

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	28
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	28

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-phase - 1: 84.411B

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

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

## 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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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: 28

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has identified SRI as the external evaluator, which is an extremely strong partner with high potential to produce evidence that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards (pg. e37). Dr. Arshan, the lead evaluator, has detailed randomized controlled trial (RCT) experience and serves as a major contributor to the project team to support and address potential implementation and fidelity issues (pg. e28). The evaluation utilizes a two-year cluster-randomized RCT with 50 schools within 10 districts covering 5 different states. There will be blocks by region and controls for prior achievement which will help identify significant differences between the control and experimental groups. The outcome measure is Global Integrated Scenario-Based Assessments (GISA), a WWC-approved outcome measure, with hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) account for all internal errors.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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's distribution partner, the Center for Collaborative Classroom (CCC), will ensure that the publications are distributed widely in collaboration with the WestEd current resources for publication. The applicant addresses a detailed and strong potential for the Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy Learning (RA4ALL) program to be used effectively in various other settings, as detailed on pages e30-31. The documentation of fidelity and variation of implementation provided is very good and should support future replication models. Additionally, WestEd will provide professional learning (PL) around the intervention with consideration of lower intensity of PL. SRI will also include a very good cost effectiveness study to measure the intervention compared to the costs.

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear why there would be a need for lower intensity professional learning for this intervention, as addressed on page e40. Additionally, there is no further discussion of the one year of data around fidelity of implementation and how that will be used to inform the evaluation (pg. e40).

Reader's Score: 4

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 has an excellent presentation of key project components, mediation events, and relevant outcomes. Teacher attendance, coach instructional logs, assessment review, and teacher surveys will provide feedback on the key project components (pg. e42). The applicant has provided minimum thresholds for the key project components, which is a strong dedication the project evaluation success. Mediators, such as positive classroom climate, relevant text accessibility, and attendance, have been included in mediating outcome measures and will examine the interactive effects of the intervention on the student outcome – grades (pg. e44). These mediators also strongly support the implementation decisions by administrators considering the adoption of this intervention.

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 integration of the SRI lead evaluator into the project management provides a strong foundation to ensure that the intervention will provide performance and ongoing feedback of the project to meet the identified outcome – student grades. SRI will also interact and support the collaboration between teachers, coaches, and WestEd, which is a good practice for fidelity and feedback from the intervention deliverers.

**Weaknesses:**

The application identifies that generous stipends will also facilitate regular data collection and strengthen buy-in; however, it is not clear how the data collection and teacher buy-in will be supported when the stipend isn't in place for anyone looking to adopt this intervention for their unique student population. The applicant indicates that implementation fidelity data will be analyzed and reported more than once a year, however, no details on analysis and what anticipated outcomes are provided beyond these general statements.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/21/2023 05:46 PM





Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	0
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	28
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	28

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-phase - 1: 84.411B

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

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

## 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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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: 28

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

WestEd has effectively described its methods of evaluation. They plan to contract SRI International to conduct a two-year cluster-randomized control trial during 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 academic years in participating districts (10) to assess the effect of the Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy on student outcomes. If well implemented, the project should 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 (e37-38). WestEd intends to recruit 50 eligible schools based on whether they offer reading intervention classes to support developing readers in 8th or 9th grade (e38). Students would be included in the proposed project if they take an intervention reading class either in the 2025-2026 or 2026-2027 academic year (e38-39). The proposed project plans to collect and analyze data according to What Works Clearinghouse standards, which is highly effective. For instance, SRI International will collect baseline data to check for equivalence, similar collection across treatment and control conditions, and the use of Hierarchical Linear Models to reduce the risk of Type I error (e39). Additionally, SRI International plans to administer the Global Integrated Scenario-Based Assessments, which is a study-administered measure of reading comprehension that meets What Works Clearinghouse standards (e39).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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

**Strengths:**

SRI International's evaluation will provide WestEd with ongoing guidance and support regarding effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings through Phases 1-3 (e40-41). In Phase 1 or the refinement phase, WestEd plans to streamline the implementation of the Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy, while integrating Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words to ensure students attain foundational skills (e40). During Phase 2 of the randomized control trial, SRI International will assess the fidelity of and variation in implementation across sites (e40). They plan to triangulate the implementation data across sites to gain a better understanding of necessary conditions and supports that would yield successful program implementation (e40). Lastly, during Phase 3 or the scaling phase, WestEd plans to collect one year of fidelity of implementation data based on a streamlined professional learning sequence (e40).

