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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)
Reader #1:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	15
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	40
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	68
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	2
	Sub Total	5	2
	Total	105	70

Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)

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: 15

   Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The proposed project involves the effective development and demonstration of a promising new strategy that builds on an existing strategy. The applicant proposes the expansion of the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) into grades 9 & 10. The intervention has been successful in improving student performance in Grade 12 (E15). The evidence of its effectiveness is that in 2015, a quasi-experimental study found that the ERWC improved grade 12 students' performance on the English Placement Test (EPT), which was the standardized placement exam used by California State University (E18). The proposal aims to close a critical articulation gap in grades 9–12 by developing full grade 9 and 10 curricula for students and Professional Learning experiences for ELA teachers, to serve as rigorous, engaging alternatives to traditional literature-based curricula (E15). This proposal supports scaling up the current intervention into additional grades as well as additional states. The Expansion of the ERWC to grades 9 and 10 is proposed to occur in California (CA), Washington (WA), Hawaii (HI), and New Mexico (NM) (E18).

   The proposed project supports the need for this intervention based on data on student performance in reading and literacy. The 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that 66 percent of grade 8 students and 63 percent of grade 12 students performed at the NAEP Basic level or below on the reading assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2019) (E17). In California, a state that will be served by ERWC, the research found that 74 percent of grade 8 students and 73 percent of grade 12 students performed at the NAEP Basic level or below on the writing assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2011) (E18).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness was found.

   Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - 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: 40

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 and completely identified four specific strategies that will address four barriers that have prevented them from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application. The strategies offered have a very high likelihood of adequately addressing the barriers. The applicant identified the barriers to broader implementation as (1) limited Professional Learning opportunities; (2) the need for additional leadership and human resources to support sustainability and growth beyond the current states; (3) the need for a high-quality English curriculum in all grades of high school; and (4) need for educators across the country to understand the benefits of the ERWC (E24). To address these barriers, the applicant identified the following strategies 1) secure additional funding (E24); 2) select and training of leadership teams consisting of university professors, community college instructors, district/site literacy coaches, site administrators, and teacher retirees in all the project states to serve as ERWC coaches (E25); 3) expansion of the ERWC to grades 9 and 10 to address the full range of high school Common Core State Standards (CCSS) ELA/literacy standards and better prepare students for their grades 11 and 12 English courses (E26); and 4) develop a comprehensive dissemination plan to share information about the ERWC more broadly (E26).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness was found.

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 applicant has developed a management plan that will achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. The inclusion of key personnel coupled with a description of their clearly defined responsibilities adds to the effectiveness of the plan. The management plan clearly articulates the notable timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. Evidence of its effectiveness is illustrated in that some of the goals, objectives, and outcomes are specific and measurable (E485-487). For example, Objective #1 has a performance measure that is specific and measurable: Students will score at least 5% higher on the Smarter Balanced ELA/Literacy Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) than students enrolled in comparison English courses (E486). Listings of key personnel indicate that the management team is capable. For example, the project director has 13 years of federal grant experience and has served as Project Director and is responsible for overall implementation and oversight of the grant (E28). In addition, the project's governance structure includes an ERWC Steering Committee of 16 members, which will provide overall guidance and content leadership for the project (E28). The project budget is detailed and aligned with the purpose of increasing the project to the required scale. For example, the costs for personnel and project activities are aligned with the management plan to expand to the scale (E28).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness was found.

Sub

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 proven that they have the capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a national level by planning to work directly with its partners during the grant period. For example, the applicant will work collaboratively with other state leaders in the planning and implementation of the project. The CA state project leader will work with the HI state leader, the NM state leader, and the WA state leader by meeting monthly to build collaborative relationships and ensure the successful implementation of the proposed project across the four states (E30). Proven leaders are chosen and an effective management plan also proves their capacity to bring the project to scale. For example, the project director has 13 years of federal grant experience and has served as Project Director for the i3 Validation Grant and the i3 Development Grant (E28) and the Principal Investigator is currently the Director of Data Analytics at WestEd, and is a longtime ERWC partner, with 12 years of experience conducting large RCTs and quasi-experimental design evaluations of the ERWC (E29). The project budget is detailed and aligned with the purpose of increasing the project to the required scale. For example, the costs for expansion based on personnel and project activities are aligned with the management plan (E28).

