment to include active recruitment of a diverse workforce.

Program leaders have broad experience in grants management, research, and program development. Several of them were involved in the pilot phase of the Freshman Success program. Many on the team have extensive publications on topics related to this proposal. The experience and educational background of key personnel provide a strong foundation for the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 8

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. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides a timeline that includes responsibilities by organization for each objective. The narrative provides more detail for individuals at each organization who will oversee activities. Most of the budget is dedicated to personnel costs, travel, and contract services. Personnel expenses are detailed and include cost of living and merit increases. Expenses appear reasonable and appropriate.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The timeline does not list responsibilities by individual, only by organization. The timeline does not offer dates or more specific details. The omission of this information impacts the overall clarity of the management plan.

Reader's Score: 8

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). (20 points)**

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. (5 points)**

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. (5 points)**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Sub

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

- (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
- (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
- (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
- (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
- (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence that the proposed program will address equity for high school students through engaging and inclusive practices. The program is designed to provide students with skills and support in SEL so that they will be able to access high-quality academic content in their high school courses.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through:

- (a) conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time to accelerate

learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

Strengths:

The applicant provides extensive research references to support the impact of COVID-19 on marginalized students, with a focus on disengagement and retention. This project is designed to provide specific strategies for supporting students in the target populations. The project includes evidence-based strategies such as data-based decision making, explicit instruction in SEL skills through the Freshman Success curriculum, and peer mentoring. Based on the planning and evidence provided, the applicant demonstrates the likelihood of success in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 for the target population.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/23/2022 11:20 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/03/2022 12:53 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Total	30	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - EIR Tier 2 - 6: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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

Strengths:

The evaluation methods are satisfactorily designed to produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. The confirmatory impact evaluation will feature a school-level cluster randomized controlled trial design. A three-level hierarchical linear will be used to estimate treatment impact on student engagement and a two-level model will be used to assess course completion, course performance, and attendance (pg. e40). To form the participant groups, schools will be randomly assigned to treatment or comparison groups across three cohorts (pg. e39). The plan to address potential attrition is adequately discussed and the sample size, power analysis, and effect sizes are satisfactory. Contamination should not have an impact on outcomes because group participation is at the school level (pg. e39).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to describe how they would determine that the study groups are similar on both observable and unobservable characteristics prior to the intervention. This feature of a randomized controlled trial allows any subsequent differences to be solely attributed to the intervention (pgs. e39-40).

Reader's Score: 19

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

Strengths:

The evaluation methods are adequately designed to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward project outcomes. Multiple measures will be used to assess program implementation including an implementation checklist, treatment contrast tool, curriculum checklist, peer navigator log, and teacher perception survey (pg. e112). For student outcome data, schools will provide course completion, course performance, and attendance rates in a data template for the evaluator to analyze (pg. e113).

The continuous improvement process involves two processes: review and revise and implement, evaluate, and refine. These components should help refine project components and materials and ensure that the project is as

Sub

effective as possible (pgs. e30-31). With two different research teams in different states, the applicant has assigned evaluation tasks to each team which will allow for cohesive data collection and analysis (pgs. e37-38).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant intends to assess student outcomes including attendance, engagement, and academic achievement. Also, any moderating effect by student group will be examined (pgs. e39; e43). Program effects on student outcomes will be assessed using a mixed-model Time × Condition analysis to test differences by school condition in student gains or growth over time, with student gains nested within schools (pg. e17). Reasonable thresholds for acceptable implementation have been proposed. For example, on the treatment contrast tool, a score of 2 on a 0-1-2 scale corresponds to high fidelity of implementation (pg. e112).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not present any mediators that might be considered in the analyses. There was no explanation provided about the use or, or lack of, mediators which would have been informative (pgs. e42-e45).

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/03/2022 12:53 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/01/2022 09:53 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Total	30	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - EIR Tier 2 - 6: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: University of Oregon Foundation (S411C220103)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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

Strengths:

FS was shown effectiveness in a small RCT pilot (e18, e28). The proposal connects constructs of interest with recent WWC findings (e24). The study will use a cluster RCT design within districts and baseline equivalence will be established (e39-40). The proposal addresses plans to reduce attrition (e39-40). Analyses plans are appropriate for each type of data (e40). The proposal explained power analyses (e41-42).

Weaknesses:

The proposal reports that curriculum can be delivered in different classes depending on the school but does not indicate a way to measure this impact (e27).

Reader's Score: 19

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

Strengths:

The proposal indicates plans to collect feedback from a subset of teachers during phase 1 on the components and materials and revise as needed (e31). During phase 2, a continuous formative evaluation process will be conducted at least monthly by monitoring fidelity and proximal outcome data, making midcourse adjustments as needed (e31). The evaluator will provide formative feedback to UO after each data collection activity to inform implementation (e42). The study will implement an online survey to determine barriers and facilitators to implementation (e42).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposal has a clear and concise logic model (e30). The proposal clearly aligns project goals, objectives, and outcomes, including moderators (e31-32, e41). There is a detailed fidelity of implementation plan with multiple measures (e45). Fidelity checklists and thresholds are provided (e96-106, e112)

Weaknesses:

The logic model includes high school graduation, employment, and engagement in postsecondary education, but the proposal does not indicate collecting that data (e89).

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/01/2022 09:53 PM