**Weaknesses:**

WestEd plans to provide a streamlined professional learning sequence and collect one year of fidelity of implementation data consistent with the lower intensity of PL (e40). It is unclear how the lower intensity of PL would be impactful for replication in other settings.

Reader's Score: 4

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.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes as demonstrated in Exhibit 4. RA4ALL Conceptual Framework (e32). For instance, key project components are comprised of intervention resources (i.e., curriculum, teacher professional learning, and instructional coach and leadership support) and intervention activities (i.e., teachers' use of the curriculum, instructional coaches providing support for teachers, and students actively engaged in the curriculum) (e32).

The mediators are student engagement and motivation, which would be demonstrated in academic grades earned and school attendance (e32). According to Appendix J.8: Detailed Evaluation Timeline, WestEd intends to conduct mediation analyses in a three-step process to estimate which course grades and attendance mediate the effects of Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy (e181).

The outcomes are identified as proximal outcomes (i.e., general literacy achievement and reading comprehension) and distal outcomes (i.e., high school graduation and college and career readiness) (e32).

The measurable threshold for acceptable implementation is outlined in Exhibit 8. Key Components and Annual Thresholds for Implementation Fidelity (e43). For example, Component 1: Active, sustained participation in professional learning states at least 80% of sites reach the site-level threshold on both indicators (e43). For Indicator 1.3 PL activities demonstrate discipline-specific, comprehension-building practices' threshold is 80% of teachers indicate "always" or "regularly" (e43).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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:**

It is evident that the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the intended outcomes. For example, during the refinement phase, WestEd plans to analyze usability data at the conclusion of each unit for continuous improvement (e45). The external evaluator, SRI International, plans to attend the Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy professional learning to build relationships with WestEd and the teachers (e45). SRI International plans to collect qualitative data during these site visits and provide quick turn-around analysis (e45). Another strength in this area is WestEd's commitment to continuous communication throughout the proposed project during bi-weekly check-ins and quarterly briefings, which will focus on the effectiveness of the implementation strategies in achieving the intended outcomes and annual targets (e45).

**Weaknesses:**

Although it may be plausible that generous stipends for research and PL participants will also facilitate regular data collection and strengthen buy-in (e45), there is a concern regarding how data would be collected after the stipend funds are depleted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	13
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	35
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	13
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	61
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	61



# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-phase - 1: 84.411B

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

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

## 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. 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 is effectively building on an existing strategy by engaging 8th and 9th grade students in literacy and the foundations of reading instruction. This approach expands the use of the evidence-based Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy (RAAL) curriculum and incorporates additional foundational skills instruction for students. The applicant states that their approach is different from existing approaches because it focuses on high-level disciplinary reading comprehension that is needed to support middle school students. (e17-19)

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant states the program will achieve 60% reading improvements in students reading levels; however, there is no explanation of how this improvement will happen. Additionally, there is no provision for students who have physical disabilities or reading disabilities, like dyslexia. The applicant did not demonstrate how the program will address student learning styles to keep students engaged in the program. (e17-19)

Reader's Score: 13

### 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: 35

#### 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.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has clearly identified four barriers to achieving scalability. The applicant states that the curriculum is old, with the last content update being in 2013. The current curriculum would benefit from updated information on adolescent literacy and feedback from current users. Another barrier is that there is a large amount of content and it is often not targeted to the needs of the user. The plan is to streamline content to better serve the student's needs. A third barrier is that the RAAL program does not fully address foundational skills. The answer to this barrier is to supplement the RAAL program with the SIPPS® (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight program) to fill the gap. The last barrier is that there are not enough teachers who are reading specialists that can teach RAAL to address the adolescent literacy challenge. To overcome this challenge, the applicant will provide Professional Learning to support teachers in implementing both RAAL and SIPPS project programs. (e21-23)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide reading content that would be engaging to students. There was a discussion of how the project will get teacher feedback, however, the student's feedback on the reading curriculum should also be included. There is no data provided to determine the effectiveness of the training for staff on program implementation, which would be a barrier to scaling the program. (e21-23)

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has clearly divided the project into three project management phases. The first phase will refine and pilot the RAAL course. Phase 2 will evaluate the impact of the refinements to the RAAL program. In the 3rd phase, the project management will collaborate to disseminate the improved program, and all three partners will publish the results. The applicant provides a chart that goes through the three-phase timetable according to the quarter and year and includes project milestones that will achieve project objectives. (e23-25) The project budget is adequate and will support program goals and objectives. (e183-209)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not explain the roles key personnel will play in the project. Only the project partners are listed for project tasks. The specific person responsible in each organization for administering each project activity should be listed. It is important to have a position responsible for specific project goals and objectives to ensure their completion. (e23-25. 53)