Weaknesses:

No weakness was found.

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 will utilize several mechanisms to broadly and effectively disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication. Those mechanisms include an extensive website, liaisons to professional organizations, an annual webinar series, a blog, an email list, a growing social-media presence, standing agenda items at statewide meetings, access to the PR department at the CSU Office of the Chancellor, and a designated ERWC communications team: the ERWC Community and Communication Work Group (E30). The Work Group which will be composed of personnel in the four project states, will ensure that information is disseminated to leaders, educators, families, and students in new states to support possible replication and continued development (E31).

Weaknesses:

No weakness was found.

Reader's Score: 10

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Strengths:

There is a good likelihood that the products produced from the proposed project will be used effectively in a variety of other settings. One reason is that the ERWC products are adaptive by design with built-in flexibility to allow teachers to support students' development as expert learners and respond to instructional contexts (E31). Another

reason is that the ERWC products will be publicly available in the ERWC Online Community and can be used to create place-based and interest-based modules for students in grades 6–12 in diverse schools and regions (E32). These products are research-supported, adaptive to instructional settings, and readily available for public use, which increases the likelihood that they will be accessed widely and the potential for replication increases. The applicant recommends that certain aspects of the ERWC's curriculum development model can be replicated in other regions and states. It includes the recruitment of a diverse pool of authors, shared review of best practices and theoretical foundations, writers' groups, collaborative peer review, field testing, evaluation, and rhetorical revision (E32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

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:

   There is a high-quality conceptual framework that supports the research and demonstration activities of the proposed project. Evidence of this quality level is that the Logic Model is informed by the Assessing Research-Practice Partnerships framework (Henrick et al., 2017) is composed of five dimensions of effectiveness, and outlines specific indicators of progress (E35). The project goals will focus on 1) equipping students with college-ready reading skills, 2) preparation of faculty to teach a research-based reading curriculum, and 3) scaling up the research-based reading curriculum to other states (E220). There is a clear and rational flow from the inputs (Partnerships, Curriculum & Pedagogy, Professional Learning) to the Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes (E220). For example; the Development of effective partnerships in four states (Input) leads to effective 4- state collaboration (Activity) leading to effective and efficient project and state-level decision-making (Output) (E220). This is consistent throughout the logic model and illustrates the high level of quality of the conceptual framework.

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness was found.

   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 application contains clearly specified goals, some clearly specified and measurable objectives coupled with some clearly specified outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project. The project goals are clearly specified

with stated focus areas such as 1) equipping students with college-ready reading skills, 2) preparation of faculty to teach a research-based reading curriculum, and 3) scaling up that research-based reading curriculum to other states (E220). For each goal, there are some partly specific and measurable objectives that align. For example; in Goal #1 which deals with equipping students with a college-ready reading intervention; the objective is to scale implementation with 100% fidelity in 70 schools in CA, HI, NM, and WA in grades 9–10 (E45).

Weaknesses:

The objectives do not include the time period for implementation and completion (E37-38). Some of the objectives were not specific and/or measurable. For example; Objective 7 of Goal 3 is that the applicant team will understand cost-effectiveness in order to scale up upon completion of the project (E38). There is a lack of clarity of what the applicant actually meant by understanding the cost-effectiveness. You cannot measure a level of understanding and its relation to cost-effectiveness.

Reader's Score: 3

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 design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and has a high probability of addressing the needs of the target population. The project design's focus on scaling up an intervention to prepare students in college-ready reading is appropriate based on research data that found both a need for it and the success of the earlier limited implementation. The applicant identifies the need for the intervention that includes: (1) the need for the ERWC in grades 9 and 10 to further increase grades 11 and 12 and postsecondary preparedness and success, especially for high-need students such as English learner students and students with disabilities; (2) the need for more engaging reading and writing pedagogy and content; and (3) the need to be responsive to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and teachers (E39). For example; (NEED) In California, a state served by ERWC, the research found that 74 percent of grade 8 students and 73 percent of grade 12 students performed at the NAEP Basic level or below on the writing assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2011) (E18). (SUCCESS) The intervention has been successful in improving student performance in Grade 12 (E15). The evidence of its effectiveness is that in 2015, a quasi-experimental study found that the ERWC improved grade 12 students' performance on the English Placement Test (EPT), which was the standardized placement exam used by California State University (E18). Based on the empirical data, scaling up the project has a high probability of addressing the needs of a much larger target population in four states.

