

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2022 02:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	12
Sub Total	15	12
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	30
Sub Total	35	30
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	57
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	2
Total	106	59

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 12

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a good description of how rural teachers lack support in the areas of professional development, ongoing support, and cost-effective evidence-based interventions that are needed to support adequately their high-needs students. The proposed project also directly addresses those established deficiencies that hinder the academic development and success of our nation's rural students.

Weaknesses:

The statistics that were provided regarding rural in-school suspensions (6.09%) compared to urban schools (5.06%) as reasoning for poor reading outcomes due to lost learning time is less than compelling. The narrative would be strengthened with information regarding deficits in achievement in rural districts.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The proposed project involves the expansion of Class-Wide Function-related Intervention Teams programming that has exhibited strong positive outcomes across K-8 as demonstrated in published works. The addition of a more flexible rural coaching model and micro-credentialing program to enhance teacher engagement and participation with tiered supports and program monitoring has strong potential to build on the existing strategies and address established needs that are specific to rural districts.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The widespread expansion of the established CW-FIT program through implementation and assessment in unexamined rural schools has strong potential to increase knowledge and understanding of the educational problems and issues particular to serving high-needs students in rural communities, of which there is a noted lack in current research.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides specification of the problems of rural versus urban and also disproportionate discipline extending to students with disabilities and other marginalized student populations (p. 4-5). Clarification of potential to increase knowledge of the reasons these subpopulations of students are underperforming in rural schools and how to improve student engagement and learning would strengthen the application.

Reader's Score: 4

Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the strategy to scale 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 the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

It is reasonable to propose that the availability of the online learning modules for teachers will address previous barriers of cost and geography in reaching rural districts. The utilization of the rural coaching model and micro-credentialing program also has strong potential to address directly the barriers facing rural districts that are restricted by geography and limited resources.

Weaknesses:

The accessibility of online professional development to address these barriers is already becoming readily available to all districts and is not unique to reaching the level of scale now proposed. In addition, the proposed strategy of integrating programming into district budgets as a response to acknowledged limited capacity and resources has limited potential in addressing those same barriers of limited capacity and resources.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The time allocated for the project personnel is adequate to achieve the project's objectives. The management plan includes relevant activities that could be achieved within the proposed budget. The management plan includes specificity of responsible personnel for quarterly activities that are relevant to the project objectives such that essentially all itemized activities are adequately assigned to relevant staff. The plan also includes adequately detailed communication strategies which will serve to facilitate and organize workflow efficiently to ensure accomplishment of project tasks.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Project personnel are highly qualified to fulfill the roles assigned to complete the objectives during the grant period. The applicant has provided strong letters of support outlining expressed interest of potential partnering rural school districts increasing the probability of bringing the project to scale on the proposed national level. The applicant proposes a partnership with an established and successful external evaluator, shown to be capable of successfully evaluating a project of this scale. In addition, the resources are adequate to bring this proposed project to scale. The proposed rural coaching model, integral to the successful implementation of the project, relies on nominations of qualified teachers and staff to step into these roles. The narrative includes details regarding sustainable compensation that would incentivize these persons from accepting and continuing in these labor-intensive extra duty roles which include extensive training, oversight, and data collection. The budget also includes \$10,000 in funds annually to partner districts to support personnel costs of implementation and project activities.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The project proposes to include budget funds to allow coaches and leaders to contribute to publications with partner organizations and presentations at state and national rural conferences. In addition, the applicant will support news releases and social media which also is minimally adequate to disseminate information to support further development or replication.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The mechanisms for dissemination would be stronger with a deliberate focus on the purpose of supporting further development or replication rather than providing a basic listing of dissemination activities. In addition, the assertion that simple maintenance of the program in participating districts as a main proposed method for dissemination to provide support for replication is weak and would be strengthened with more specific details regarding the proposed replication of critical components of the CW-FIT through leveraging existing collaborative relationships.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 15

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposed project includes a well-organized and detailed logic model that clearly defines key program components inputs of programming, rural coaching model, and implementation supports with well-articulated outputs for coaches and teachers and measurable intermediate and long-term outcomes of the project

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The specified goals of expansion and contribution of the evidence base with accompanying objectives of training coaches and teachers have associated strategies related to each objective and are clearly specified and measurable.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Sub

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.