**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 applicant provides detailed project staff's resumes to demonstrate the qualifications for the roles they will play in the grant. For example, the resumes of several project personnel showed experience with training teachers for reading programs. (e27-28, e53-80) The applicant states that the project's dissemination program is to share RAAL research and implementation stories at national and regional conferences. For example, Literacy Research Association or the National Council of the Teaching of English. The project will also be shared with stakeholders in a variety of ways, such as peer-reviewed journals, practitioner forums, downloadable infographics, podcasts, and webinars. (e29)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not discuss what financial resources the organizations or the organizations' partners will bring to the project. For example, the applicant or other project organizations will provide a 10% match. The applicant needs to discuss the financial support project partners will bring to support the project. (e53-80)

**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 project partner will publish and market the RAAL curriculum, which will reach over 1,000 school districts in every state and 15 of the Council of Great City School Districts. The applicant will also make project research reports and resources available on SRI, organization, and Reading Apprenticeship websites. Information will also be emailed to contacts, and social media channels which have more than 350,000 views. The applicant plan will reach a wide group of stakeholders. (e29)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**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 explains there is a strong potential for the project to be used effectively in a variety of other settings because this project builds on existing strengths in students while addressing the needs of a wide range of students. The applicant states this program will align with state education standards. The programs RAAL and SIPPS are suitable for use in a variety of settings to meet students' needs at their developmental levels. RAAL includes reading materials at different reading levels to meet students' needs and provide access to grade-level, disciplinary content. The SIPPS program is designed to support students' foundational reading skills. For both reading programs, the teachers in the project will learn how to effectively meet their students' needs and state proficiency standards. (e30)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide alternatives to phonics for students who are not able to use phonics or have barriers to using phonics. Also, support for other learning styles in the program is not described so it is unclear how this combination of programs can be used effectively in a variety of other settings.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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 applicant clearly explains that the project's conceptual framework consists of RAAL and SIPPS curriculum. Additionally, the framework features the RAAL professional learning for coaches and administrators to support the implementation and sustainability of the program. (e31) The applicant presents a logic model that is supported by research and includes the resources to support students, and intervention activities for both students and teachers and then aligns those program components to the outcomes to be achieved. (e32)

**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 provides a chart for the four project goals. (Exhibit 5. Measurable Goals and Objectives on e34-35) The project has clear objectives and outcomes that are specific and measurable. For example, one objective is to recruit approximately 140 RAAL teachers. The goal of 140 teachers will consist of 70 teachers from the treatment group and 70 from the control group. This objective will be measured by determining how many teachers participated in the training. (e34-35)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not discuss how student assessment scores will be used to determine the program's impact. These scores are needed to determine student success for the project. While the applicant does measure other project goals, the main project goal of reading improvement is not being measured against previous scores to demonstrate this program's effectiveness. (e34-35)

**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 applicant fully explains that the design of the project will successfully address the needs of the target population, 8th and 9th-grade students and teachers unmet needs concerning reading outcomes. (e36) The applicant has provided letters of support from district and state education agencies representing the project's target of 285 schools in five states. The applicant's program will work with a diverse set of district leaders and use reading resources to address the literacy challenges of high-needs students in the schools of the project partners. The target students are defined as high-needs students because they tested below the proficient level for their state ELA assessments. (e36)

Sub

**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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**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:**

NA

**Weaknesses:**

NA

Sub

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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 did not address this CCP.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 0

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	13
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	34
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	13
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	60
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	60

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-phase - 1: 84.411B

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

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

## 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. 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 teach foundational reading skills at the 8th and 9th grade levels, which is innovative. The proposed activities have research behind them with Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy (RAAL) and Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Site Words (SIPP) reporting effect sizes from a randomized control trial evaluation (p. e4-5). The addition of SIPPS to the RAAL program strengthens the implementation because of the use of the foundational reading using alphabetic and spelling-pattern skills and complex, multisyllabic decoding approach at the 8th and 9th grade levels (p. e4). These are strategies not commonly used at this grade level.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant claims that the effect sizes are strong, however, the exact statistic to measure the effect size is not identified (pp. e4-5). The applicant states that RAAL improved students' reading comprehension by 64% above what they would have achieved without the course, but does not provide information on how much of an increase there actually was in reading achievement scores (p. e4). There are no provisions for students who do not learn phonetically or visually (spelling pattern skills, complex multisyllabic decoding skills).