Weaknesses:

No weakness was found.

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

   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. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

   Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

   Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

   (a) **Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**
   (b) **Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**
   (c) **Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**
   (d) **Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

   Strengths:

   The fiscal agent and prime grantee is the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools or Fresno County Public Schools. The proposal indicates that the site-based work will take place in high schools in California (CA), Hawaii (HI), New Mexico (NM), and Washington (WA); the exact list will be determined during the recruitment process (P4). They state that partners will include representation from community colleges, tribal colleges, and minority-serving institutions in the four project states (CA, HI, NM, and WA) (E14). Some of the CSU campuses are Hispanic-serving institutions (E39).

   Weaknesses:

   The fiscal agent and prime grantee is the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools or Fresno County Public Schools. This organization is not classified as one of the required entities. Although the applicant states that they will partner with community colleges, tribal colleges, and HSIs, there is a lack of information about how these institutions will be directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed project and bringing it to the scale listed in the application.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 03:30 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	15
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	40
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	15
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	4
	Sub Total	5	4
	Total	105	74

Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)

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: 15

   Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant clearly describes the proposed curriculum and how it uses new strategies to teach literacy. Based on U.S. student 2019 NAEP data, 66% of grade 8 and 63% of grade 12 students performed at the basic NAEP level or below on reading assessment (e21). The pandemic has created further issues with low-performing literacy achievement of students. The Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) was designed to improve the literacy skills of high-need high school students (e22). It is specifically designed to prepare high school students for the literacy demands of higher education (e23). In a recent 2022 study, a randomized controlled trial found that the ERWC improved grade 11 students' performance. ERWC is composed of 30 modules that make up a yearlong college preparatory English course for grades 11 and 12 students. The core structure of the modules is the Assignment Template, which progresses along an arc from reading rhetorically to preparing to respond to writing rhetorically (e24). ERWC represents a transferable literacy process for comprehension, critique, and analysis. This proposal seeks to close the high school gap and develop a full curriculum for grades 9 and 10 (e26), thus having full vertical alignment of the curriculum for secondary education.

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness found.

   Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - 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: 40

    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 barriers to scale, as well as their strategies to address them. The four barriers are limited professional learning opportunities; need for additional leadership and human resources to support sustainability and growth beyond the current states; the need for a high-quality English curriculum in all high school grades; and the need for educators across the country to understand the benefits or ERWC (e28). As an example, to address professional development, the project will use a comprehensive professional learning experience that includes one-on-one coaching, communities of practices, and workshops to support teachers in their implementation of the curriculum.

    Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

    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:

A thorough management plan is provided (e255-e268). The applicant states they will achieve the project objectives on time and within budget (e26). The management plan aligns the project tasks to the start and finish, the personnel responsible, and the milestones (outcomes). The timeline covers the fiver year grant period and is very detailed, describing the activities and their occurrence by month. Outcomes include signed MOUs, communication protocol document, and mapping the existing modules for grades 9-10. An ERWC Steering Committee will provide project governance and content leadership (e31). It is composed of 16 members that are faculty at multiple institutions. Partnerships from community colleges, tribal colleges, and minority serving institutions will facilitate professional learning.

    Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

    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 capacity to implement the project to scale is evident. The key project personnel are qualified and have experience with projects and grants of this size and scope. The project director served in the same role for an i3 grant with ERWC. She is an ERWC module writer and teacher coach as well (e33). The Principal Investigator specializes in data analysis and has worked on the ERWC project for twelve years. The applicant has completed multiple federal and state large grant projects (e34).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

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 dissemination plan is clearly written and appears to be able to support further development of the ERWC. There are already several communication methods in place including a website, liaisons to professional organizations, and an annual webinar series (e34). The ERWC Community and Communication Work Group is comprised of professors, ERWC teachers, and grant partners (e35). The dissemination plan includes presentations, written products, meetings, professional development, and the internet (e246-e254). Each product for dissemination is aligned to the target date, audience, contributor, and feedback obtained. Products include articles for publication, white paper submission for round table discussions, flyers, brochures, and newsletter updates (e249). Lessons learned from ERWC implementation will be disseminated to educators and school leaders to support replication.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 10

