

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/01/2017 10:38 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	
Sub Total	15	
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	
Sub Total	30	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
Sub Total	55	20
Total	100	20

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy, or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.
- (2) 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.
- (3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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 Evidence Standards without reservations.

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

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The evaluation plan is designed to meet What Works Clearinghouse Standards without Reservations, because it randomly assigns a sufficient sample of schools to control and experimental groups and uses an independent evaluator (pages 17-18). The evaluation plan addresses attrition and baseline equivalence (pages 24-25). This will help ensure an effective research design.

The evaluation plan includes impact and exploratory research questions that correlate with the proposed project's goals and activities (pages 18-19). They will provide important information on the effect of the project at the student and school levels assessing behavioral and academic outcomes.

The applicant incorporated a thorough plan to measure fidelity of implementation which is necessary to determine if the project has been implemented as designed (pages 9-18).

The applicant plans to measure student outcomes for behavior, academic achievement; executive function (pages 21-23). This will provide information on the project's impact at the student and school levels.

The evaluation plan includes a variety of data collection strategies with documented reliability and validity sources that will provide objective and subjective data about the project's outcomes (pages 21-23). They will provide meaningful information on the impact on students' social/behavioral skills and academic readiness skills.

The applicant described plans to effectively analyze data using sound techniques for research analysis that will provide valuable information for What Works Clearinghouse and other organizations interested in replication (pages 23-27). This will provide even more information on project outcomes.

The applicant recognized that the control group may be implementing some practices of the Pyramid Model that are "general developmentally appropriate practices". The evaluation will provide data that distinguishes practices similar to the proposed project at a minimal level (page 29). This will help guide meaningful evaluation based on actual circumstances

in the field while providing information about the intervention.

The applicant has incorporated strategies that will provide guidance for replication in other settings (page 28). The applicant plans to assess the cost-effectiveness of implementation will provide valuable information for replication (page 30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/01/2017 02:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Sub Total	15	0
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	0
Sub Total	30	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
Sub Total	55	19
Total	100	19

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy, or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.
- (2) 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.
- (3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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 Evidence Standards without reservations.

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

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The external evaluator is identified (SRI) and is included in the management team (page 15, e42). Individuals at SRI who will be responsible for the project evaluation are identified and their qualifications are provided. The evaluation plan will use two Randomized Control Trial studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse Standards without reservations. It is reasonable to conduct separate studies of the Pre-K and K populations since the Pre-K environment is less structured, which could impact implementation of project activities and outcomes. Evaluation activities and timeline are clearly defined in Table 1 (page 13, e40-41). The evaluation plan includes a cost effectiveness analysis (page 18, 345). It also includes a fairly detailed logic model (page 19, e46). Inclusion of a logic model provides structure for the evaluation plan. The evaluation plan includes both impact and exploratory research questions that are aligned with project goals. The evaluation plan indicates plans to obtain consent forms from parents for their child's participation in project activities. The evaluation plan includes a specific measure to be used for assess social skills and challenging behavior (page 21, e48). Additional observation measures are also indicated. All measures included in the evaluation plan have established reliability and validity for Pre-K and K children. Individuals who will be collecting direct observations will be trained and required to pass strict certification and reliability requirements. Specific data analysis methods are provided in the data analysis plan (page 23, e50) and impact analyses (page 25, e52). The model includes a term for the possible impact of child having participated in project activities in both Pre-K and K. Analyses will also be conducted for subgroups and moderation analysis. The evaluation plan includes a power analysis and analyses to assess implementation fidelity. It also includes a cost-effectiveness analysis with a specific approach described (page 30, e57). As described the evaluation plan should be able to identify core elements for replication and impacts for a new population (K).

Weaknesses:

Although the application indicates that a data specialist is included in the key personnel (page 16, e43) no details about this person are provided. The evaluation plan should include analyses to assess the similarity of the treatment and control groups.

Reader's Score: 19

Status: Submitted**Last Updated:** 06/01/2017 02:51 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/31/2017 11:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	28
Sub Total	30	28
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	34
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	55	34
Total	100	76

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

The proposal does an excellent job of detailing the short- and long-term consequences of social and behavioral problems in the early school years (pre-K and kindergarten). These issues not only reflect difficulties in the academic realms, but also have consequences for social and emotional development, family relationships, and adult well-being (pp. 1-2). The proposal indicates other systemic issues related to social and behavioral deficits in the early years as well (e.g., monetary cost of delaying intervention; p. 1) as well as the toll these students' problems can take on teachers (p. 2).

The proposal also reflects on the national significance of the issue, by pointing out lessons in social and behavioral management skills are often missing from teacher training programs further compounding the problem (p. 3). Statistics are also presented about the breadth of the issue nationwide, including in both rural and urban school settings (p. 3-4). Further support for the nationwide significance is the concern that suspensions and expulsions may be overused as a response to young children with social or behavioral deficits (p. 4). Combined, these factors strongly highlight the need for interventions in these early school years.