Reader's Score: 13

### 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: 34

#### 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 applicant thoroughly describes four barriers with clearly delineated strategies to overcome those barriers (pp. e21-23). Updating the material, streamlining the content, incorporating SIPPS into RAAL, and providing 8th and 9th grade teachers with professional learning (PL) in implementing the program with fidelity and reading pedagogy and content with classroom coaching addresses multiple barriers identified by the applicant (p. e23). Administrator training is also provided (p. e23). The Reading Apprenticeship PL will be used for teacher training (p. e22) and there is a Reading Apprenticeship PL for Administrators (p. e23).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states that outdated content is a significant barrier (p. e21). Updating the information in the text may strengthen the relevance of the text (p. e21), however, current research supports the notion that students in this age range need high interest text for engagement and while the topics provided (p. e21) are of value, they appear to be of low interest to encourage student engagement (p. e19, p. e21). Incorporating SIPP into RAAL (p. e22) does not address student learning styles. For example, a non-phonetic or non-visual learner may have difficulty with the program and there appear to be no provisions for those students. The Reading Apprenticeship PL will be used for teacher and administrator training; however, no data is provided on the effectiveness of the training.

**Reader's Score:** 8

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

**Strengths:**

The project is rolled out in three phases (p. e25) with the three partners using shared project management software (p. e25). Timelines are provided (e.24, Appendix j.7) with clear milestones provided. Four teams are presented with clearly identified team members and responsibilities (pp. e.25-26).

**Weaknesses:**

The roles of the key personnel were not clearly delineated. Clearly identifying specific personnel for specific implementation activities would strengthen the application.

**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 applicant and partner have vast experience implementing similar types of scale up models (pp. e26-27) with qualified personnel (pp. e27 – 28). For example, WestEd brings more than 50 years of experience providing PL across all 50 states (p. 26). Additionally, their Reading Apprenticeship has engaged more than 50,000 teachers in the past 27 years (p. e27).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide sufficient information on finances and the ability to bring the project to scale.

Sub

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:**

Extensive outreach resources of WestEd, the Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC), and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) will be used to disseminate project information (p. e29). Using a three-pronged approach, the applicant makes use of conferences, peer-reviewed journals, forums, infographics, podcasts, webinars, websites, email contacts and social media channels, which are all encompassing (p. e29).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

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 includes resources that meet a range of developmental levels (p. e29), provide foundational skills instruction (p. e29), designed to align with common state literacy standards (p. e29). They will conduct focus groups with RAAL curriculum users, observe classes, interview teachers, and collect student formative assessment data which will be used to inform refinement of the products (p. e29). Additionally, 3-6 current RAAL teachers in high-need schools will pilot the refined materials (p. e29).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide ways to meet the needs of students with different learning styles, which impacts utility. For example, those who do not learn phonetically or visually (patterns) have not been provided for in the program. The applicant proposes to pilot the program with 3-6 current RAAL teachers in high-need schools which does not seem adequate as these are the students who are frequently the farthest behind. There is no mechanism to collect student perceptions of the program.

Reader's Score: 3

**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.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The Reading Apprenticeship framework (Appendix J-6) is used as the foundation for the application of the reading intervention and supports the reading intervention, RAAL professional learning and PL for coaches and administrators (p. e32). For example, the four dimensions of classroom life, which undergird the Reading Apprenticeship Framework, are clearly delineated, and clearly support students in becoming stronger readers. The framework dimensions are further used through metacognitive conversation which enhances the classroom instruction.

**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 proposes clear objectives and outcomes (p. e34). The four proposed goals are reasonable and attainable. For example, Goal 1, Objective 1.3, has a clear objective, gathering data and feedback from pilot teachers and schools with an attainable outcome, identifying additional refinements to RAAL curriculum based on pilot results which is attainable.

**Weaknesses:**

Outputs for 2.3 do not give enough information to evaluate how student scores will be used to determine impact (p. e34). Further information on what scores will be used to determine the impact (previous years' reading scores) would have been helpful.