Strengths:

The proposed expansion into rural districts utilizing the rural coaching model and micro-credentialing has strong potential to address needs of teachers in rural districts in areas for high quality and cost-effective professional development with these relevant additions to the established CW-FIT program that will address the issues of geography through providing online professional development and incentive to participate by offering partial graduate credit for completion.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Sub

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. 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 proposed project includes serving rural, underserved students in middle school to promote educational equity and adequacy of resources and opportunity.

Weaknesses:

The proposed program elements do not specifically address any of the approaches to learning within the technical criteria (a-e).

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **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 proposed project includes relevant assessments of disengagement among students as foundational to the project CW-FIT implementation and measured outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The ongoing problems of disengagement within high needs students in rural communities are documented and noted, yet are not specific to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community asset mapping is not supported in the narrative, and expanded learning time is not proposed as a way to accelerate learning for students as stated within the technical criteria.

Reader's Score: 1

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	11
Sub Total	15	11
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	30
Sub Total	35	30
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	12
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	53
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	2
Total	106	55

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 11

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has made a good case for the project significance nationally (pages e25-e29). The context of the national importance of the project is that one-fifth of public-school students attend rural schools (page e25). Table # 1 (page e13) demonstrates that the project will be implemented across schools in several states. The applicant has highlighted unique strengths and challenges faced by the rural school professionals and an overall need for reengaging the teachers in the post-pandemic era. The underlying importance of increased engagement of the students in school, especially in the rural areas, is supported by research supporting the project.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not substantiated the project significance for the target schools (pages e25-e29). The applicant has claimed a high level of in school suspensions but has not discussed how the project strategy will address the issues (page e25). Similarly, the applicant also discusses a gap based on race for the students in rural schools. However, the applicant does not discuss how this project will address this gap, especially in rural schools.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant has described broadly how vetted strategies, such as the CW-FIT program, and a district coaching model utilizing technology and training materials will be expanded in the project (pages e27-e28). The applicant has claimed that the approach is promising, as it adapts existing resources to enhance reach and reduce cost. The project will expand this strategy to rural areas for testing.

Weaknesses:

The applicant discussion on the demonstration of building on the existing strategies is limited (pages e27-e28). For example, the applicant does not describe how the successes or areas of improvement with the implementation strategy demonstrate that it has been promising. The applicant has not related how the current project will expand on or build upon existing strategies such as the Rural Coaching Model, CW-FIT Micro-Credentialing Program (pages e27-e28).

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided good information of the potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge (pages e28-e30). For example, the applicant states that the project will contribute to the effects of CW-FIT on academic engagement, achievement of K-8 rural students, and the rural teachers' classroom management. The strength of the project knowledge is based on a study of fidelity of implementation, and the use of data-based decisions, especially in the field of teacher coaching (pages e29-e30).

Weaknesses:

The applicant discussion of the potential contribution of the proposed project is limited (pages e28-e30). For example, the potential contribution is limited to academic engagement and classroom management (page e28). However, the applicant had also highlighted the concerns about in school suspensions and academic gaps among student groups. The applicant has not discussed how the project will increase knowledge of the relationship of the project strategies in addressing these specific issues faced by rural schools.

