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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)
Reader #1:   **********

		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	16
	Sub Total	55	16
	Total	100	16

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)

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:

   N/A

   Weaknesses:

   N/A

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:

   N/A

   Weaknesses:

   N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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 applicant presents a strong evaluation plan. The evaluation was written to measure the fidelity of program implementation and impact on student outcomes. The research questions are comprehensively designed to respond to implementation, student performance, and unique outcomes (pg. 23). A variety of relevant qualitative and quantitative data will be used in the multilevel analyses including interviews, teacher surveys, and literacy screening results (pgs. 24-25). Additionally, a structured instrument will be used to capture real time data during observations of tutoring sessions and family engagement activities (pg. 25).

   The research design features a multi-site, randomized controlled trial which meets some of the criteria for the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations during project years 2 and 3 (pgs. 22-24). The applicant indicates that intervention and comparison group assignments will be made after literacy assessments are completed so that students with the lowest assessment results can be prioritized for participation (pg. 24). The study should have sufficient power for the analyses (pg. 29). The evaluation plan has set measurable thresholds for satisfactory implementation. For example, students must attend 40 tutoring sessions and staff should make five contacts with families including one home visit (pg. 26). At the site level, at least 70% of participants should meet these thresholds (pg. 26).

   Weaknesses:

   Although the applicant indicates they will extend and support replication (pgs. 12-13), sufficient guidance on any effective strategies for replication in other settings was not presented. Also, the applicant fails to satisfactorily address several key components of the randomized controlled trial including group characteristics and contamination. Other than literacy

assessment scores, no additional variables would be used for baseline equivalence. For example, a description on whether the comparison and intervention groups would be similar on observable and unobservable characteristics was not seen. Finally, contamination is a potential issue in that students participating in the intervention in year 1 would serve as the comparison group in year 2 (pg. 24). An explanation on how this research design would control for previous treatment effects was not seen (4 points not awarded).

Reader's Score: **16**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/31/2017 08:35 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)
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	16
	Sub Total	55	16
	Total	100	16

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)

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 applicant proposes to implement a K–2 early reading across a tri-state network of 15 high-need, low-performing schools. To achieve this purpose, the applicant has set three project goals. These are to improve student outcomes by implementing the program with fidelity, to extend the reach of the program, and to evaluate and disseminate the program (abstract). These goals are to be reached through a set of objectives (p14). For example, the first goal is to improve literacy outcomes and the objective is to successfully implement the treatment program. The expected outcomes are to be improved reading assessment scores and student improvement as measured by a student social emotional development survey. The applicant also indicates one threshold value of 80% adequate adherence to the intervention model. The applicant provides a clear description of the goals and for the first goal there are appropriate objectives and outcomes. These elements are important for a sound evaluation.

   The applicant plans for a number of data sources (p 24 – 26). Program data will be used to document attendance and participation and will be used for calculating a fidelity-of-implementation score (p 24). Project staff will be interviewed related to the effectiveness of the program and the implementation (p 24 – 25). There will also be on site observations that will be used to help inform the continuous improvement of the innovation (p 25). Project teachers will complete the Teacher-Child Rating Scale which is a documented scale for teacher assessment of their students' social emotional development (p 25). The applicant will also collect data on the number of in-school tutoring sessions, the number of afterschool reading enrichment sessions, the reason for missed sessions, the number of family events, the number of individual parent contacts, and the number of licensed educator formal observations (p12). This data is all relevant to the purposes of the project. The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) will be used to measure student literacy development (p 25). These various measures align with the intended purpose of the project.

The applicant also intends to have an external evaluator. The applicant provides documentation of the evaluators experience and expertise (p 22). The cost of evaluation is about 12% of the requested budget which falls within the typical range for evaluations of 10 to 15%. The request is reasonable and adequately justified.

The applicant describes a number of ways in which a study of project effectiveness could meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

The applicant intends for the evaluation to answer eight questions. These include questions about implementation fidelity, impact on student, and differential impact on student literacy. The applicant provides a table with eight research questions indicating whether data is program data, data from interviews or observations, teacher survey data, or student data (p 23). The research questions and types of data align appropriately with the intentions of the project.

To address these questions, the applicant proposes using a multisite, randomized control trial method (p22). With 15 schools and two grade levels involved in the study (p 24), students with the lowest assessment scores will be placed into blocks. Students will then be randomly assigned to the treatment or control conditions. There are to be two trials and at the end of the second trial the data is to be pooled (p 24). Baseline data is to come from the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) literacy assessment (p15). The applicant also provides a power analysis demonstrating that the sample size is sufficient for detecting minimum effects (p 29).

