

**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: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	30
Sub Total	35	30
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	56
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	1
Total	106	57

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a narrative detailing the crisis in learning recovery that our schools are currently facing, including data illustrating the problem in Texas. Evidence has also been presented to support that nationwide low-performing, high-poverty schools are failing due to a lack of flexibility to meet individual challenges at schools, strong school leaders with the freedom to act, and steady commitment to bold change.

Weaknesses:

The evidence and argument that failing schools is a nationwide problem would be stronger with the inclusion of nationwide data indicating the full extent of the problem and that it is, in fact, nationwide and not limited to Texas.

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 applicant proposes to implement and evaluate strategies that have shown to be effective at the ninth-grade level and alter them for elementary-level schools through the proposed Project Research-based Strategies and Artificial Intelligences for School Enhancement: Turning Around Schools (Project RAISE).

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 potential contribution of the project will be information for school leaders and university faculty on how to turn around schools within a multi-school, state, and national project through leadership residencies, virtual professional development, and a school enhancement/turnaround intervention which has potential to increase knowledge of the effectiveness of the RAISE Project on elementary-level schools.

Weaknesses:

The argument would be strengthened with inclusion of more clear details and relevant data of what turning around failing and potentially failing schools entails.

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 acknowledges a previous barrier of lack of focus on school turnaround in the virtual professional development prior grants and for national leaders which the proposed strategy of switching to this focus has strong potential to address this barrier. The applicant also acknowledges a previous barrier to making a national impact with the virtual professional development due to the main focus on one state (Texas). The current project proposes to expand nationwide; thus, directly addressing this barrier.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 includes relevant activities that could be achieved within the proposed budget. The narrative describes a comprehensive management plan which includes timelines for major project activities in terms of milestones and assignment of responsibilities for each among the three main responsible parties. A detailed timeline for implementation by group and school cohorts is also included which will serve to facilitate and organize workflow efficiently to ensure the accomplishment of project tasks. In addition, the applicant proposes the utilization of an active advisory board well-represented by project stakeholders and partners.

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 tasks needed to complete the objectives during the grant period. The applicant has provided at least 30 letters of support outlining expressed interest in potential partnering 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.

Weaknesses:

The resources allocated for the project's external evaluation (of only 4.2% of the total federal funds) is less than adequate to achieve the objectives for a project of this scope and scale.

The narrative clearly states that the overall program management will be the responsibility of the principal investigator, for which the position is only funded for 5% FTE. This is inadequate for the proper management of a project of this magnitude. Further, the organization of personnel includes 1 PI, 3 Co-PIs, and 4 Co-Investigators (all with only 2-5% FTE effort) as the administrative managers (e168). The time allocated for the project principal investigator and co-investigators could be inadequate to achieve the program management, academic and professional development program, and external relations activities (listed in Figure 5), the majority of which are assigned to the PIs (each working at most 2 hours per week or 5% FTE) which could feasibly not be enough to ensure task completion.

Reader's Score: 5

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 focus broad dissemination efforts in the areas of scholarly publications, Open Access, webinars, podcasts, and social media to a wide audience that will be strong in supporting further replication. In addition, the applicant commits to post step-by-step guidelines for school practitioners in implementing the models developed and enhanced over the course of the project.

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: 13

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 conceptual framework of the underlying proposed research and demonstration of activities is articulate and thorough. The descriptive, well-developed situation, priorities, and intended outcomes clearly lead to the project inputs, activities, and impact outputs with consideration of assumptions and other external factors.

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 proposed project goals are clearly specified and measurable and are tied directly to each of the three identified project components. Each goal is accompanied by detailed, appropriate objectives and outcomes with associated replicable activities and also comprehensive details of how each objective will be measured.

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 urban principal residency program in failing schools, virtual professional development, and school enhancement turnaround program interventions are designed to provide training and support to school leaders and will strongly address failing schools.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks data regarding evidence specific to the identifying needs of the target population in project districts. In addition, details are lacking as to the design of how any procedures would be modified or what would be needed by diverse learners and low-SES students. This would strengthen the evidence of the extent that any identified needs would be addressed.

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:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:
Not addressed.

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:

The proposed project includes program components of diverse urban residency program in failing schools during COVID-19, professional development for school leaders to enhance and turn around schools, and school enhancement and turnaround as foundational to the project implementation and measured outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The problems of failing and near-failing schools and proposed project components designed to address those are noted, yet are not specific to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though evidence-based instructional approaches and supports are being proposed, community asset mapping has not been addressed as required in the competitive preference priority criteria.

