

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/24/2022 12:08 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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	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	0
Sub Total	6	3
Total	106	71

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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 excellent and thorough description of the proposed project, which will scale up and rigorously evaluate Relationships First (RF), the district's restorative practices model, and provided a supportive explanation of the original RF model, which is "proving to be effective, efficient, and sustainable in SDP's challenging urban context" (e1). The applicant stated: "RF is a multi-tiered, schoolwide restorative model that addresses disciplinary, academic, and social-emotional outcomes for K-12 students by fundamentally shifting relationships among and between adults and students in schools" (e1).

In support of expansion of the RF model with the proposed project (as the model showed promise with the initial implementation) the applicant provided supporting documentation with a description of the project's expansion focus: The proposed project builds upon best available research of restorative practices and combines "1) a restorative practices model that focuses on racial equity, acknowledging trauma, adult and student by-in, youth leadership, and systems change, with 2) a relationships-focused approach to MTSS that offers an alternative to behavior-focused models" (e3). In further support, the applicant stated: "Because of its responsiveness to lessons from research and practice, and because it leverages MTSS, we anticipate this project will produce the largest impacts of any restorative practices intervention to date (e3).

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 succinct and quality description of the conceptual framework underlying RF. For example, the applicant provided the following explanation of the underlying conceptual framework: "The conceptual framework for this project posits that MTSS can best support improvements in school climate and student outcomes when combined with the tools for transforming relationships and systems, and that RF provides the tools for this transformation" (e3-e4).

To provide further support of the conceptual framework that guides the proposed project, the applicant includes a description of additional research results on restorative practices and the benefits to the functioning and well-being of individuals and communities. These approaches are included in the framework of RF project design. Factors address such elements as: focus on equity, acknowledgement of trauma, sustained community building, and empowerment of youth (e5).

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 detailed table in the Project Design, which identified the specific and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the RF project and provided a table (Table 1, e6), which included the following information as documentation: "Goal 3: Improve student, teacher, staff and parent perceptions of school climate and equity; Objective 3.1: Improve student's perceptions for positive school climate and equity; Outcomes/Targets: Increase the percentage of students who report positive school climate and equity by 20% annually (District Wide Survey)" (e7, Logic Model-Appendix G).

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 thorough description of the target population of RF (the SDP school district-110,000 students; "52% Black, 22% LatinX; 7% Asian; 5% multiracial/other" (e10); and students whose personal and/or family circumstances have been negatively impacted by marginalization, structural racism, and/or economic inequity. The proposed project, RF, builds upon and will evaluate RF-already implemented in the SDP school

Sub

district, which has demonstrated success based upon preliminary data from the pilot implementation academic year, 2021-2022. Included in the description was a summary of the success of the initial implementation with the target population: “We have observed notable progress toward implementation, school scheduling and staffing decisions for the coming year that prioritize continued implementation, and staff eagerness to participate in summer training offered by the RF team” (e11).

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 extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from a diverse group of individuals was documented in the description of the SDP Project Team, which states: “SDP’s policy 104 is to provide to all persons equal access to all categories of employment in this district regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability, gender identity, or genetic information” (e11). The applicant also provided the reference to its full policy and provided a link to access the documentation: “104-Nondiscrimination-in-Employment-Practices.pdf”(e11).

The applicant provided a complete list and summary and the resumes of RF project personnel, including their qualifications, relevant training, and experience. The summary included the project Principal Investigator, Project Advisors, Lead Climate and Culture Coach, Relationship First Coaches, Director of Climate Implementation and Innovation, and the Chief Research Office. For example, the description of the relevant experience of Abigail Gray, Ph.D., the Principal Investigator and Deputy Chief of School Climate Culture at SDP, included the following information: “Dr. Gray has initiated, supported, and overseen the growth of RF by securing funding commitments at the district level, hiring the Director, and ensuring alignment of RF with the Board of Education’s Goals and Guardrails and district-level priorities and processes” (e11-e12, Appendix B: RF Team Resumes).

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 provided a multi-faceted management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project inclusive of the relationship of RF to the SDP Guards and Guardrails, established by the district's Board of Education, which identifies targets for student outcomes and the conditions for achieving those goals.

To support clearly defined responsibilities, the applicant provided a summary of the description of the responsibilities of RF project team members—all employees of SDP, except for Research for Action, the independent evaluator for the project. For example, in D. Project Management Plan, the applicant stated: "All activities in this proposal will be overseen by Dr. Gray. Mr. Staub and Mr. Thompson Smith will collaborate to direct the day-to-day execution of the grant activities" (e18).