To analyze data on the impact of the implementation on student literacy, the applicant proposes to use a Hierarchical Linear Model and provides information about the model (p 26 – 27). The applicant notes that the model will involve a baseline literacy assessment and that separate models will be developed for each grade level and then pooled. Moreover, the applicant will investigate possible interactions between the treatment and participation, baseline literacy, and student background variables such as gender, race, and free/reduced-price lunch participation. The applicant provides a discussion on how the data with respect to each of the eight research questions is to be analyzed.

The applicant is also attentive to the need for fidelity of implementation for the impact study to have any meaning. The applicant plans to track implementation using a number of measures. The project staff will continuously review data and consult with the external evaluator so that appropriate feedback for the continuous improvement of the implementation is provided to the project staff (p20, 23 – 25). The monitoring of fidelity will include the use of a fidelity-of-implementation observation instrument. The applicant notes that judging the innovation to have been implemented "well," at least 70% of the students must meet threshold standards. The applicant provides these thresholds such as students participating in at least 40 tutoring sessions (p 26). The applicant's concern for fidelity provides confidence that the impact study will be based on an innovation implemented with fidelity.

The applicant intends to test the visibility of replication by extending the innovation to 15 new schools involving both urban and rural communities (p12). The applicant argues that extending the innovation to rural settings will help to show how the innovation can close the achievement gaps "across the various racial and economic subgroups" (p13). In support of providing guidance for replication, the project staff will work with the evaluation team to determine the possible differential impact of the innovation "in different settings and with different student subgroups" (p13).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant describes several measures to be used, the applicant does not provide any target scores by which success could be judged. For example, student literacy achievement is to be measured by the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, however no target value is provided. Similarly, teachers will use the Teacher-Child Rating Scale to rate student social emotional development, but there are no target values. It is not sufficient to say that the intention is for the students in the treatment condition to score better than students in the control condition. As another example, students in the treatment condition are expected to "demonstrate higher regular school day attendance," but the applicant does not say how much attendance needs to improve in order for the intervention to be judged successful. Again, is not sufficient to say that the goal is for the treatment students to have higher attendance than the control classroom students.

The applicant also mentions that there is to be a fidelity-of-implementation score (p 24); however, the applicant does not provide any details on how this score is to be arrived at or exactly how it will be used in the study.

Other than describing the expansion into new school sites as replication and saying that the staff will work closely with the evaluation team in order to provide guidance for replication, the applicant provides no details about how the evaluation will contribute to guidelines for replication. While it can be seen how extending the innovation to new schools is a form of replication, the applicant does not describe how the evaluation will look at the new implementations vis-à-vis their prior implementations, which is needed if the evaluation is to provide guidance for future replication by others.

Reader's Score: **16**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/02/2017 10:11 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)
Reader #3:   **********

		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	28
	Sub Total	30	28
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan			
1. Project Design/Management		35	30
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	0
	Sub Total	55	30
	Total	100	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - EIR - Mid Phase Grants - 5: 84.411B

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

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)

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 applicant described a unique opportunity to address Absolute Priority 1: Supporting High-Need Students and Absolute Priority 4: Improving Low-Performing Schools by creating a network of high need schools in both rural and urban communities. Pages 1 and 2 include data that shows the reading proficiency rates of eligible free and reduced lunch students as it compares with the counterparts of non-eligible free and reduced lunch students illustrating the disproportionate levels. The data helps to substantiate the need for a program of this magnitude.

    The applicant proposes using an intervention, SPARK, which has been used in similar schools and districts and has shown strong evidence of success. The applicant included data on pages 3 and 4 to demonstrate how the model has positively impacted school absences. Using such a model is likely to have national implications that can be implemented in similar schools and districts.

    The proposed project has been proven successful in similar schools and districts, which represents an exceptional approach to the priority. The applicant included data on pages 4 and 5 that will continue to meet the absolute priority by prioritizing high-needs schools and school districts. The chart is helpful in understanding how the schools are identified. The applicant included research in Appendix G) to support the necessity for incorporating non-cognitive competencies in a literacy program. The data was helpful in understanding the necessity of each of the components of the literacy model.

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 15

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.

Strengths:

On pages 9 and 10, the applicant provided substantial details that illustrate how the SPARK model is cost effective and how it compares to existing literacy programs. This information is helpful in understanding how the program can be sustained over time after the completion of the grant. On page 11, the applicant described an opportunity engage stakeholders to understand how the project is being received and implemented by the different groups. This level of engagement is essential to ensure that there is an opportunity for feedback and continuous improvement.

The applicant has implemented a project of this scale and is familiar with the barriers that may prevent the applicant to reach the level of scale proposed in the grant. On pages 9 and 10, the applicant identified potential barriers and a plan to mitigate the known barriers.