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Strengths:

The applicant clearly describes the value of the ERWC. This project seeks to amplify the utility, reach, and impact of the product in the areas of instructional design, professional learning, coaching, intersegmental collaboration, and literacy leadership (e35). The project expands opportunities for module development in ERWC, which will provide teachers and students with more curricular choices, greater diversity of text types, more courses, and more support for English language learning (e36).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

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.**

Sub

Strengths:

A detailed logic model is provided (e224) that aligns the project goals to the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. Inputs include partnerships, curriculum and pedagogy, and professional learning. The conceptual framework is composed of five dimensions and thoroughly described (e39). The dimensions include: build trust and cultivate ERWC partnership relationships; conduct rigorous research to inform ERWC action; support partner practice organizations in achieving their goals; produce knowledge to inform ERWC improvement efforts more broadly; and build capacity to engage in partnership work. The ERWC Theoretical Foundations will serve as the foundational framework for ERWC and teaching methodologies (e40).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

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 goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and mostly measurable. There are three project goals that are aligned to the objectives and outcomes. There are seven objectives. An example of an objective is to refine 100% of the module course pedagogy, including strategies for English learner students and students with disabilities (e37-e38). Outcomes include: Students assigned to the ERWC in grade 9 will score higher on the Smarter Balanced ELA/Literacy Assessment compared to students assigned to comparison classes (research question 1); students assigned to the ERWC in grades 9 and 10 will score higher on the Smarter Balanced ELA/Literacy Assessment compared to students assigned to comparison classes (research question 2); ERWC students will report higher levels of motivation than comparison students (research question 7) (e224).

Weaknesses:

Several of the objectives are not measurable. Objective six is written as: Validate the success of the ERWC by evaluating student results, using a multi-site student-randomized controlled trial, and by examining the success of project replication (e38). Objective seven is written as: understand cost-effectiveness in order to scale up upon completion of the project (e38). These objectives are not timebound, nor are they associated with a measurement.

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 project appears to be capable of addressing the identified needs. The three identified needs are: the need for the ERWC in grades 9 and 10 to further improve grades 11 and 12 postsecondary preparedness; the need for more engaging reading and writing pedagogy; and the need to be responsive to the impacts of the pandemic on students and teachers (e43). Vertical alignment through grades 9-12 will make the ERWC more robust. Expanding ERWC, which has proven successful, to grade 9-10 will help mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on high school students (e43).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

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:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    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:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    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:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    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:

    Not applicable.

Sub

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    Reader's Score: **0**

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

    (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
    (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
    (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
    (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

    Strengths:

The applicant mostly addresses this competitive preference priority. An info-graphic is provided (e314) that states there are 21 campuses in California State University (CSU) system that meet the criteria of HSI. Several individuals that had curriculum vitaes included work at a CSU HSI (e63-e179). The applicant states professors from the CSU HSIs will participate on the ERWC Steering Committee (e27). The ERWC Steering Committee will meet monthly to determine the direction of the ERWC project and carry out the implementation of the curriculum.

    Weaknesses:

While there were multiple curriculum vitaes provided, it was not clear what the project roles are for several of those individuals. It therefore cannot be determined what the level of partnership is with regards to HSI institutions. The applicant also states they will partner with tribal colleges and community colleges (e31), but their exact partnership and role with implementation is not adequately described.

Reader's Score: **4**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 07:39 PM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 06:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)
Reader #3: **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	15
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	38
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	66
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	4
	Sub Total	5	4
	Total	105	70

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)

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: 15

   Sub

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

   Strengths:

   The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools offers valid evidence to support the significance of the proposed project. The Reading and Writing for College and Career Success: Expanding the Reach of the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) proposal is compelling, timely, essential, and designed to prepare students for the demands of higher education courses.