Reader's Score: 1

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	35	31
Sub Total	35	31
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	12
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	56
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	4
Total	106	60

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has emphasized the use of evidence-based strategies such as a one-year residency training program for school leaders, and the Turn Around Schools – Focus on Leadership (pages e21-e22). The applicant has also identified the issues that prevent turnaround schools' models such as flexibility, strong school leaders, and commitment to bold changes. The project seeks to address this through the involvement of the entire leadership team.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not specified how the project strategies address issues of national significance (pages e21-e22). For example, the applicant has listed several factors such as drop in math achievement and increasing teacher vacancies. However, the applicant has not clearly described how the turnaround school model will address these issues. Additionally, the applicant has not discussed how strong school leadership may help address the drop in math achievement or the increase in teacher vacancies in low performing 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 provided strong evidence of how the project will build upon a promising strategy of the RAISE model (pages e23-e25). The applicant tested some components of the model such as the urban principal residence program through SEED grant money. The proposed project will expand the model in high-need campuses. The project will also combine other elements such as virtual professional development, virtual professional learning community, and virtual mentor coaches, based on the BAAR model (page e25). The project will build upon the BAAR model that successfully turned around 13 schools. Other elements that the project will build upon are Artificial Intelligence and District School Predictor along with an internal root cause analysis (page e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 has provided a convincing argument about the potential contribution of the proposed project to knowledge and understanding of the key elements of virtual professional development, professional learning communities, and mentor coaches (pages e25-e26). The applicant will test the project strategies across a wide population of 19,190 principals across the nation. The project will assess the efficacy of a turnaround model that based not on replacing staff, but leadership development and enhancement. The project will also be implemented across a diverse set of schools covering both rural and non-rural schools (page e25).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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: 31

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 an average approach to scale up the project from its existing level (pages e26-e27). The applicant will use Coburn's (2003) approach to scaling that addresses the issues of depth, sustainability, spread, and shift of ownership. For each of the issues, the applicant has provided a specific strategy. For example, the shift of ownership issue will be handled through the five-year period in phases, and by year five, the ELRC will be the institution to handle the project. The applicant used the SEED grant to implement virtual professional development, but the current project will allow it to focus on specific topics of virtual professional development and study the national impact (page e27).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's approach to scale the project has some gaps. The applicant has not adequately discussed in their approach to scale, the barriers that prevented the applicant from reaching the scale during the past project (pages e26-e27). For example, the applicant's discussion of the limitation of the scope of the past grant on one state was the limitation set by the grant and was not an issue of scaling up. The applicant has not discussed how it will alleviate the issues of data collection halted by the pandemic.

Reader's Score: 6

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 strong management plan (pages e27-e29). The management plan includes the leadership of the principal investigator and addresses the core components of project administration, the academic aspects of the project, the school, district, and university relations, and finally external relations. Moreover, the applicant has provided clear activities associated with each of the project components, the staff involved and milestones in terms of the semesters through the five years (Figure 5, pages e27-e28). For example, the component of school and district relations will be handled by the principal investigator, the project coordinators, and the faculty involved right from year one. Subsequently, they will be handled through the cohorts developed.

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 a comprehensive discussion of the institutional capacity (pages e29-e31, e149). The project is led by the qualified and experienced principal investigators and co-PIs. The project will have adequate leadership to lead the project through PIs, coordinators, and outreach directors. The applicant also has access to experts working on school turnaround models and adult transfer of learning (page e30). Other resources used will be the decision-making simulation app, adequate space for housing the project (page e149), and evaluation support by a team of researchers. The applicant also has discussed the level of structural capital such as official partners, especially with the Houston ISD for the residencies.

