

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	33
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Total	100	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

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 supports the magnitude of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project which focuses on the Professional Learning with Impact (PLI) program to improve teaching and learning through integrated, aligned support for teachers in grade 4. Evidence provided supports the low performance of one out of two Black students in grade four reading are below the basic level. Cited are mathematics scores stating that 31% of fourth graders from low income households scored below basic, compared to just 9% of their higher income counterparts. Achievement gaps of high need students are long term and affect health and economic well-being of underachieving students. Page 3
2. The applicant provides some elements to support the national significance of the proposed project. The concept of teacher quality is a national concern as well as supports for teachers to design and deliver effective instruction in low performing schools with high numbers of high need students who are underperforming. There is research presented in this narrative that supports instructional coaching to stimulate professional learning. Page 5
3. The proposed project has some elements of an exceptional approach to the priorities established for the competition, but does not represent an exceptional approach. The collaborating partners, the Danielson Group, Learning Forward and Educopia have indicated a commitment to support PLI implementation and produce a refined set of materials and procedures for future implementation, informed by continuous improvement processes and evaluation results that will develop partnerships and infrastructure for continued PLI scaling. (Abstract)

Weaknesses:

2. The applicant does not provide/describe the existing data and/or outcomes that would support their specific approach (PLI) initiative in the designated large urban school districts where they seek to implement the proposed project. Page e27
3. The applicant does not differentiate in clear terms how their proposal differs from existing school and teacher coaching models that have, over time, been incorporated using components of the project collaborators models in similar, if not some of the same urban school settings, in districts to be served by this project. Page e28

Reader's Score: 13

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 of settings and with a variety of populations.

Strengths:

1. The applicant demonstrates there is an unmet demand for the practice that will enable the lead agency to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. The applicant makes a good case there is a need now and a demand beyond general PD programs currently available. The current gap the applicant cites is that there are only a small number of coaching programs that have demonstrated significant impact in an individual study. In addition, in support of reaching the level of scale, the abundance of schools with high-need students gives the project flexibility to fill each cohort strategically with balance in terms of size, geography and student race and ethnicity. Page 10
2. The applicant identifies a specific strategy that addresses barriers that prevented the applicant in the past from reaching the level of scale this is proposed for this application. These include a poor selection of staff to serve as coaches and facilitators. The PLC model will use guided selection of skilled coaches and provide a guideline with desired qualities. Back-up coaches will also be solicited in case of coach turnover. Sufficient preparation of coaches is also a barrier that will be addressed with six days of intensive workshops where expectations for performance will be clearly laid out. Page 10
3. The applicant provides evidence for successful replication of the proposed PLI project if favorable results are obtained. This PLI project, if successful, will result in a well-developed set of materials; including the online system to support the varied position roles defined within the project and represent a variety of settings and populations. The collaborators on this project including Learning Forward, will convene participating districts five times: twice as a community practice and three times as part of a broader community practice. Page 15

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 30

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:

1. The goals objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. The applicant provides a detailed Exhibit 5-Objectives, Strategies, Outcomes and Measures that incorporates project components. An example is provided. Objective 3 –Strategy 3.5 –Assess the impact of PLI on classroom practice, student engagement and student achievement-Outcomes-Data on outcome measures collected and analyzed-Measures-Data Collection update indicates response rate of 90% for teachers and 80% for students; impact memo that meets WWC standards without reservation Page 18

2. The applicant provides for 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. Exhibit 6-Organization Chart, provides the scope of collaborators responsibility for program and evaluation project components with how the collaborators interact with one another. The lead agency and the collaborators have extensive experience and knowledge in the delivery of professional development programs to urban school settings in a variety of disciplines including online technology to support this project. Page 20

3. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project are clearly stated by the applicant. Exhibit 9-Routines for Using Feedback provides for meeting name and frequency, participants, feedback data sources and the specific strategy to be improved are detail specific. In addition, each cohort's participation creates feedback that helps inform to provide real-time improvements currently or for future cohorts in the implementation of the project. The applicant provides sufficient vehicles for continuous feedback. Page 22