   For instance, the focus domains of the project are to increase students' reading and writing scores by 10% on standardized assessments, create strong leadership teams at the local and state level, and develop a high-quality, rigorous curriculum design. Another strength of the project is that it leans on an evidenced-based ERWC curriculum written by college professors and high school teachers specifically for high school students (page e18). If successful, the project will improve critical literacy issues and augment student performance, ultimately supporting more students to become proficient readers with 'rhetorical and critical acuity' (page e13).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - 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: 38

   Sub

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 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools identified four strategies that specifically address particular barriers that could prevent the project from reaching the scale level for The Reading and Writing for College and Career Success: Expanding the Reach of the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum project (ERWC). As highlighted on pages e24 – e28, those four barriers included (1) limited professional development opportunities, (2) sustainability of leadership and human resources, (3) a need for a high-quality high school English curriculum, and (4) a need for more educators in other states to understand the benefits of the ERWC. The applicant states strategies that directly address the barriers that would help the project reach scale. For instance, on pages e24 -26, the applicant's strategies to ensure they develop a comprehensive, detailed dissemination plan, how they will better revise and design reading and literacy curriculum to align with Common Core Standards, fill literacy leadership roles with highly qualified leaders, and implement more robust professional learning experiences for teachers as they implement the ERWC, offers innovative approaches to extend reach into the states of California, Washington, New Mexico, and Hawaii.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses 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 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools provides a management plan that demonstrates its commitment to achieving the objectives of the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) project for all participants. The applicant clearly outlines the goals, objectives, responsible personnel, training, curriculum development, and outcomes for each year of the ERWC project (pages e251 – e266). A budget narrative is provided and offers a comprehensive breakdown of costs associated with the project that rationalizes the cost of the study. It is important to note that another strength of the proposal is its ability to garner a $110,000 in-kind contribution for the ERWC project from the Fresno K-16 Collaborative (page e230). Critical contributors like this help leverage the project's equity-based work for all participants and support the management plan's goals (page e230). The activities highlighted within the management plan align with the stated goals and identify the personnel responsible for executing the tasks. Identifying the persons accountable for completing critical components of the management plan holds essential personnel responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of all of the outcomes designated in the management plan.

   Weaknesses:

   Despite its comprehensive nature, the proposal lacks clarity on the outcomes from start to finish (pages e251-e264). For instance, on page e253, Objective 2, Activity 2.1, the milestone/outcome listed is 100% of MOU contracts signed. If "D, SPC, PLT" is responsible for developing a new ERWC curriculum, revising the current ERWC curriculum, and designing ERWC professional learning. It may be beneficial to identify each item as its on task and then provide more specificity around the artifacts/modules and submission dates of the content for the modules that support the task. Additionally, the applicant uses letters for responsible personnel. A legend may help the reader identify the personnel responsible for a specific job.

   Reader's Score: 4

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 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools demonstrates that team members are highly qualified to adhere to the requirements of this project and provide the necessary support to ensure the successful implementation of the project as outlined in the grant application. For instance, the biographical sketches on pages e61-e178 indicate that a diverse group of personnel for this project covers a wide range of expertise from higher education to K-12 educational settings. The FCSS provides a detailed explanation of each person's role as it pertains to these intricacies of the grant. On page e265, in the chart titled: Infrastructure to Ensure Qualified and Staff Management Capacity," the applicant organizes qualified personnel in categories by state, college, and county level, state-level infrastructure, and district & school level. Among the innovations of ERWC is its strategic inclusion of university faculty, industry practitioners, and other economic actors as resource providers (page e265). Finally, the applicant demonstrates that members of its steering committee and sub-committee (pages e27- e28) are highly qualified to adhere to the requirements of this project and provide the necessary support to ensure the successful implementation of the project as outlined in the grant application. Again, this is evidenced in the biographical sketches on pages e61 -e178.

    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 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools outlines a detailed action plan for disseminating information about the ERWC initiative to its stakeholders. The strength of the dissemination plan is highlighted on pages e242 - e25 of the grant application. The applicant will expand its reach by using various mechanisms of distribution such as presentations at conferences such as the California Educational Research Association Conference (CERAC) and the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Module Writing Institutes, peer-reviewed journal publications, press releases, social media outlets such as X formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, blogs, vlogs, and articles and newsletters. However, the strength of the application is that the applicant's collaborative partners, WestEd evaluators, ERWC teachers, directors, and the CSU Communications team will disseminate the information and gather feedback from the various mechanisms. The data would then be standardized. Thus, serving as a repository for others to access the information for replication purposes.