Additional responsibilities were outlined in C. Quality of Project Personnel, i.e., Kyle McClerken: "Mr. McClerken will work with the RF team to further develop the training and coaching components of the program, to strengthen the components targeting adults, and the youth engagement effort" (e14).

Weaknesses:

The description of project personnel included a summary of the personnel to be involved in implementation of the proposed project. However, there were no members of the project team with more than a .20 FTE, i.e., Robert Zindell, Project Manager (e15). For example, an FTE of .5 was indicated for Joshua Staub who is identified as the Director of RF (e12-e13). It is, therefore, questionable if that would be adequate to provide quality and consistent leadership of the project, a comprehensive "scale up and rigorous evaluation" (Project Abstract) of the applicant's RF, which is a district-wide implementation of the project.

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

Sub

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:

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 information to support the implementation of RF to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for high school students and indicated that: “The project will involve 40,000 K-12 students in 72 SDP schools, the majority of which are high-need as defined as those whose personal and/or familiar circumstances have been negatively impacted by historical marginalization, structural racism, and or economic inequity” (e1). In the SDP, most high-need students are from low-income backgrounds; are Black or Latinx; have been identified as having disabilities; and/or are English language learners.

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 did not provide supporting information in the project narrative to document strategies to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Weaknesses:

The applicant stated in the project narrative under A. SIGNIFICANCE that the project meets Competitive Preference 2 (e3). However, a review of the narrative did not reveal strategies designed to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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	5
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	65
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	0
Sub Total	6	0
Total	106	65

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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 demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. For instance, the applicant seeks to scale up and evaluate an existing multi-tiered school-wide restorative practices model. As the result of addressing the inadequacy in prior research regarding existing approaches, it should yield promising new strategies (p. e18). The proposed project's restorative model would address disciplinary, academic, and social-emotional for approximately 40,000 K-12 students identified with high-needs and low-income status (p. e18). Currently, the restorative model is serving over 110,000 students throughout 212 schools.

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:

There is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research based on a multi-tier system of support that can improve school climate and student outcomes when combined with tools for transforming relationships and systems (pp. e20-e21). The applicant noted relevant and supportive research, such as the classic relational schema theory and change processes in schools.

The application of the relational schema theory to the proposed project in an urban school setting is that students' and adults' contextual relational schemas are grounded in repeated, negative experiences (punitive discipline, hostility, and racial bias). The reoccurrence of the negative experiences has an adverse physiological and psychological effect (p. e21).

Therefore, the applicant seeks to address these issues through restorative practices research rooted in indigenous communities (p. e21). For instance, the proposed project is grounded in restorative practices to address nine distinct areas, such as the cultivation of school leader ownership and buy-in (p. e22).

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 comprehensive goals, objectives, and outcomes in Table 1. Project Goals, Activities and Outcomes (pp. e23-24). Each of the four goals aligned with its objectives and outcomes. For example, Goal 3 (Improve student, teacher, staff, and parent perceptions of school climate and equity) aligns with Objective 3.1 (Improve students' perceptions for positive school climate and equity) and Outcome 3.1.a (Increase the percentage of students who report positive school climate and equity by 20% annually) (p. e24).

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 states the proposed project will benefit students and staff of K-12 schools in its district and, ultimately, other districts. The district has over 110,000 students and is the 8th largest school district in the US (p. e27). Nearly 90% of students qualify for free lunch with a majority of students representing historically underserved minority groups (i.e., 52% Blacks and 22% LatinX) (p. e27).

Additionally, it states that the restorative model that is currently in place in 2021-2022 demonstrates a level of buy-in and optimism. For instance, the staff is eager to participate in summer training and testimonials that the program impact.

Sub

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 encourages applicants for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. For instance, the applicant has a policy granting persons equal access to all categories of employment regardless of race, color, age, sexual orientation, disability, and gender identity (p. e28).

The applicant provided qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (principal investigator, director, lead climate & culture coach, project advisor (3), Relationships First coaches (15), director of climate implementation and innovation, project manager, chief research officer, chief statistician and senior methodologist) (pp. e28-e33). For example, the principal investigator has extensive experience leading multiple large-scale projects funding by federal grants (\$12 million). In addition, the principal investigator is a What Works Clearinghouse certified reviewer of group design studies (p. e29).