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 an effective dissemination plan (page e31). The applicant has identified the Educational Leadership Research Center as the main disseminator of project information. The applicant has listed several methods and strategies to disseminate information such as policy briefs, open access reports, journal manuscripts, summer leadership institutes, webinars, podcasts, and conference presentations. The applicant will also make the information available freely on the ELRC website, with step-by-step guidelines for school practitioners and best practices.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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: 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 comprehensive conceptual framework for the project (pages e31-e32, e127). The applicant has discussed a logic model that contextualizes the project in the need for a turnaround model, the priorities, and intended outcomes (page e127). The logic model incorporates the pertinent inputs in terms of human and other resources, activities, and short-, mid-and-long-term impact. The various components are linked causally. The conceptual structure is based on the assumption of the active participation of school leaders and external factors along with a strong evaluation component. The theoretical base for the project comes from andragogy theory (Merriam) and transfer of learning (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Burke and Hutchins, 2007; and Ford and Weissbein, 1997).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant has provided clear goals and objectives for the project (pages e33-e43, e180-e185). The project goals are comprehensive as they range from the principal residency program to preparing in-service schoolteachers and preparing 2,500 school leaders. For each of the goals, the applicant has discussed specific objectives, outcomes, and the replicable activities associated with the objective. For example, for goal # 3, the applicant will recruit school leaders and implement a randomized control trial and provide and measure the efficacy of interventions such as summer institutes, virtual leadership coaching, and student achievement. On pages e180-e185, the applicant has discussed fifteen performance measures associated with the project goals and objectives.

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 general needs of the schools (pages e43-e44). The needs highlighted are the risk of near-failing or failing schools. The applicant has discussed the overall need for a diverse leadership pool and provides the leader's strategic support.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not substantiated the needs of the target schools with data (pages e43-e44). For example, the applicant has not provided data on the schools/districts that are failing, and the articulated need for leadership development. In the absence of information about the target schools, it cannot be fully determined whether the proposed project is appropriate to and will successfully address the needs of the target population.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:
Not addressed.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

According to the applicant, the project elements were developed as a response to the problems faced by the low-performing schools because of the pandemic (page e18). This implies that the project is a partial attempt to address the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has only partially addressed competitive preference priority # 2 (page e18). 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 access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12 and expanding learning time to help students.

Reader's Score: 1

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

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	14
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	35	0
Sub Total	100	62
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	1
Sub Total	6	1
Total	106	63

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

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:

Some of the needs within the target community have been identified by the application. A high burden for learning recovery, and data that substantiate the need for their project is addressed. Documented data, (STAAR results decreased by 4% compared to 2019 data; Math assessment scores dropped from 50% to 35% and other relevant information; and studies) will justify the proposed project. Additionally, COVID-19 pandemic affected principals and leadership teams across the nation. The disparities such as teacher vacancies; school community coping issues; students' academic and social lapses are stated in the project. Data indicate increases in academic deficits, absenteeism, conduct, and mental health issues in the area. Literature substantiates a rationale for intervention strategies and ensures that some of the needs of the target population are met. (p. e 23-e27).

Weaknesses:

The application would be more convincing with national data and information of addressing the discrepancies in student achievement beyond Texas. The applicant does not provide sufficient information to validate the national significant of the project (p. e 27).

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 applicant presents a solid plan to involve the development of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. For example, the proposed project clearly 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 proposed project modifies strategies for the target population by expanding access to the BARR system with practices to solve the persistent problems in education. This program also adapts existing online delivery training materials to replace in-person training at a reduced program cost. From these efforts, the project will 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 has provided a clear design to use the information collected through the evaluation to increase knowledge or understanding of educational problems, spread the news about the project; to monitor the progress of the funded project; and provide accountability information about the effective strategies. Data collection will provide needed information regarding the effects of services provided. The proposed project offers community awareness of the project by utilizing top-class Institutes and webinars, new podcasts via the center, think tanks, and Summer Leadership Institutes. These initiatives provide information on project effectiveness to accelerate achievement and implement strategies in a variety of new populations to ensure increased knowledge and understanding of educational issues (p. e28-31).

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 specific strategies that address a particular barrier are well defined. The applicant proposes to utilize a system that provides resources, training, and professional development. The project employs sufficient resources such as the RAISE as an implementation plan of stakeholders' support, feedback, assessments, past success, and a strong theory (logic model). For example, Coburn's (2003) approach is referenced in the proposed project to be utilized to scale and address the issues. The strategy links the program inputs for the evaluator to assess the evaluation of program implementation (p. e25-27). The application shows clear information on the expansion nationwide with an adequate plan to address barriers to appropriately scale.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 is adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant proposed the project tasks with task monitoring and a clear roadmap for project implementation of key benchmarks with objectives. Outputs and outcomes are outlined in the logic model and highlighted as specific deliverables in the project. Project milestones are provided to address continuous improvement for the strategy of implementation. Additionally, the applicant clearly defined roles for key personnel and a sufficient timeline to accomplish project tasks by improving results and productivity. The key personnel provides an opportunity for the project to have a systemic impact on the organization's overall operation to maximize the effectiveness of the project (p. e 127,34,129).