    Weaknesses:

    Although the applicant provides a target range for the written products (page e245), it fails to provide more specificity on the target dates for dissemination of the written products. Including the dates would strengthen the proposal and ensure a timely execution of materials and reach a larger audience.

    Reader's Score: 9

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

Sub

Strengths:

: The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools provides a Reading and Writing for College Success: Expanding the Reach of the Expository and Writing Curriculum project that will be used effectively in California, Hawaii, Washington, & New Mexico. As part of this expansion plan application, one key point of pride is its execution of the model in colleges, universities, and school districts in each participating state that shares similar demographics as California. By sharing the ERWC Arc/Framework (page e238), data collection processes, and reporting with the participating states, the lessons learned will provide an opportunity to carefully document the protocols for quality literacy leadership development and facilitate students' success through a rigorous curriculum design specific to expository reading and writing for college and career success. Additionally, lessons learned will help improve higher reading and writing scores on standardized assessments, make higher education options real for students interested in attending college, and show a more profound impact on student achievement nationwide. The project also promises to expand opportunities for module development, which can be replicated in other states nationwide (page e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools provides a conceptual framework, the College Readiness via Rhetorical Literacies, that serves as the foundation for its Reading and Writing for College and Career Success: Expanding the Reach of the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum project (page e220). A vital element of the College Readiness via Rhetorical Literacies Logic Model is its attention to how key factors, such as the curriculum and pedagogy, professional learning, and strategic alliances with collaborative partners, will impact student learning outcomes in reading and writing. The model provided by the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools is presented coherently, building consensus and understanding among all stakeholders involved in the project. The inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes align appropriately with the three goals listed on the Logic Model (page e220), thus setting the groundwork for successfully implementing the project on its participants. The applicant also provides samples of the model/curriculum, checklists, and lesson plans (pages e267-e431). A final strength of the model is that an indicator of progress accompanies each ERWC dimension of the framework.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant fails to clarify how the participants will operationalize the framework through monthly feedback cycles, as suggested on page e35. The applicant also fails to demonstrate how the Culturally Responsive Professional Learning (PL) Model connects to College Readiness via Rhetorical Literacies Logic Model.

Sub

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 Fresno County Superintendent of Schools successfully outlines objectives for each year of the EWRC project. The research priorities are well justified, and the anticipated outcomes are clear. A further strength of this project is the description of objectives and the desired outcomes as a result of the goals the applicant has set. Further, the applicant outlines several objectives, measures, and thresholds for the project, that include how these objectives relate to the existing strategies outlined in the application (pages e37-e38 Table 2). If the activities within the project are successfully carried out, it will have prolonged impacts and contributed to future EWRC projects/initiatives.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant indicated the goals, objectives, and outcomes for the EWRC project, they failed to include how those goals would be measured throughout the duration of the project (pages e37 – e38; Table 2).Performance measures on pages e251and e264 were not included in the chart. Additionally, some of the statements for expected outcomes of the project were too broad and general. The description of expected outcomes should not just restate the goals but indicate what will be learned and propose alternatives if the results are not as expected (page e37-e38).

Reader's Score: 4

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 Fresno Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) successfully addresses the needs of the target population for its Reading and Writing for College and Career Success: Expanding the Reach of the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum, project (page e220). One of the strengths of the application is its goal of supporting and serving a high needs population of 24,500 students in grade 9 and 10, throughout the states of California, New Mexico, Washington, and Hawaii. Page e39 of the proposal provides a very descriptive plan of provisions the FCSS will make to ensure that the needs of all participating students will be met with ease. For instance, the project addresses a need for the ERWC in grades 9 and 10 to further increase grades 11 and 12 and postsecondary preparedness and success. Another strength of this application is its intention to use poverty indicators to focus on high needs students such as English Lanuage Learners, special education students, and students with disabilities (e39 - e40).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 0

    Sub

1. **(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards 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

    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. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

   Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

   Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

   (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
   (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
   (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
   (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

   Strengths:

   The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) maintains a strong partnership with community colleges, and tribal colleges and universities that serve minority students in the states of California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Washington. Key supporting letters were provided by California State University, the University of Hawaii, Shoreline Community College, and Washington SBCTC (pages e179 – e230). Based on the letters of support, the partners clearly articulated a high level of support that will be offered to expand the Reading and Writing for College and Career Success project: Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) which is a component of California's nationally recognized Early Assessment Program. Additionally, the partners demonstrate how their support will expand the project by ensuring the Fresno County Superintendents' schools can use its design to allow evaluators to compare outcomes from participants and study the impact on college readiness and students' progress toward college graduation.