Reader's Score: 4

Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale

1. The Secretary considers the strategy to scale 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 the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a comprehensive set of strategies that will potentially address barriers and enable expansion of the program (pages e30-e32). The applicant has highlighted unique issues faced by rural schools such as cost, time, and geographic isolation. The applicant seeks to address these strategies using a rural coaching model and a flexible micro-credentials program (pages e30-e31). For example, the applicant will use a virtual coaching platform which is flexible for rural teachers (page e31). Moreover, the project also seeks to build capacity among rural districts using existing resources. Moreover, the micro-credentialing program will provide not only professional learning but also graduate credit for the rural teachers as a part of their professional development (page e32).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's strategies do not describe tiered level of support for the teachers adequately (pages e30-e32). For example, the applicant does not describe how the project will address varying barriers or challenges faced regarding rural teachers, including high turnover, lack of motivation, and limited resources. The project also does not seem to adequately address the main challenge of limited budget since the target districts will have to roll over the costs of the project to the school.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant has discussed a viable management plan (pages e32-e34, e7). The strength of the management plan is an alignment of the project goals and objectives with a clear timeline, and specific milestones. For example, goal # 1 of strategy to scale will focus on launching and identifying and training of rural coaches in year one through the various semesters (page e37). The strength of the implementation plan is the involvement of the various personnel such as the evaluation team regional directors, rural coaches, and dissemination team. The applicant has clearly identified partners, involvement of district and school-based staff, and the use of rural recruitment and advisory council (page 33).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided adequate information about the capacity of the applicant to implement the project (pages e34-e38). The project will be led by an experienced and qualified project director and supported by qualified team members such as a technology director, dissemination director, cost analyst, diversity equity and inclusion, and the evaluation team. The strength of the applicant's capacity in implementing the project is the active involvement of the partnering school districts (page e36), the established capacity to provide professional development (page e36), the use of an effective online professional development system (page e38), and technology support (page e38). The success of the project will also be determined by the communication strategies planned by the applicant. ,000 in funds annually to partner districts to support personnel costs of implementation and project activities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant has described a broad dissemination plan (page e39). The strength of the dissemination plan is the establishing of a proactive plan, the involvement of the coaches and leaders, and the partnership with the applicant communications department. The applicant seeks to use platforms such as rural education associations, contribution to publications, press releases, research briefs and the use of social media. Regular scheduled meetings will inform regional directors and coaches about project progress.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The The project dissemination plan lacks some details (page e39). For example, the applicant has mentioned the use of a dissemination team, but has not provided the constitution of the team, and specifics of the team. Moreover, the dissemination plan also does not have specific targets for the dissemination plan (page e39) that will enable further development or replication.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 12

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has discussed a broad conceptual framework for the project (pages e39-e40). The applicant has discussed a logic model that incorporates the key project components such as the rural coaching model, micro-credentialing option the use of the online professional learning platform, and the involvement of the staff. The project outcomes also seek to casually link the project components to the project goals and objectives.

Weaknesses:

The project logic model is not comprehensive (pages e39-e40). Moreover, the applicant has not contextualized the project conceptual framework as uniquely for rural schools and supported by pertinent research.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided clear goals and objectives for the project (pages e40-e43, e164-e167). The strength of the project goals is that it covers the expansion phase of the project strategy and contribute to the evidence base of the project model. The goals are aligned to strategies that enable goals to be achievable. On pages e164-e167, the applicant has provided specific outcomes and quantitative measures of the project goals. For example, for goal # 2, there are two objectives and each of the objective has specific performance measures in terms of targets and achievement levels.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Sub

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.

Strengths:

The applicant has briefly discussed the broad needs of the rural schools that will be the target population (page e43). The applicant has stated that the CW-FIT has been supported by peer reviewed publications that support the efficacy of the project to address needs of the rural schools. The applicant has highlighted the main need of high quality and cost-effective professional development.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not substantiated the needs of the target schools with data (page e43). For example, the applicant has not supported the need of high quality and cost-effective professional development of the target schools beyond a general statement. The applicant has not provided information about the need for micro-credentialing, and rural coaches that are key components of the project.

Reader's Score: 3

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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Sub

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. 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 has addressed the competitive preference priority to promote educational equity (pages e24-e25) in both middle and high schools. The applicant has stated that the project strategy of CW-FIT is inclusive and seeks to breaking implicit bias cycle to enable effective instruction and classroom management through team collaboration

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not adequately addressed the competitive preference priority (page e24-e25). For example, the applicant has not substantiated the claim that the strategy used will promote student equity in access to educational resources and opportunities. For example, the applicant has not discussed, any of the approaches that the criteria has asked for (a-e).