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 applicant makes some connection between activities, partners, and personnel. The project will provide some collaborative efforts among partners such as Center for Research & Development in Dual Language & Literacy Acquisition. The applicant described some of the responsibilities and how the program integrates into the organizational structure of the project (p. e 115, 168).

Weaknesses:

The applicant presented insufficient information about the project personnel time commitments to support the scope of the applicant's capacity. The project investigator's allotted project commitment time to support the program management, including academic and nonacademic programs, are questionable (Figure 5). The applicant provided inadequate description of the resources to make a clear determination of effectiveness of the management capacity. The application would be strengthened with more clarity on how time commitment of key personnel and specific managerial resources would justify sufficient coverage for the adequate completion of proposed project activities (p. e115, 168).

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

A clear plan to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development is provided. The strategy contributes to publications (e.g., social media, presentations, and peer-reviewed scholarly journals) that target policymakers and practitioners at state and national conferences. Innovations of the RAISE Model will increase knowledge in schools, districts, states, and classrooms. The proposed project provides community awareness of the program and offers nonparticipants information about the plan by employing presentations at academic conferences to ensure broad dissemination and project effectiveness to accelerate the achievement of successful evidence-based practices in new schools, districts, and states (p. e28, 40).

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: 14

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 conceptual framework is well-developed and leads to comprehensive project implementation by employing solid alignment between the project activities and outcomes illustrated in the logic model. The applicant's calculated modifications improve and adjust activities and build the evidence based on effective educational practices with proposed outcomes and goals. Additionally, specific tasks (training) are employed with tangible results reasonably linked to a rationale for the implementation strategy and referenced study of BAAR. (p. e127, 19).

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 applicant presents measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes that are clearly specified. The project objectives are outlined and include corresponding program purpose and clear outcomes). The application provides clarity of outcomes tied to programmatic operations that are achieved by implementing measuring tools, quantitative qualitative levels of success, baselines, indicators, and targets within timelines. The application supports the achievement of measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project (p. e 39-e41).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Sub

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 offers some educational services; training, assessments, and remedial instruction to raise student achievement. The application describes services to address improvements in achievement for high-need students (p. e193).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address how the program will meet the needs of special target populations such as English learners and disabled students that need special accommodation to complete school tasks. The applicant does not provide services or translators for English learners. It is unclear if the applicant policies and procedures are modified to assist students who are disabled. (p. e 193).

Reader's Score: 4

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

N/A.

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:

The applicant will examine how students from underserved communities have become disengaged from learning in the aftermath of COVID-19; implement BAAR as an evidence-based strategy for engaging students; and providing evidence-based professional development. (p. e24-26).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not adequately discuss how required methods address the Impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty. The proposed project needs more descriptive information on (PK-5) schools' approach to addressing the impact of Covid-19. There is limited information for access to rigorous coursework across K-12. The project does not include a needs assessment that would provide the applicant with a snapshot of local policies and strategies that are currently in place that are addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty to avoid an overlap in services (p. e 27).

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: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

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	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 Expansion Panel - 1: 84.411A

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

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 will appropriately focus on three components of the project. The initial component will be an urban principal residency program and will be assessed using a quasi-experimental design involving 60 schools. The second two components involving virtual professional development and training for state and national school leaders will utilize a randomized control trial study for each. The applicant will focus on the two- year intervention activity and the baseline equivalency of component 3 which will generate evidence that meets the What Works Clearinghouse standard without reservations (page e47). Included in the study will be baseline equivalence which will be examined and reported following WWC baseline equivalence guidelines.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address the issue of attrition in terms of sample size. It is unclear how the applicant will control for bias in the evaluation process. It is unclear if the applicant expects attrition. The applicant does not include any policy or procedures it will use to deal with the attrition of schools and participants. The applicant does not discuss either issue in terms of policy or procedure. It is unclear how the applicant will deal with potential bias in selecting participants and analyzing data and information. The applicant does not explain how it will avoid bias and assure the samples are truly random.