The Pyramid Model is likely to be an exceptional approach to address pre-K and K social and behavioral deficits as it has already demonstrated empirical support for its success (pp. 4-5) and because there are many features in place that can accommodate a variety of teacher learners to improve the likelihood of successful implementation in their classrooms (p. 5).

Weaknesses:

While elements of the Pyramid Model (PM) program are provided (p. 5), an overview of the program and its logic model, including some specific examples would have been helpful.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy, or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.
- (2) The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations.

Strengths:

The proposal clearly outlines the unmet demands for the program within the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools by presenting statistics on suspension and expulsion rates within the district for the early elementary school grades (p. 6), as well as a recent and steep increase in the proportion of pre-K students who enter school with self-regulation deficits (p. 6). The MNPS is clearly on board with the proposed project (p. 6).

The proposal identifies several key barriers, including training issues and the lack of continuity between pre-K and K implementation (p. 7; p. 9). Both of these barriers will be addressed in the current project.

The proposal also has a clearly outlined plan to scale up the program including creating materials to promote buy-in from all necessary entities (e.g., teachers, schools, districts, etc.; p. 11) and will also include ongoing professional development and support to sustain the program over time (p. 11). Importantly, materials will be made available at no cost (pp. 11-12).

The project will also be implementing the program in multiple districts in order to gain insight about how to promote future scale up and expansion after the project period has ended (p. 12). Some of the early expansion will include rural districts (p. 18) that often have very different resources than typical urban districts. This will provide some early evidence for the generalizability of the project's PM approach.

Weaknesses:

While some key barriers are addressed (p. 7, 9), it appears that the project has been working in these schools for many years implementing the program. It is unclear what specific barriers have prevented them from scaling up in the past. This would be important to know to inform feasibility of scale-up more broadly in the future.

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

The 6 goals for the project are clearly articulated and presented with detail (pp. 6-12). Each is very logically linked to objectives and outcome (e.g., Table 1) all of which reflect specific, measurable constructs (see

Table 1 (see also pp. 15-16) does a good job of also articulating which entity is responsible for each of the goals and objectives over the course of the project and a feasible timeline is presented along side these goals and objectives.

The goal of refining the training and materials for the new population is clear and likely to succeed given the creators of the PM will be doing this work (pp. 8-9). Additionally, the proposal provides detail about how exactly this will be carried

out as well as which personnel will be responsible (pp. 8-9).

The measures to be used to assess the outcomes are presented clearly throughout Appendix G and reflect measures that have been previously used to assess implantation fidelity as well as outcomes. Both fidelity and child behavior is measured through a multiple sources including teachers and direct assessments, which strengthens the validity of the measurement. Further, systemic improvements will be examined via school discipline and other administrative data.

Letters of support are present (e141-148), and a plan is in place to monitor the successful and timely completion of the project milestones (p. 15) suggesting the successful completion of the project.

The project has both systems and personnel built into the protocol to ensure monitoring and feedback of progress (pp. 16-17). Importantly, the project has also built time into the timeline to carry out these actions.

Weaknesses:

There is some concern that there is a lot of development work (pp. 8-9) that will need to be done in Year 1 to modify and refine the program/materials. Further assurances would have been helpful to demonstrate that this task could be carried out feasibly in conjunction with other project tasks planned for Year 1.

Reader's Score: 34

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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 Evidence Standards without reservations.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/31/2017 11:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/31/2017 09:40 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	27
Sub Total	30	27
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	32
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	55	32
Total	100	74

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

- Social and behavioral competencies are directly related to academic outcomes and pre-K and K are important periods for the development of these skills. The application cites research showing that poor social skills and behavioral competencies are directly linked with negative academic and long-term functional outcomes, such as school drop-out. Behavior problems in the classroom also lead to fewer teaching opportunities. Unfortunately, these skills are not taught in many school districts and many educators lack training in how to facilitate these skills and to manage classroom behavior problems. Educators who struggle with classroom behavior management report low job satisfaction, high turnover, and increased burnout. As such, the magnitude of the problem is clear and was well described in the application.
- There are many professional development programs focused on increasing teachers use of evidence-based behavior management techniques. A key ingredient in these programs is coaching and performance feedback, which is resource and time intensive and prevents scale-up in many cases. Even when these programs are implemented, gains may not be sustained because coaches leave after the grant period. The applicants state that coaching will be provided by district personnel (i.e., a train the trainer model) which if successful, could lead to sustained gains without continued grant funding and would have high national significance.
- Classroom behavior problems are prevalent and have a significant negative impact on learning, with approximately 10-15% of students demonstrating significant problem behaviors and up to 30% considered at-risk for these problems.
- The Pyramid Model is a tiered framework that has been evaluated in two randomized efficacy studies. The evidence presented supporting the efficacy of the intervention suggests that it is an exceptional approach to addressing the problem. In addition, on page 5, the applicants discuss features that make the PM program unique, including materials being in print and web-based, available in English and Spanish, includes video examples of the strategies being implemented.
- The application provides evidence that the PM intervention has demonstrated efficacy in two randomized trials and has been implemented with fidelity in those trials. These data increase the potential national significance of the proposed scaling efforts.