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. 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 has addressed competitive preference priority # 2 (page e25). The applicant states that the project will involve examining how the rural students have become disengaged from learning using the CW-FIT strategy. The project seeks to accelerate learning to ensure all students to meet challenging academic standards, through professional development for rural students.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not adequately addressed the competitive preference priority # 2 (page e25). For example, the applicant has not provided specific plans for community asset mapping to examine student disengagement. The applicant also does not provide specific information about using the evidence-based approach for rigorous coursework.

Reader's Score: 1

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	34
Sub Total	35	34
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	63
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	2
Total	106	65

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 14

Sub

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

Strengths:

The application clearly addresses a high burden to expand and accelerate learning time, and includes data that substantiate the need for their project. A high accelerating learning burden and documented data (Average % below Reading Proficiency in Partner Districts for 72 rural districts (range 51%-75%), other relevant information; and studies) will substantiate the proposed project. The local comparison of student data are 60% below reading proficiency for the state of Kansas. Additionally, rural teachers are struggling to support high-needs students in the presence of declining academic engagement, increases in academic deficits, absenteeism, conduct, and mental health issues. The disparities such as critical needs for professional development, ongoing support, cost-efficient evidence-based interventions, staff shortages, declining enrollment/funds, and COVID-19- related lost instruction time are stated in the project. Data indicates rural schools have more students receiving in-school suspensions (ISS) (6.09%) than urban schools (5.06%) in the area. Literature substantiates a rationale for intervention strategies and ensure that the needs of the target population are met (p. e 23-e27).

Weaknesses: The applicant does not provide a needs assessment to justify the national significance of the project.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The proposed project clearly incorporate the development of new strategies that build on existing strategies by providing documented interventions, resources, activities, services, programs, and practices that can help to solve the persistent problems in education that prevent high-need students from succeeding. The project addresses the problem and demonstrates how the proposed project appeals to high needs students to accelerate student achievement. The proposed project will modify strategies for the target population; expands access in the Today's One Room School House (TORSH) system of coaching, and equips students with the new CW-FIT Micro-Credentialing Program. This program also adapts existing on-line delivery training materials to replace in-person training at a reduced program cost. Additionally, rural teachers earn micro-credentials that can stack toward graduate credit. The project reach scale over time by expanding services and utilizing past success with a logic model that links the program inputs to the outcomes to ensure promising new strategies (e 27-e28).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant's describes a potential contribution of the proposed project to increase clear understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies. The potential dissemination of the proposed innovations increase efficiency by utilizing resources, replication operations, current research-based methods of assessment; adaptations of practices, and grant implementation. The proposed project provides community awareness of the project by utilizing YouTube, commercials, overviews, research briefs, and testimonials. These initiatives provide information on project effectiveness to accelerate achievement and to implement strategies in a variety of new populations to ensure increased knowledge and understanding of educational issues (p. e28).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly identifies specific strategies that address a particular barrier that would address reaching the level of scale for the proposed project. The applicant proposes to abstain rural school teachers from insufficient training by developing a system that provides resources, training, and professional development for rural teachers. The project employs sufficient resource of the Rural Coaching Model and TORSH as an implementation plan of stakeholders' support, feedback, assessments, past success, and a strong theory (logic model) that links the program inputs (teacher skills) to the outcome. Also, being a part of a larger network and sharing resources and operating procedures supports reach to the level of scale that is proposed in the application (p. e30-e32).

Weaknesses:

The applicant addresses a lack of resources as a barrier to cost structure of the proposed strategies that rolled over into the proposed budget (p. e30).