4. The potential and planning for the incorporation of project benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant is substantiated. The investment of the major collaborators, The Danielson Group, Learning Forward and Educopia illustrate a desired effort for this PLI model to be successful as well as affordable. Materials developed as a result of this project will be used in future implementations of PLI. As detailed by the applicant, each of the major three collaborators see the fit in their efforts to refine the Fft to apply it in powerful ways as well as helping states and districts identify scalable PD that can be integrated into a positive system of teacher supports. Foundation support will also be sought by the lead agency for the delivery of the PLI model. Page 24

Weaknesses:

1. In the recruitment Strategy 1.1 and 1.2 there is no mention or a provision to recruit/train alternate coaches as the applicant indicated they would do to have a reserve in case coaches dropout for a variety of reasons. Page 16

2. In Exhibit 8 –Group Responsible, Time Frame, and Milestones for Each Strategy, the applicant does sufficiently embellish milestones beyond a yearly check mark. Page 21

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 standards without reservations as

described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: **0**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	12
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	35
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Total	100	77

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

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 magnitude of the problem to be addressed will aid to potentially reduce the achievement gaps and improve the achievement for high need students as noted on page e25. This addresses the national significance of ensuring a quality literacy education for all. On pages e27-e29, the project highlights an exceptional priority for the competition because of the field initiated PLI program and preparatory program workshops.

Weaknesses:

While the program focuses on teacher development and the ability for teachers to deliver to effective instruction, the significance portion does not immediately address how students may perform within one year of the training.

Reader's Score: 12

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 of settings and with a variety of populations.

Strengths:

The demand for professional learning and support for instruction can be scaled to reach up to 42 schools by year 4 as noted on pg e31. Data supports that districts will require schools to fund professional development opportunities for

teachers and to build local instructional capacity. The applicant scales the effectiveness model using the Fft model. Details in section B.2 support the six clusters of instruction utilizing the Danielson framework (a model that grounds in effectiveness, coherence, and scalability). On page e34, there is an example of a strategy to implement PLI at scale with high quality through selection of coaches, initial training of coaches, and ongoing support for coaches i.e. monthly check in meetings and group month meetings. The plan is then rated according to a rubric which is included in Exhibit 4 as mentioned on page e35.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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:

In the quality of the project design and management, the clearly specified and measurable goals with outcomes is communicated on pages e38-e40. The organization highlights the responsibilities of how AIR will be held accountable to the US Department of Education for grant performance. This includes overseeing the sub grants to the service providers, school district partners, ensuing coordination across the partners, recruiting eligible schools from the district partners and the conduction of the independent evaluation. There is a process for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement on pages e44-45 which includes monthly implementation review meeting, monthly group support check ins, and monthly individual support check in meetings. AIR will utilize the feedback to maximize impact during and after project as noted on page e46.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 35

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 standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

N/A- Scored by the Evaluation Reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A- Scored by the Evaluation Reviewer.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	0
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
Total	100	17

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

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 of settings and with a variety of populations.

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 standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).
- (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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The applicant presents a satisfactory evaluation plan. The evaluation methods meet the minimum requirements for What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. A block cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) will be conducted with 3-level analyses set to observe student and teacher outcomes. The applicant provides detailed information on the sample to show that the school populations are similar (Appendix G3) and the size is sufficient to successfully run the analyses. Because the schools will either be in the comparison or treatment group, e.g. not split by grade level, contamination of program effects is not expected to be a concern (pg. 25).

The evaluation is reasonably designed to provide guidance on effective strategies for replication in other settings. Several elements are involved in this guidance including a set of materials for use and a network of participating districts to support others (pg. 15). Also contributing to future replication is that the project strategies will have been implemented with a large, diverse sample and that differential impact analyses will be conducted to identify project impact on different groups (pgs. 26-27).

The evaluation methods should provide solid performance data on project outcomes. Classroom lessons will be video-recorded and reliably scored; teachers will also take surveys to measure their self-efficacy (pgs. 28-29). Students' scores

from state math and ELA assessments will be used, as will their responses from student engagement surveys (pg. 29-30). The applicant fully describes the project's key components, outcomes, and measureable thresholds for acceptable implementation (pgs. 6, 16-18, 30). Interestingly, the intermediate teacher outcomes (knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy) will mediate the primary teacher outcome of quality of classroom practice, which will mediate the student outcomes of engagement and academic achievement (pg. 6).