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: 5

Sub

1. **The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project**

Sub

on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (10 points)

Strengths:

In Appendix B: Project Activities Timeline (p. e131), the applicant includes a list of activities (Implementation of Relationships First, Implementation and Impact Evaluation Activities, Impact Analysis Activities, and Evaluation Feedback Activities) and timelines. For instance, from January through April 2023, the proposed project plans to interview district leaders and support team staff (3 interviews per year).

Weaknesses:

The applicant identified persons who will collaborate and oversee the day-to-day execution of the grant activities according to the project timeline but do not include the responsibilities for these personnel which impacts understanding of the feasibility of their management plan.

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). (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:

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:

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:

No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

The applicant stated the proposed project meets Competitive Preference Priority 1 but did not provide any supporting evidence and/or discussion.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

The applicant stated the proposed project meets Competitive Preference Priority 2 but did not provide any supporting evidence and/or discussion.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
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	0
Sub Total	6	3
Total	106	71

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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 is an expansion of the school district's Relationship First program. The applicant plans to serve 40,000 students in grades K-12. The project will expand, implement, and test for impact. The narrative discusses current research in restorative justice and MTSS and describes how the program is an innovative blending of the two approaches to support high need students (e18-20).

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 provides a detailed discussion of the research base for this project (e20-23). The framework considers the program at all levels: district, school, classroom, and community, with activities, outputs, and outcomes given for each stakeholder group (e81-82). Together, the research and the framework provide a

Sub

compelling justification for this work.

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 project goals are clear and appropriate. The objectives for each goal are tied to measurable outputs with specific benchmark targets. These elements combine to deliver a strong plan that appears likely to succeed.

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 provides data on the diverse population served by the school district and the challenges they face. Appendix F provides data to show the success of the initial implementation of this program with this target population. This information combined with the research provided on promising practices in restorative justice and MTSS indicate that this program is likely to address the needs of the target population (e119-120).

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: 8

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)**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant states that the school district has a comprehensive hiring policy in place that prohibits discrimination. Key personnel, including district employees and contractors, have extensive experience in topics related to this project. The experience and educational background of key personnel provide a strong foundation for the proposed project (e28-e33).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include their current staff demographics which would demonstrate their current practice of attracting employees from underrepresented groups.

Reader's Score: 8

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 has developed a comprehensive timeline that covers all critical activities for the grant term (e131). Individuals and district offices that are responsible for execution of these activities are identified in the narrative (e33-35). The proposal provides reasonable justification for requested funding, with an emphasis on personnel costs for RF coaches (e134-136). The management plan provides sufficient detail for accomplishing program tasks.

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**

Sub

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:

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 project will serve high-need students by delivering an innovative model of restorative justice across grade levels and multiple schools. The program offers a student-centered model that incorporates MTSS strategies into restorative practices, improving equity and opportunity for underserved students (e19-20).

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The proposal briefly addressed the impact of COVID-19 but did not give details for how the proposed project is addressing these impacts (e19). The proposal does not include plans for conducting needs assessments or community asset mapping.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/26/2022 04:23 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/07/2022 12:45 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	20
Total	30	20

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - EIR Tier 2 - 9: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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: 20

Sub

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

Strengths:

The application proposes a quasi-experimental Comparative Interrupted Time-Series (CITS) design with a matched comparison group to determine the impact of the proposed Relationship First (RF) program on student, teacher, and parent outcomes. The proposed impact study, if well implemented, has the potential to produce evidence about RF's effectiveness that meets the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations.

In line with WWC guidelines, the application demonstrates that the proposed statistical power has the potential to elicit acceptable minimum detectable effect sizes for each cohort and for the models examining student and parent outcomes. In the same vein, the proposed analytic approach (i.e., multilevel regression analysis) is very appropriate for the nested nature of the data, with students and teachers nested within schools. This analytic approach is appropriate for examining differential effects in student outcomes. Moreover, the application demonstrates that the data collection tools and measures have acceptable reliability indices.

Per WWC guidelines for CITS, the application demonstrates that baseline equivalence will be assessed from preintervention data. The application indicates that baseline equivalency was based on data from Cohort 1, which according to the proposal narrative, was implemented in 2021-2022.