The applicant included a plan in Appendix G to disseminate lessons learned with stakeholders. Communicating lessons learned and best practices will be essential in replicating the project in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations.

Weaknesses:

On page 9, the applicant included substantial data that addressed the cost-effectiveness of the model however more information about student impact would have strengthened the application to ensure that the quality of the support that students receive is consistent or surpasses the support offered in similar programs.

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:

   On pages 14 and 15, the applicant provided clear goals and objectives that are consistent with the logic model included on page 30. The applicant also included a detailed plan on page 15and 16 that illustrates the roles and responsibilities for key personnel. The plan is helpful in understanding which personnel will be responsible for carrying out each of the project tasks. The resumes were helpful in understanding how the roles and responsibilities were assigned based on expertise of key personnel. The applicant also included a proposed timeline that aligns with the project goals.

   On pages 20 and 21, the applicant provided a detailed plan for feedback and continuous improvement. The plan is evidence-based and provides targeted support for refining implementation strategies for the project. The applicant is experienced with using this model and will use this method to inform project activities. The applicant is committed to collecting data and sharing with all stakeholders on a consistent basis. This will be essential in ensuring that the project is meeting the needs of all schools.

Pages 21 and 22 describes how the SPARK Center will rapidly expand services nationally on a fee-for- service basis beginning in year 4. If the project is successful, it is likely that the other afterschool networks will realize the benefits and continue using the model. The applicant is committed to finding other funding streams to continue the project after the end of the grant.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not describe the plan for additional training in subsequent years. It would be helpful to understand how that training will be handled for new stakeholders or refresher training for existing stakeholders. The timeline should have included additional details that aligned the goals and expected outcomes. Additional information about the activities for Year 4 would have been helpful to see in timeline.

Reader's Score: 30

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:

    This section was reviewed by different reviewer.

    Weaknesses:

    This section was reviewed by different reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/02/2017 06:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)
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	28
	Sub Total	30	28
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan			
1. Project Design/Management		35	30
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	
	Sub Total	55	30
	Total	100	73

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)

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:

   #1: The applicant provides a strong case for the magnitude and severity of the impact of poor literacy skills such as higher drop out rates, and higher potential for mental and physical problems. Data is cited from US Department of Education: Only 36% of fourth graders across the country are proficient in reading underscores the magnitude of the problem on a national scale (U.S. Department of Education, 1990-2015); in addition other sources such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress NAEP s scores that show lower income students perform at a lower level in reading than their higher income peers is emphasized.

   #2: SPARK meets the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations based on an i3-funded randomized control trial in seven Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). There is a national need for high-quality early literacy interventions. SPARK is a cost-effective, K–2 early reading intervention that answers this need by improving student reading achievement through research-based literacy programming in three spheres: school, family, and community.

   #3: Education Analytics (EA), is a partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee (BGCGM), five Boys & Girls Club (BGC) affiliate organizations, and one local education agency (LEA) that will address Absolute Priority 1: Supporting high-need students and Absolute Priority 4: Improving low-performing schools which takes the research based SPARK Early Literacy Program to scale across a tri-state network of 15 high-need, low-performing schools (Absolute Priorities 1 & 4) across 7 LEAs through a technology-enabled SPARK Center. The project is exceptional based on the structure and menu of services provided. It combines 1 on 1 tutoring, family engagement, and social/emotional learning development.

   Weaknesses:

   None identified

Reader's Score: 15

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:

   Scale: There are plans to extend the reach of SPARK through a technology-enabled SPARK Center with the core functions of stakeholder engagement/communication and dissemination,
   implementation resources, and online real-time implementation data.   The SPARK program will meet an unmet demand by providing a proven literacy intervention program combined with family engagement and after school supports, which is an uncommon approach to helping low-performing schools as outlined on page 9 of the grant application.

   Barriers to Scale: An EIR investment will take SPARK to scale across a tri-state network of 15 high-need, low-performing sites through a technology-enabled SPARK Center. Creating this
   infrastructure will address the current barriers that are preventing the program from reaching
   the level of scale proposed; barriers have included implementation capacity and lack of awareness of the program's unique and cost-effective approach.

   Replication: The SPARK Center will extend the existing program to additional settings and allow for testing of replication in the 15 site, tri-state network including both urban and rural
   communities. The proposed program will build on SPARK's successful implementation in seven low-performing urban sites with diverse a program. participants; two randomized control trial (RCT) studies, funded by a previous i3 Development Grant, showed that the program had a strong impact on ethnic groups such as African American, Hispanic, Southeast Asian, White (non-Hispanic), and Native American students. The applicant plans to extend implementation to rural settings to ensure the program's replication in areas that have yet to attain an acceptable level of success in educating and closing the achievement gap across the various racial and economic subgroups of this diverse student population.