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

The management plan clearly achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones. The applicant accomplishes the project tasks by incorporating a detailed timeline (Year 1) to allow task monitoring and a clear roadmap for project implementation of key benchmarks with objectives (e.g., Strategy to Scale Training Coaches with High Fidelity (Yrs. 1-4) that illustrate concrete attainment. Outputs and outcomes (Improved student MAP scores) are outlined in the logic model and highlight specific deliverables from all key partners and stakeholders involved in the project. Project milestones drive continuous improvement by addressing data checkpoints where pivots in strategy of implementation are warranted. Additionally, the applicant clearly defined roles for key personnel and sufficient timeline to accomplish project tasks by improving results and productivity. The key personnel provide an opportunity for the project to have a systemic impact on the organization's overall operation to maximize the effectiveness of the project. The project is designed to achieve the goals and to complete activities to signal that are on track, on time, and within budget to ensure objectives of the proposed project are achieved (p. e 32-e41).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The proposal clearly discusses how the project utilizes financial resources, management capacity, or staff to ensure that objectives are attained. A clear connection is made between activities, partners, resources, and staff in the achievement of each objective. Project Director oversees budgetary monitoring, collaborates with rural partners, (The Global Education (GE) Academy) and ensures timely completion of RCT, and supports project evaluation activities. Time and effort of qualified personnel, such as the Project Director, Executive Directors, Implementation Director, and Technology Director, staff are responsible for tasks and activities to appropriately oversee the proposed project. The applicant has effectively described the role of the Project Director and how the program fully integrates into the organizational structure of the project. Dissemination of the proposed innovations clearly increases efficiency and effective strategies by utilizing dissemination operations, up-to-date technology, and research-based methods to ensure applicant's capacity to working directly, or through partners, during the grant period (p. e34-e37, e40).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly uses a plan to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development. The plan contributes to publications (e.g., Journal of Research in Rural Education) and presentations that target policymakers and practitioners at state and national rural conferences. The disseminating of the CW-FIT is within one's school, district, state and, exemplar classrooms. Proposed project provides community awareness of the project and provides nonparticipants with information by employing ongoing posts about the project via social media (e.g., Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Facebook) to ensure broad dissemination and project effectiveness to accelerate achievement of successful evidence-based practices in new schools, districts, and states (p. e38-e53).

Sub

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 15

Sub

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

Strengths:

The proposed project's conceptual framework is well-conceived and leads to sound project implementation by employing strong alignment between the proposed project activities and outcomes outlined in the logic model. The applicant's strategic revisions improve and adjust activities and build the evidence based on effective educational practices with proposed outcomes and goals. Additionally, specific tasks (eg. meetings) are employed with tangible results logically linked to a rationale for the implementation strategy and referenced study of CW-FIT Rural Expansion. The detailed project plan leads to a more organized project implementation by itemizing project tasks and task owners, outlining timelines for specific project deliverables, and allowing all stakeholders to monitor progress in real time to meet the objectives of the proposed project (p. e38-e40).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Specified measurable goals (e.g., Goal 1. Expand CW-FIT to Rural Schools Across the Country), objectives, and outcomes are specific and measurable. The overall rate of change anticipated across the project period and aligned objectives are determined by rates of increase from performance indicators. Project objectives such as, (Objective 2: Implement Strategy to Scale Training Teachers with High Fidelity (Yrs 1-4) are outlined and include corresponding program purpose and clear outcomes (Rural Coaching Model and MCP available and posted). These components describe the specific desired programmatic operations that are achieved by implementing measurable terms such as measuring tools, quantitative qualitative levels of success, baselines, indicators, targets (100%) timelines, and population to achieve measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project (p. e 39-e41).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Sub

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.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly provides services to address the needs of intended recipients or beneficiaries by providing sufficient quantity and quality educational services; training, assessments, and remedial instruction to raise student achievement. Additionally, appropriate personnel, activities, research-based programs; a CW-FIT Micro-credentialing program; a rural coaching model utilizing TORSH, online coaching, and fidelity and program monitoring will be provided to address persistent challenges that other educators can build upon. Services will sustain, replicate, and scale successful evidence-based practices in new schools, districts, and states, address the barriers to scale, and provide cost-effectiveness and implementation fidelity to successfully address the needs of the target population or other identified needs and to improve achievement for high-need students (e19-e24).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 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 without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Sub