Weaknesses:

The application does not demonstrate a clear plan for identifying intervention and control groups. The application indicates that the team will recruit schools for the impact study through the SDP (School District of Philadelphia) mandated planning process, where schools select key climate and academic strategies that they would implement in the following school year. Given that schools will choose from a pool of climate improvement strategies (including RF), the application does not demonstrate how the project team will achieve the recruitment target. As indicated in the application, it is expected, but not guaranteed, that 18 schools will select RF as their primary strategy. The application does not discuss what will happen if all or none of the schools in the district select RF as their preferred improvement strategy. Overall, the application does not demonstrate the capacity to achieve the recruitment target.

Sub

The application does not describe strategies for mitigating potential threats to the internal validity of the impact study. For example, the application does not address risks associated with attrition and missing data. Moreover, the application does not provide a description of the intervention dosage (i.e., the amount of an intervention needed to achieve the desired outcomes) and its potential effect on student and teacher outcomes. Specifically, the application indicates that the multi-tiered TR strategies are implemented “as needed” in the intervention schools, however, the impact study does not include an exploration of how the level of dosage at the participating schools may affect the extent to which the expected outcomes are achieved.

The application does not provide specific propensity score matching strategies employed in the preintervention analysis. For example, the application does not indicate if (and what) caliper benchmark was used for the matching and does not clarify if matching was done with or without replacement (per WWC guidelines for propensity score matching designs).

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. (5 points)

Strengths:

The application proposes a mixed method formative evaluation approach that has the potential to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. For example, the proposed fidelity study, if implemented as described, will provide meaningful data to uncover the school and student-level factors that facilitate or inhibit the successful implementation of RF and how the implementation varies across schools and contexts. Another strength of the fidelity study is the proposed implementation of case studies to understand factors that influence sustainability. Likewise, the proposed quarterly meetings of the project and evaluation teams with the district as well as the proposed yearly evaluation presentations and reports are appropriate for obtaining periodic performance assessments of progress towards the achievement of project goals, identifying gaps in the implementation, and making necessary adjustments.

Weaknesses:

None

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 application outlines the objectives, outcomes, and targets for each of the project goals. The outcomes are realistic and logically connected to the project activities and objectives. For example, the application clearly targets a 20% annual increase in the percentage of students who report positive school climate and equity. The application also provides a logic model that outlines and connects program activities, outputs, and outcomes. The expected program outcomes are appropriate and related to the proposed program activities.

Weaknesses:

The application does not articulate mediators and does not describe a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/07/2022 12:45 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/07/2022 03:42 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	23
Total	30	23

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - EIR Tier 2 - 9: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: The School District of Philadelphia (S411C220120)

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: 23

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 application explains a design that, if well implemented, will meet What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservations. Specifically, the external evaluator will use a quasi-experimental design (QED) to investigate program impacts. The applicant is well positioned to execute a high-quality QED, especially given that the school district is driving the decision-making on key project components and relevant outcomes. RFP, the external evaluation firm, has explored baseline equivalence and included details from prior cohorts (p. 22); there is evidence in the application that securing matched comparison schools is likely.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks information on how schools will be recruited for participation in the project. On page 19 the applicant states that schools will be recruited via a state-mandated planning process, but this does not provide enough information for the reviewer to determine that the project team is likely to succeed in recruiting sufficient schools to meet the requirements outlined in the evaluation plan. In addition, the information on the use of propensity scores matching lacks sufficient detail for the reviewer to determine how well the plan might meet What Works Clearinghouse standards.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

There are specific features of this evaluation plan which stand out as exceptional strengths. First, the use of an equity lens is a particular strength, as this will support the collection of feedback and data that are meaningful across stakeholder groups (i.e., parents, practitioners). Next, the inclusion of parent outcomes via a district-wide survey is excellent for providing the project team with important feedback on performance. Finally, the use of a case study approach, whereby the evaluator will identify nine sites with variation in implementation to explore deeply is especially meaningful for performance feedback.

Sub

Weaknesses:

none identified

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:

Key project components are outlined clearly via Table 1 and the logic model. Table 1 identifies project goals, activities, and outcomes with clearly specified thresholds for implementation. For example, for Goal 3: Improve student, teacher, staff, and parent perceptions of school climate and equity, the evaluation plan explains a desired increase in parents who report positive school climate and equity by 20% annually via a district-wide survey. These are clear and measurable thresholds. The evaluation research questions include exploration of the importance for fidelity of implementation and student outcomes (research question 9).

Weaknesses:

The plan for mediation analyses is not clearly specified. They do not specify mediators; they do not have thresholds specified (target for outcomes)

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/07/2022 03:42 PM