   Weaknesses:

   Although the applicant garnered letters of support from key partners, No letter of collaboration was attached for one critical expert (Shoreline Community College) which makes the level of support from this partner unclear (e179-e230).

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 06:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)
Reader #4:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	0
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	0
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	27
	Sub Total	100	27
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	0
	Sub Total	5	0
	Total	105	27

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: **0**

> **Sub**
>
> 1. **The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.**
>
>   **Strengths:**
>
>   Not applicable.
>
>   **Weaknesses:**
>
>   Not applicable.
>
>   **Reader's Score:**   **0**

Selection Criteria - 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:**
>
>   Not applicable.
>
>   **Weaknesses:**
>
>   Not applicable.

Sub

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:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   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:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   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.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   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:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    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:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    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:

    Not applicable.

    Weaknesses:

    Not applicable.

    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 assess the impact of the project, the fidelity of implementation, and the cost effectiveness of the activities and services of the project (page e40). The evaluation is designed to make the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations. Included is an independent evaluator and organization. Both have experience in large scale federal projects. The evaluator is a WWC certified reviewer for group design standards. Using a series of research questions, the evaluation plan will involve both students and teachers and will specifically assess English language arts and literacy achievement at the end of grade 9. The plan includes appropriate statistical analysis of each question and applies statistical models to ensure that the findings are reliable and valid. The applicant indicates that it will monitor student completion of the outcome measures and ensure that teachers in both the treatment group and control group are retained in the project. Included in the plan are both qualitative and quantitative data (including baseline equivalence measures) that will be collected through test scores, interviews, surveys, focus groups, and observations (page e283).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant briefly discusses the issue of attrition and bias (page e27). It is unclear at what level of attrition the applicant will take measures to ensure that there is a sufficient number of participants, both students and teachers, in the project to ensure appropriate outcomes. Similarly, the applicant does not provide strategies or techniques to ensure against attrition bias in general

   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.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant indicates that appropriate documentation of all activities and services as well as research findings will be available to others seeking to replicate a part or all of the project (page e44). To ensure that all aspects of the project are documented, the applicant will utilize a template developed by Hoffman et al (2014) that includes all evaluation details concerning data collection and analysis. The applicant further indicates that it will develop a procedure that will explore the drivers of implementation fidelity and impact to assist potential adopters of the program. The response is comprehensive.

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness 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 specifically addresses the issue of mediators (e.g., teacher behavior and student activities) and other components of the project (page e46). In the narrative as well as in the logic model (Appendix G), the applicant illustrates clearly how the various components of the project interact with each other to accomplish the anticipated outcomes. The components of the logic model are consistent with the program design and provide a reasonable

Sub

rationale for the activities and services. The applicant clearly articulates an evaluation plan that includes a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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:

Data and information collected and analyzed by the applicant will be shared with various stakeholders on a monthly basis (page e51). In a monthly report of the findings, the applicant will make available performance feedback designed to assess the current status of the project and identify ways to better implement the project. Similarly, student achievement data will be made available to stakeholders at the end of each term. These activities will effectively make available to stakeholders a periodic assessment of the project toward achieving intended outcomes. The approach provided by the applicant is effective.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

   Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 5 points)

   Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

   (a) **Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**
   (b) **Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**
   (c) **Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**
   (d) **Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

Strengths:

Not applicable.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 03:35 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)
Reader #5:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		15	0
Strategy to Scale			
1. Strategy to Scale		40	0
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		15	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	26
	Sub Total	100	26
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		5	0
	Sub Total	5	0
	Total	105	26

Technical Review Form

Reader #5: **********

Applicant: Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (S411A230005)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 0

Sub

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

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - 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:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

Sub

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:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   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:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   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.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   Reader's Score: 0

5. **(5) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

   Strengths:

   Not applicable.