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. 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 proposes to improve academic engagement and achievement for high-needs K-8th grade students in rural elementary and middle schools and improve teachers' classroom management in target schools (p. e19-e25).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly address any of the required approaches to learning (a-e) that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life. e19, 24-25

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. 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 will examine how rural students including various subgroups that have become disengaged from learning in the aftermath of COVID-19; implement CW-FIT as an evidence-based strategy for engaging students; and providing evidence-based professional development. e 13,24-26

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly discuss all required methods for addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty (p. e13-e26)

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2022 02:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2022 02:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
Sub Total	35	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	32
Sub Total	100	32
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	0
Sub Total	6	0
Total	106	32

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2 - 1: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Sub

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

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: 32

Sub

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

Strengths:

The evaluation plan is well-developed because it includes a multi-state, multi-site cluster random control trial (RCT) that is expected to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standard without reservations (page e44). The applicant also indicates that the independent evaluator will be WestEd, an organization that has extensive experience in evaluating large scale education projects. Prior to implementing the full project, the applicant will pilot in one school across 6-7 of the state partners. The applicant provides appropriate evidence of reliability and validity for the instruments that will be employed in reviewing academic achievement, engagement, teacher outcomes, and teacher self-efficacy (pages e48-e51). The applicant provides detailed information of the instruments that will be used to measure the objectives of the project that focus on the intervention and coaching model (Appendix J, pages e142-e148). The proposed instruments to measure student and teacher changes as well as the statistical applications are appropriate for the project and will produce evidence about the effectiveness of the project.

Weaknesses:

The applicant addresses the issue of attrition for participants in a somewhat general fashion (page e47). It is unclear if there are sufficient incentives and protections to ensure that the participants and the sample sizes will not be affected substantially due to teachers and students leaving the project. The offering of course material as an incentive to participate and not leave the study seems to have limited potential.

Reader's Score: 17

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

Sub

Strengths:

The evaluation plan is effective and clearly provides information and data to others interested in replicating or testing the results with extensive information relative to the large samples that were tested. The information described will be presented in an appropriate fashion. For example, the evaluation consultant will use a multi-level structural equation modeling to test mediation of facts and search for any presence of measurement error (page e54). In terms of cost effectiveness, the applicant provides specific information concerning the costs related to coaching and teaching, explaining that the primary cost driver is related to the coaching activity (page e55).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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.

Strengths:

The evaluation plan effectively focuses on the key components of the project. The extensiveness is demonstrated through the collection and analysis of data focusing on coaching, teacher perceptions of the training and professional development, and teacher credentialing. The applicant indicates that the project activities must meet 80% fidelity and be implemented at least three times a week (page e55). The evaluation consultant (WestEd) has developed an analysis plan that will assess the student and teacher mediators in terms of the treatment effects. The logic model (page e40) illustrates how the teachers will mediate the issue of self-efficacy and in turn mediate the project's impact on academic engagement (page e54).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The evaluation plan clearly provides feedback that will permit periodic assessment of progress. The applicant indicates that the evaluator will meet with the principal investigator on a weekly basis at the beginning of the project. This process will eventually result in monthly meetings during which time the evaluator will focus on issues such as randomization, attrition, data collection, student level information, and other issues that may cause the project to change or alter components of the project. In addition, the WestEd evaluators will also work on a continuous basis to assist the project team during the pilot stages to ensure that appropriate tests are used, data collection procedures are completed, reporting templates are developed, and other factors are finalized to ensure ongoing feedback.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2022 02:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2022 02:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	0
Sub Total	35	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	27
Sub Total	100	27
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	0
Sub Total	6	0
Total	106	27

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2 - 1: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. (S411A220001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