Weaknesses:

The applicant could have provided a stronger discussion on why attrition was expected to be low, particularly with these specific schools and participants. Instead, the applicant mentioned their prior experience and did not explain why that experience was applicable to this project, such as if those studies involved the same district or similar population. Additionally, based on the budget narrative (pg. 2), the percent of time allotted to the Evaluation Leads seems insufficient to effectively conduct the evaluation activities as described.

Reader's Score: 17

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	0
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
Total	100	17

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

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 of settings and with a variety of populations.

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 standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).
- (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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The proposed evaluator for the project has extensive expertise and experience to be able to effectively conduct an evaluation for a project of this scope and magnitude.

The proposed blocked cluster randomized control trial design (p. 26) has the potential to produce evidence of the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. The evaluation includes appropriate estimations of power analysis for minimum detectable effect sizes (Appendix G2) and appropriate multilevel model intent-to-treat analyses (Appendix G7).

The proposed evaluation includes a thorough plan to provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings (p. 26-28, Appendix G3) including detailed statistics of the study districts showing diversity in the sample, a differential impact analysis, and cost-effectiveness analysis.

The proposed evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant teacher and student outcomes, including Fft, CLASS-UE, and Teachers Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (p. 28-30, Appendix G5).

A PLI theory of change model is presented (p. 6) that includes intermediate and primary teacher outcomes and student outcomes. Project outcomes (p. 16-18) include performance measures that contain measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation.

Weaknesses:

Because the evaluation team is internal to the applicant and the budget does not include itemization of the proposed evaluation expenses, no determination can be made as to whether the dedicated resources in the proposed budget are adequate to comprehensively complete the proposed evaluation tasks. Under personnel (Budget narrative - section A), only 2 evaluation staff will commit a combination of the FTE of 32% to 65% of a single staff member which would be inadequate.

The evaluation plan states “we expect minimal school-level attrition,” but assurances are not given regarding efforts to minimize overall and differential sample attrition or what levels of attrition could be considered low enough based on the sample size for the study to meet the “without reservations” standard. This could reduce the evidence standards to “with reservations.” In the case of high attrition, this could reduce the evidence standards to “with reservations,” in which case the proposed evaluation would need to provide baseline equivalence for the analytic sample. Without this, there is no assurance that the proposed study would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Group Design Standards.

Reader's Score: 17

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy to Scale	30	30
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Management	35	35
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Total	100	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - EIR Mid-Phase - 2: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH (U411B180032)

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 well describes the magnitude and severity of the problem of persistent gaps in student achievement based on family background to be addressed by the proposed Professional Learning with Impact (PLI) project. The targeted project area includes 369,522 students who attend 659 high poverty schools, 541 of which are urban, 112 are suburban, and 12 are rural. 88% are eligible for free-or-reduced price lunch; 14% are English language learners; 20% are students with disabilities; 34% are African American; and 51% are Hispanic (p. e 218). The 2017 NAEP showed that nearly one in two Black fourth graders (49%) were reading below the basic level which is more than twice the proportion of White students who scored below basic (22%). In mathematics, 31% of fourth graders from low-income households scored below basic, compared to just 9% of their higher income counterparts. The achievement gaps in Grade 4 reading and math between White and Black students have remained essentially static for the last decade and persist through high school (p. e 25).

(2) The applicant cites relevant research which clearly describes the significance of the proposed Professional Learning with Impact (PLI) project. The PLI will target schools with high percentages of students who are Black or Hispanic (on average 85%) and from low-income families (on average 88%), as well as the critical national need for teacher quality and support for teachers to design and deliver effective instruction (pp. e 25 – e 27). A significant feature of the proposed PLI project is that it has the potential to reduce achievement gaps and improve achievement for high-need students by fostering student engagement, boosting teacher quality, and supporting teachers to design and deliver effective instruction (pp. e 25 – e 27).