   Weaknesses:

   Not applicable.

   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:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      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:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      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:

      Not applicable.

      Weaknesses:

      Not applicable.

      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: 26

> 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 presents a very good evaluation plan. The research study design is a student-level randomized controlled trial that is intended to estimate the intent-to-treat impact (pg. e41). A nicely detailed explanation was also provided on how students would be randomly assigned to either the treatment or comparison group and how researchers plan to ensure school compliance after the assignment to groups (pg. e281).

   The applicant adequately discusses their plan to address overall and differential attrition in that the evaluation team will monitor students' completion of the outcome assessment and encourage teachers to administer the assessment to as many participating students as possible (pg. e41). A reasonable approach was used to calculate effect size and estimate power for the analyses (pg. e283). The external evaluator is a WWC-certified reviewer in Group Design Standards, has 12 years of experience conducting large RCTs, and has led two previous i3 evaluations of the current project (pgs. e29, e40).

   Weaknesses:

   The evaluation methods do not have a strong likelihood to produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that meets What Works Clearinghouse without reservations. First, the applicant does not describe if they expect the treatment and comparison groups to have similar characteristics (pgs. e41-e43). Being similar on group characteristics is one of the three key components for meeting What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. Second, the applicant does not provide convincing evidence that overall and differential attrition would be achieved (pgs. e42-e43. And if they don't meet the low attrition requirements, then their design would only meet What Works Clearinghouse standards with reservations which does not satisfy this criterion.

   Reader's Score: 11

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant offers an appropriate plan to provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication. The evaluation team will use an intervention description and replication checklist as a guide to document the key features of the project. Specific data will be collected to use in highlighting both successes and challenges. Thorough documentation of the project activities throughout the grant cycle, in conjunction with analysis and commentary, will help other sites determine if the model can be implemented within their setting (pgs. e45-e46).

   Additionally, the current project team creates and supports the dissemination of current evidence-based practices in pedagogy by offering free access to their teaching resources, webinars, and blog. The team also publishes articles that are foundational to expert literacy and language instruction, including articles on culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, cultivating expert learners, formative assessment, and transfer of literacy and language skills and strategies to other content areas (pg. e33).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness 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 satisfactorily describes the key project components, outcomes, mediators, and measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. The goal of the project is to close an articulation gap in high school by expanding the current project with a grades 9 and 10 curriculum for students and professional learning experiences for ELA teachers, which will serve as a rigorous, engaging alternative to traditional literature-based curricula (pg. e22). The expected outcomes are for students in the treatment group to score higher on a standardized assessment and for those students to also report higher levels of motivation (pg. e220). The evaluation plan includes moderating and mediating factors of which teachers' self-reported pedagogical practices and students' motivation will be used to deepen the analyses (pgs. e41, e46).

   The applicant proposes a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation as 80% of teachers having implemented the curriculum with fidelity. Curriculum fidelity is defined as two pieces. First, participants must teach 11 modules (two portfolio modules, three mini modules, one book module, one drama module, three issue modules, and one mid-year assessment module) in each grade and teach at least one activity in each strand. Second, teachers must attend at least four community-of-practice meetings and four coaching sessions each year (pg. e48).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness 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 methods are reasonably designed to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward project outcomes. The leadership and evaluation teams will collect and analyze data, and then share project findings and recommendations each month with the purpose of continuously improving professional learning and the curriculum (pgs. e35-e36). Teachers will be asked to provide feedback on the module which will be used to provide formative output to module developers (pg. e47). Student achievement will be measured using a standardized ELA assessment which is designed to assess students' progress towards college and career readiness in ELA (pg. e284). Qualitative data will be collected throughout the grant and will include responses from teacher interviews and student focus groups, answers to open-ended questions on teacher and student surveys and coaching and community-of-practice logs, and data from classroom observations (pg. e289).

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness found.

   Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

   Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

(up to 5 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

  (a) **Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**
  (b) **Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**
  (c) **Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**
  (d) **Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

Strengths:

Not applicable.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2023 08:52 PM