Strategy to Scale - Strategy to Scale

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Sub

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Sub

Reader's Score: 0

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: 27

Sub

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

Strengths:

The evaluation plan includes many of the design features required to meet WWC standards without reservations. For example, the applicant states their intent to exclude joiners from the analysis which, consistent with WWC standards, is a sound approach to reducing the risk of bias due to joiners and is a strong approach to ensuring both pre and post data is available for analysis from a high percentage of students (p. e47). The use of a cluster RCT accompanied by a clear description of efforts to minimize attrition is a sound approach to measuring the impact of the intervention. The student ELA outcomes measured with MAP growth scores are an excellent way to maximize impact analysis since these scores are comparable across grades (p. e49). The applicant provides extensive details on the psychometric properties of their outcomes measures which meet WWC standards for validity and reliability. In addition, the evaluation team (p. e83-e87) has solid experience with studies using a similar rigorous design so the plan is likely to be well implemented.

Weaknesses:

The applicant intends to recruit 20 districts for each cohort, stating an average of 2 schools per district ("40 total") and 4 teachers per school (p. e45), but minimal information is provided on how they will determine the balance between elementary and middle schools, and/or how they will try to achieve balance across grade levels, or what criteria middle school ELA teachers will use to select "one class period for the RCT" (p.e46). In addition, the proposed use of "within district blocks" (p.e47) for randomization has the potential to yield an imbalance in both school type and grade levels included. While the model specification in Figure 6 of Appendix J (p.e148) indicates the use of multiple covariates at each of the three levels, specific covariates are not listed. In particular, it is not clear whether teachers' years of experience will be included, which is likely to influence their self-efficacy and/or classroom management skills. Similarly, it is not clear whether school level will be included as a covariate which would be important to determine whether replication of this model is likely to be more/less successful depending on whether it is used in an elementary or middle school setting.

Reader's Score: 14

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

Sub

Strengths:

Research questions (#7-9) presented on page e45 provide a solid approach to collecting data on important aspects of the intervention that will result in a thorough exploration of the effectiveness of particular strategies and the conditions under which replication is likely to be successful. The CW-FIT modules and the structure for the coaching support are clearly defined as well as the completion of detailed coaching logs, all of which will enable successful replication (p.e31-32). The plan to conduct focus groups with 20% of the teacher, post-intervention, is also a strong approach to documenting effective strategies (p. e52).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant's logic model clearly identifies intermediate and long-term outcomes for both students and teachers. (p. e40) Further, thresholds for acceptable implementation are specified on pages e41-e42 representing reasonable targets (e.g., 80%) for fidelity measured through efficient tools such as coaching logs and TORSH videos. In addition, the CW-FIT teacher fidelity checklist on page e144 provides a detailed explanation of the components considered and rated and how fidelity percentages are calculated by the rural coaches.

Weaknesses:

In determining the key mediators, it is important to clearly articulate the covariates included in the analysis of teacher/classroom outcomes (e.g., Research question #5, p. e45), and this portion of the plan is vague. Research question #6 references mediation analysis and outcomes measures such as TSES will include pre and post-scores, but it is not clear which data will be included in the hierarchical analysis – baseline self-efficacy, post-intervention self-efficacy, or change from pre to post. Minimal detail is provided on a two-level hierarchical model focused only on teacher outcomes which would be an important component of an evaluation determining the effectiveness of this coaching model in terms of changing teacher practice, or the conditions under which it is the most successful, which is stated as one of the two primary goals of the project (p.e23).

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides extensive details about the processes through which this periodic assessment will occur, as well as a clear description of the exhaustive communication channels (e.g., weekly updates from WestEd (p.e56/35) and Table 4 listing communication strategies (p.e38/17)) embedded within the project. Specifically, the rural coach dashboard provides detailed ongoing information about implementation fidelity across schools (p. e145). In addition, the applicant's plan to have regional directors meet with rural coaches monthly is a sound approach to providing performance feedback and documenting progress toward achieving intended outcomes (p. e38/17).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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