Reader's Score: 12

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 indicates that it will share all developed materials and products on a statewide and national basis. The research products as well as the evaluation of rubrics will be disseminated and shared through research and practitioner publications and presentations, webinars and institutes, implementation manuals, and social media outlets (page e47). In addition, the applicant throughout the program design identifies replicable activities for each objective. For example, for objective 1, the applicant will develop an easy- to- follow program for other university school residency programs designed for turning around schools (page e35).

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 applicant indicates that it will utilize a series of instruments to examine the project components and the validity and reliability of outcome measures (page e48). These assessment tools will analyze observation data, English language proficiency, improved learning, and the overall progress of all students. The overall process is illustrated effectively in the logic model that identifies the current situation, priorities, and intended outcomes (page e127). The model further illustrates how the proposed inputs and activities interact with each other to achieve short- term, mid-term, and long- term outputs. The model also includes an explanation of how data will be collected annually and over the five-year timeframe of the project. The information is specific and includes the measurable thresholds associated with the objectives of the project.

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 applicant indicates that it will use a variety of valid and reliable instruments that will collect quantitative and qualitative data that will be analyzed by the external evaluators regularly (page e52). The information will be shared with the project team and other stakeholders for review and feedback to assess the progress of the project. The timeline included in the management plan indicates that the project will provide data for internal audits and comprehensive evaluations on a semester basis and will be the responsibility of the evaluators (page e28).

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: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

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	24
Sub Total	100	24
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	24

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Texas A&M Research Foundation (S411A220007)

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: 24

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 applicant proposes a cluster RCT design for the portion of the evaluation focused on the third component, School Turnaround Program, which is a research design that could potentially meet WWC standards. (p.e46/29)
The proposed use of standardized test scores as the outcome of interest is also well-aligned with WWC evidence review protocols, in terms of validity and reliability (e47/30).

Weaknesses:

Only one component of the larger project will be evaluated with a design that could meet WWC standards without reservations, as stated in the selection criteria. The cluster-RCT portion of the evaluation plan contains little detail on how the applicant will monitor attrition in schools, or what efforts will be in place to minimize attrition. In addition, the proposal lacks detail on how the evaluators will monitor the representativeness of clusters or limit the risk of bias due to joiners, both of which are outlined in the WWC Handbook. The applicant does not provide a thorough rationale as to why they are recruiting 350 schools, and then selecting 10 schools (per cohort) to be randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. It is not clear how many students will be included, per school, so it is difficult to determine whether the study would be adequately powered. For example, the applicant states there will be "an expected effect size of 0.15 in favor of T student achievement" but it is not clear how this was calculated or what information it is based on (p.e41/24). While the plan to evaluate Component 1 with a cluster-QED design is sound, it would not meet WWC standards without reservations as stated in the selection criteria.

Reader's Score: 10

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 applicant presents an exhaustive list of exploratory research questions that will provide data on strategies' suitability for replication in other settings. (pgs. e49-e51/33-34) These include collecting evaluation data on the professional development quantity and quality as well as the quality of parent/community engagement plans and root cause analysis reports developed through the project. (p.e50/33) Appendix J13 (p.e154) also includes detailed rubrics describing the features of an outstanding turnaround plan and MOOPIL, which can provide guidance for replication. The applicant has also planned quasi-experimental and correlational studies which could provide promising evidence of effectiveness (pgs e50-e51/34).

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 provides extensive details on each of the three components of this project, along with the associated objectives and outcomes for each goal. (pgs. e34/17 – e39/22). In addition, thresholds for acceptable implementation such as completing 3 MOOPILs (p.e38/21), 90% passing the principal exam, and leaders participating in 95% of activities (p.e28/11). In addition, the logic model in Appendix G (p.e127) provides thorough detail on the activities and anticipated outcomes.

Weaknesses:

Figure 9 on pages e44-45/28 is confusing. The applicant presents 24 research questions across four broad categories with abbreviations for measurement methods, responsible parties, and data collection schedule, but it is not clear "what evaluative criterion will be used" (p.e44/27) for each of the questions, which is stated as one of the five 'elaborations' for each question.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

Page e29/13 outlines a clear plan for communication that includes a thorough list of stakeholders to be involved, including "district superintendents, teachers the evaluation team", etc. There is also a plan to collect feedback from participants semi-annually which is a good approach to allowing periodic assessment of progress.

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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