   Weaknesses:

   Applicant does a good job of proving unmet demand based on the cost effectiveness of its program; should provide a stronger case though for the uniqueness of the program components and how they meet an unmet demand compared to similar programs such as those named in the application: Reading Recovery, In School Interventions (see p. 28). The applicant should further explain the impact the program components will have on students such as the family engagement, as well as social/emotional supports.

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:

 Spark Center management. and Local Site management roles and responsibilities are extensively presented in tables on pp. 16-18, along with a clear timeline of plans for years 1 through 3 of the grant.

 Using a process based upon Deming's Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle, which is designed to build organizational learning and knowledge through a systematic series of steps for the continual improvement of a product or process, the SPARK Center staff will continuously review all data sources (e.g, stakeholder feedback, fidelity of implementation data) to determine how to provide targeted support to site-level staff and refine existing resources.

 The SPARK Center's management structure and internal processes, built around EA's technology, will ensure effective implementation and prepare the Center for scaling to additional sites after the grant years have ended. EA's established project management practices ensure clear alignment between project goals and staff responsibilities, facilitate communications across all project staff, and promote data-informed decision-making for all project activities.

 Weaknesses:

 Goal 1 has a measurable outcome; goals 2 and 3 do not have measurable outcomes so applicant should address this. For example with goal 1, the outcomes are quantified as follows: 80% of intervention tutoring will demonstrate adequate adherence to the model as determined by an implementation observation tracking system; however, the outcomes that support goals 2 and 3 are not. Here is an example: Refine existing training and site engagement resources, bring them into an online library, and employ them across all sites.

 The timeline for year 4 of the grant on page 18 in table 6 is not completed; this information is needed to fully meet Factor 4.

Reader's Score: 30

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
Last Updated: 06/02/2017 10:12 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)
Reader #5: **********

		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	28
	Sub Total	30	28
Selection Criteria			
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan			
1. Project Design/Management		35	33
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		20	0
	Sub Total	55	33
	Total	100	76

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Education Analytics, Inc. (U411B170045)

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 applicant establishes the magnitude of the problem by presenting compelling data on page 4 Table 1 which illustrates how the proposal will continue to prioritize high needs schools in Wisconsin by scaling-up the existing SPARK to a tri-state network (South Carolina and Alabama) of low performing schools. Additionally, the applicant establishes the national significance by providing current research data speaking to the importance of early reading intervention as an avenue to reduce the dropout rate and improve student achievement (page 1-3). Finally, the current proposal represents an exceptional approach by including one to one tutoring (p. 5), a Family Engagement staff person (p. 6), and incorporation of social-emotional learning development during after school programming (p. 7).

   Weaknesses:

   There are no areas of weakness in this section of the proposal.

   Reader's Score: **15**

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 applicant identified specific barriers with clear linear solutions to overcome the barriers and reach the level of scale proposed (p.10-12). The applicant outlines a clear plan to extend the existing program to additional national settings that include both urban and rural schools (p. 12). Additionally, the applicant has existing procedures to ensure customization of

program to different settings through the use of Cityspan for real time data management and a real time resource library for teacher resources (p. 11-12).

Weaknesses:

The applicant choose to establish the unmet demand component by focusing on cost effectiveness of the proposal which in the long run did not serve to meet the criteria that would allow the applicant to meet the level of scale that is proposed in the application (p. 8-9). The proposal would have been stronger had the applicant continued to focus on the proven track record of successful implementation and impact on student achievement.

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 applicant includes a well-developed Project Design and Management Plan narrative with clear goals and outcomes supported by Table 3 (p. 14). Additionally, there is a list of clearly defined responsibilities in Table 4 & Table 5 (p. 17-18), a timeline in Table 6 (p. 18-19) which includes activities that correlate with the project milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The applicant has adequate procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement for the operation of the proposed project as evidenced by the narrative on page 19 and 20 which is organized around Dr. W. Edwards Deming's "Plan, Do, Study, Act" Cycle designed to build organization learning and knowledge through a systematic series of steps (p. 20). The applicant addresses the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant by incorporating a Self-sustaining SPARK Center which is currently pursuing multiple funding sources to support scale-up (p. 22).

    Weaknesses:

    While the applicant does include objectives, the objectives are not measurable as there are no normative values to prove impact as evidenced by the following examples: Objective A. Successfully implement the SPARK Early Literacy program to increase literacy outcomes, decrease absenteeism, and improve student social-emotional learning (p. 14). The applicant fails to define acceptable levels of increase or decrease that justifies positively mastering the objective.

Reader's Score: 33

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

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