Weaknesses:

- None noted

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy, or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(2) 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.

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety

Strengths:

- The application demonstrates that there is an unmet demand for these types of training programs by citing the high rates of exclusionary disciplinary actions being used in school settings, such as suspensions and expulsions and how these rates are rising. These data support the assertion that educators do not know how to best deal with behavioral challenges in a manner that will allow students to stay in the classroom.
- The application provides data showing that the students in the preschools they plan to serve with this project have significantly lower self-regulation skills in comparison to what is expected based upon norms, documenting an unmet need.
- The applicants provide a detailed plan for monitoring treatment fidelity. As such, they should be able to document that the PM intervention was implemented as intended and will be able to clearly describe how the intervention was implemented (e.g., number of coaching sessions). This will facilitate other school districts being able to replicate this study.
- The applicants highlight some strategies that may be able to address barriers often faced when scaling up and sustaining professional development interventions, including materials being both in print and web-based, available in English and Spanish, and including video examples that educators can watch of skills being implemented in the classroom .

Weaknesses:

- The applicants note that they have been providing this same intervention for about 10 years in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. They note that this effort has not been systematic and has not addressed pre-K and K. However, it was not clearly stated what the barriers were that prevented them from doing this in the past and how this project will help them overcome those barriers.
- It was also not fully clear how this project will help the field overcome broader barriers associated with scaling up PD interventions. As noted in the application, the main barrier is financial cost of hiring trained coaches and maintaining these positions across time so that teacher improvements can be sustained. The proposal partly addresses this by using district employees as coaches. However, it was unclear if funding for the coaches in this project would be maintained over time to foster sustainability in the district. Further, the application did not make clear how other districts without these types of grant resources could use such a model and as such, the feasibility of replication is somewhat limited.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

- The applicants thoroughly discuss the process for providing educators with continuous performance feedback on page 5. They discuss applying a specific fidelity tool, the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool, and present psychometric data supporting the validity of the tool and evidence that adherence based upon this tool is associated with improved student outcomes. The application also discusses how practice-based coaching will help educators refine behaviors and personalize strategies while remaining focused on fidelity of implementation. A process is presented on page 10 for monitoring fidelity, with coaches meeting with teachers on a monthly basis to assess fidelity and provide performance feedback
- There is an objective surrounding ensuring the PM is sustainable which is an important goal. In particular, the applicants discuss developing materials to facilitate administration buy-in and on-going professional development activities
- The study goals and objectives are clearly defined as described on page 18. The applicants are interested in determining if treatment schools show greater social skills, academic readiness skills, and fewer behavior problems as compared to control schools. They are also interested in evaluating the impact of treatment fidelity on outcomes and whether outcomes vary as a function of student/family characteristics. The measures used to assess these outcomes are described and psychometric data supporting their validity are provided. The goals, objectives, and activities are also clearly defined in a table in the Appendix on pages 98 – 107
- The application provides a clear and detailed timeline of activities on pages 13 and 14. This timeline shows when activities will occur, who is responsible, and separates out the responsibilities by the each of the 6 project objectives/goals. This table is followed by a detailed management plan on pages 15 and 16 which describes the study personnel, their positions, and roles. Importantly, the plan specifically lists who is responsible for fidelity of implementation and includes the frequency of meetings.
- Letters of school support are provided demonstrating that the schools are motivated to participate. This increases confidence in the likelihood of the project outcomes being accomplished.

Weaknesses:

- There is some concern about the extent of intervention material refinement that is proposed. It was unclear why this was necessary given that the evidence for effectiveness from on page 70 comes from a study with preschool students. On pages 7 and 8 the applicants talk about needing to develop a manualized training program for classroom coaches, a process to support coaches, and notes that the main fidelity tool needs to be refined to align with the Pre-K and K model of PM. This sounds like substantial work needs to happen in a short period of time. The applicants propose to accomplish all of these activities in year one of the project. Further, in table 1 on page 13, it appears that these refinement activities overlap with goal 3, the training activities. The lack of information about what needs to be developed and why raises a couple of questions. First, if the revisions are substantial, previous evidence and efficacy data about the PM intervention may no longer apply (i.e. the applicants may be testing a substantially different intervention). Second, the

extent of development activities raises concerns about the feasibility of the proposed timeline. If these activities do not go as planned the coaching would be delayed.