**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 applicant clearly describes the target population (p. e34). Data is provided to support the need for the implementation (p. e36). For example, the applicant proposes to work with students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic locations who score below proficiency.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are 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:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

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

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

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

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

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:**

**Weaknesses:**

Sub

Reader's Score:

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: 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 did not address this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address this priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2023 05:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	15	14
<b>Strategy to Scale</b>		
1. Strategy to Scale	40	36
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	13
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	63
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	63

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-phase - 1: 84.411B

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

Applicant: WestEd (S411B230015)

## 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. 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:

WestEd has a proposed project to implement an English Language Arts program for 8th and 9th graders. The progression of this project will continue using two thoroughly proven strategies: Reading Apprenticeship for Academic Literacy Learning (RALL/RA4AL) and Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS). The programs focus on adolescent ELA participants and successfully proven outcomes that address the needs of these students. The project provides robust statistics to show the gap in low-income students' reading achievement. The proposed project addresses three issues, classroom climate, relevant text, and peer collaboration.

The proposed project states on pages e19-e21 that they "represent an approach to the priorities because the use of programs has proven to significantly impact adolescents' literacy and academic outcomes because it combines two successful interventions to meet the needs of secondary teachers and students."

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to show statistical improvements on the state standardized test they say they have used to diagnose the ELA concerns of students. It is not clear how the applicants are using the scores. For example, there was no explanation about the beginning scores or the criteria for seeing gains, improvements, or setbacks.

Reader's Score: 14

### 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: 36

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's barrier is focused on outdated content, too much content for a year-long course, and content that does not fully address foundational skills; beyond the reading specialist, a few middle and high school teachers have the knowledge and expertise to address reading skills gaps. Several issues were given to overcome these barriers; for example, the need to update content from 2013 and listen to current users' feedback to enhance a more substantial update and improvement shows their focus on this barrier. The applicant gave about substantial barriers and how they would overcome them, from unit streamlining to updating Professional learning for teachers. We have thoroughly discussed this factor; this score represents my professional judgment.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were 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 applicant provided a table to show the Management plan in Phases 1, 2, and 3, including the goals, objectives, roles, and implementation plan. The written understanding of the teams, who would be in charge, and then a breakdown was presented. The breakdown consisted of a chart displaying the start, pilot, Eval1, Eval 2, and dissemination of the proposed plan and all parties, then charting the time and people who are supposed to be in charge of that task.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide tables or exhibits that referred to the budget breakdown or implementation. Additionally, the applicant failed to provide specific goals and critical personnel responsible for the management plan.

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:**

Based on the adequacy of the management, the applicant has the capacity to plan and achieve the objectives proposed, roles, and responsibilities. The partnership with the Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC), a nonprofit focusing on literacy and social-emotional learning programs, gives access to people nationally and internationally. The applicant was able to break down each role, give specific information about capacity, and bring proposed projects to scale with the assistance of the partners.



**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant proposed plan lacks financial evidence to prove the capacity to scale through the capacity through their partners.

**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:**

The applicant states they will use the extensive outreach of their established partners. They will share RA4ALL at conferences, create content to publish in journals and podcasts, and more, and make the search available via websites, social media, and more. The applicant states they will be able to reach more than 350,000 people. The partners will also help with publishing the curriculum and facilitating the information.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**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 addresses a widespread need to support adolescent learners in strengthening their reading comprehension skills. The applicant focuses on yielding existing strengths from an angle of studies and aligned standards. The applicants continue to detail how the program will engage in iterative design, refinement, and level airing to enhance RAAL's usability. They can break down the phases and the number of teachers to address and teach the 8th and 9th graders.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide enough evidence on how they would adjust and shift in the program if they did not see teachers using it. The applicant also fails to provide adequate evidence of the potential for the program's effectiveness in various other settings.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a clear conceptual framework: RA4ALL Conceptual Framework, Appendix G, (e32) This shows adequate and continuous improvement in the operation and specified and measurable project tasks.

**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 proposed the objectives and goals in Exhibit 5 (e32) in a transparent way. The goals are tied to measures and roles, and detailed plans. The proposed plan in Appendix J.7 and Section D shows the extent of their project's goals, objectives, and outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide information on how the scores will be used to focus on how the impact determines the outcomes of the proposed project. They also failed to mention which test scores they used.

**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 extent to which the proposed project's appropriate design is identified in Exhibits 6 and 7. (e36) shows the states' test scores proposed in the plan. The years shown are 2019 and 2022, identifying 8th-grade ELA scores below proficiency. The changes and adjustments the applicants will use to demonstrate the need, ability, and successful implementation are derived from the data, and evidence is shown in Exhibit 7, ELA scores for 8th graders.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were 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**

**Sub**

**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 applicant did not address this CPP.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score:     0**

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**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   08/21/2023 05:46 PM