(3) The applicant provides an extensive description of the extent to which the proposed Professional Learning with Impact (PLI) project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. The framework of the PLI project is a field-initiated approach and is built on both a research-based and evidence-based theory of action (p. e 28). Innovative strategies will be utilized to facilitate preparatory teacher workshops focusing on data analysis, personalized instructional coaching, and facilitated teacher learning teams (pp. e 28 – e 31).

Weaknesses:

- (1) None noted
- (2) None noted
- (3) 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 of settings and with a variety of populations.**

Strengths:

(1) The applicant clearly demonstrates that there is an unmet demand for the proposed Professional Learning with Impact (PLI) project which will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. The applicant describes how the strong demand for effective professional learning systems and effective coaching models often district required but are lacking or ineffective demonstrate an unmet need for the proposed PLI which addresses both. The design of the proposed PLI offers an effective, scalable, and coherent model which significantly impacts student achievement when tested in rigorous studies (p. e 31 – e 33). The proposed PLI project is scalable because it provides clear protocols and expectations for coaching and teacher learning team (TLT) facilitation as well as strong supports for selection, training, and ongoing monitoring of the PLI coaches.

(2) The applicant identifies specific strategies that address barriers which prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application. For example, a past barrier to successful coaching programs is the poor selection of staff to serve as coaches and facilitators. The proposed PLI project addresses this barrier because a key feature of the PLI scaling strategy is the guided selection of skilled PLI coaches, including lead coaches (LC) and lead facilitators (LF). Another common barrier to high-quality coaching and PLC implementation is lack of clear expectations and sufficient preparation for the coaches. To address this barrier, all PLI coaches will participate in six-days of intensive workshops, which will incorporate rehearsals and formative evaluation to ensure coaches are adequately prepared. The PLI will incorporate specific steps to ensure teacher commitment and engagement such as reimbursing teachers for their time and continuing education credits for participation (pp. e 34 – e 36).

(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. The applicant describes how the proposed PLI project will result in a well-developed set of materials, including the online system to support the roles of the coaches, and teachers (p. e 37). These materials will be refined and will incorporate useful lessons to inform future replications which will be suitable for a variety of settings and populations. In addition, a strong component of the proposed PLI which supports feasibility of replication is the convening participating districts twice as a community of practice to discuss feedback on the PLI program and its implementation and three times as part of a broader community of practice (p e 37) .

Weaknesses:

- (1) None noted
- (2) None noted
- (3) None noted

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:

(1) The well describes the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. For each objective the applicant provides strategies, outcomes, and measures depicting the overall goal of the project to further develop, test, and implement at scale the PLI program and to determine its impact. Strategies focus improving teaching and learning through integrated, aligned supports for teachers; outcomes describe continuous improvement processes and evaluation results; and measures set the baseline for gauging progress (pp. e 38 – e 40).

(2) The applicant provides a solid management plan which to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The management plan establishes the reporting relationships for the partner organizations (p. e 41) and describes the qualifications and responsibilities of key project staff (pp. e 40 – e 44). For each objective the applicant clearly describes the strategies and identifies milestones; lists the group responsible; and specifies the year to year time frame (pp. e 43- e 44).

(3) The applicant details viable procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed PLI project. The applicant describes routines for using feedback, including the meeting name and frequency; the expected participants; feedback data sources; and strategies to be improved (p. e 45). Each cohort's participation will create feedback that informs real-time improvements or improvements for the next cohort. These routines for gathering feedback and deciding on improvements are well integrated into the meetings planned for the operation of the project, where the review team will discuss implications for future implementations.

(4) The applicant well describes 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. The project's benefits will continue into the future through the commitment of partners, who plan to use the project's final materials and procedures in future implementations of PLI. For example, Learning Forward plans to continue convening users and potential users of PLI to discuss experiences with the program and expanding its use. At the school and district levels, partners will have trained, experienced, local coaches and resources earmarked for teacher professional development that can support ongoing delivery of PLI.

Weaknesses:

- (1) None noted
- (2) None noted
- (3) None noted
- (4) None noted

Reader's Score: 35

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 standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice).

(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 project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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