Reader's Score: 32

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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 Evidence Standards without reservations.

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

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/31/2017 09:40 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/05/2017 12:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
Selection Criteria		
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	25
Sub Total	30	25
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	34
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	
Sub Total	55	34
Total	100	73

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (U411B170021)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (2) The national significance of the proposed project.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

The narrative is clear about the significance of addressing social and emotional skill deficits early because they become more severe and costly as children get older. The list of negative consequences is well-defined and each area is supported by research (p. 2).

The national significance is concise, addressing the national percent of children who have risk factors for problem behaviors (p.3). This data is linked with level of poverty, demographics (rural areas), and educators who lacked the proper training. The narrative integrates well the consequences for the lack of support to schools result in the current level of suspensions for young children, eventually leading in high dropout rates, mental disorders, staff turnover, and delinquency problems.

The PM intervention is already in place in many locations, representing an exceptional approach because previous research has found it successful. This new proposal will further promote this approach into new locations and demographics, addressing the needs of pre-K and K students. Also integrated into this grant is the systematic professional development for teachers, which will add another level of quality to the PM project. This project is considered exceptional because it will incorporate a rigorous study of scaling tiered behavior support interventions, one of the few that are currently tested, giving empirical knowledge to other school systems that supports sound practices of tiered models.

Weaknesses:

The Pyramid Model (PM) intervention is not described explicitly other than it is a tiered framework (p. 4). It would be beneficial to discuss also the characteristics of children who come from rural communities and why social emotional needs are higher than in any other demographic areas. A brief discussion about how PM needs to address this challenge since it will be the first time they are including these children (p. 3). This will be important when other rural communities may consider using the PM as an intervention.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

1. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy, or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application.

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations.

Strengths:

The narrative indicated plainly the unmet needs of young children through the reporting the out-of-school suspension data of K- 2nd grades who have chronic social emotional problems in schools. The need to develop an alternative strategy that will reduce this trend is essential and was clearly articulated (p. 6). Therefore, this grant recommends some very specific objectives be included in MNPS to (p. 6). Two are especially notable: increase family engagement and establish a MNPS Office of Social Emotional Learning (SEL). These additions will enhance and integrate the scalability of PM into the MNPS system. Another unmet demand that was also was a barrier was lack of consistency in professional development that ensured the model reached fidelity in implementation (p. 7). The systematic implementation will ensure fidelity via six major goals (see Table 1, p. 13), which aims to ensure successful replicability.

Weaknesses:

The description of the PM model needs to describe the demographics and unmet needs of children who live in rural areas. These demographics can give information whether PM, as a model, may have to be adjusted in order to serve different demographic needs of young children living in an environment that is very different from the urban setting. The implication is whether the model can use the same strategies that are in place for urban populations or more information regarding the community, the children, and the staff is necessary. As a result, new barriers and adjustments of current PM strategies may be the outcome that needs to be addressed in this grant. This grant assumes that PM can be successfully replicated in a rural community, but information regarding these new demographics was not provided. In addition, a survey of teacher needs (p. 9) to be aligned to rural areas for professional training and needs, not clear if the TPOT survey will be the same or a revised one will be developed for rural areas. All of these factors will impact replicability.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

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

(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.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(4) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

The goals, objectives, outcomes, and responsible staff are clearly presented in the Logic Model (Table 1, p. 13-14). The procedures in the Management Plan will use a manage-by-objective system (p. 15), which will review the progress of how the implementation is delivered and performance of PM will be evaluated. Furthermore, Appendix G included timelines by month indicating which phases of the PM model are scheduled for implementation. The staff in this project had very good credentials and experience with large federally funded projects. The alignments of the Management Plan to address all of the key factors for implementing the PM model on a large scale were clearly defined.

In addition, explanations for the procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement were clearly done through the management-by-objective system. This system monitors the implementation of all aspects of the grant in a systematic method (p. 15-16). The potential for the applicant to benefit many schools system nationally is promising, especially with

all of the materials that will be developed through the life of the grant. The specificity of the social emotional competences is given in a very detailed chart (e109-e135) and could be useable by many schools districts.

Weaknesses:

The Management Plan states that it “will develop” a detailed management plan that will include key milestones. A concern is that if PM is a well-established plan, it is uncertain the rationale why this is not already developed (p. 15). Instead, it would be more reassuring is the management plan is refined and already in existence.

The explanation of the management-by-objective system needs to be described more explicitly, including whether this system is currently in use or whether it is a new method to monitor the progress of the intervention.

Reader's Score: 34

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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 Evidence Standards without reservations.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components, mediators, and outcomes of the grant-supported intervention, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
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