

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/28/2015 06:00 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U367D150026)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	7
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	11
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	79
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
1. CPP3: Promoting STEM ED	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
CPP4: High-Need Students		
CPP4: High-Need Students		
1. CPP4: High-Need Students	4	4
Sub Total	4	4
Total	107	84

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 9: 84.367D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U367D150026)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The significance of the proposed project on a National Level.
- (2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices.
- (3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

The applicant intends to connect its evidence-based model, one of the few validated professional learning and curriculum programs for adolescent literacy, with school-based professional learning approaches, a promising practice that could yield insight into how schools can combine best practices with context-specific professional learning. The reach of the proposed project is significant, with 4,500 participants.

Weaknesses:

Given the proprietary nature of the applicant's service model, and given the focus on increasing the efficiency of this service model, it is not clear what others not participating in or purchasing the applicant's programming can gain from the study. The proposed study, in other words, does not significantly extend existing applicant or national capacity.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design and services of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design and services of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.
- (3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

Strengths:

The applicant has specified measurable teacher performance objectives. Both the applicant's curricula and professional development program have been fully tested and validated; it already has the online platform and content in place to implement the proposed project. The applicant has an established train-the-trainer model and has formed partnerships with organizations in the areas of the proposed study to recruit, manage, and support teacher training and development. There is some attention to both supporting these local partnerships and giving them the autonomy to leverage existing relationships and context-specific knowledge to support the study work. The applicant demonstrates clear student need.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide significant detail as to how its remote/online components will provide intensity and rigor commensurate with its traditional model, particularly when it comes to the learning and practice of core routines. Only one of the partners has identified schools in need of the training; the others appear to have existing relationships but don't provide detail as to the institutions it will work with. It is not clear how the role of the local partners will evolve as the training regimen is disseminated and expanded over time.

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project and of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors.

(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 extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation.

Strengths:

The applicant's key personnel have extensive experience leading a national initiative, including previous and current competitive Federal funding programs. The organization has extensive personnel and technical resources to manage and evaluate the proposed project. The management plan interweaves both key activities and the program evaluation plan.

Weaknesses:

The management timeline is organized by year and thus does not clarify a sequence or ongoing progress of the process. The specific roles and responsibilities of the local partners, while identified, are not described or sequenced fully. Key personnel appear to be meeting about ongoing progress too infrequently to meaningfully inform ongoing and future project work.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to continue the proposed project after the grant period ends. In determining the adequacy of resources and the potential for utility of the proposed project's activities and products by other organizations, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations.

(3) The extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

The applicant's train-the-trainer model, coupled with its leveraging of existing local partnerships and their strong ties to schools in the community, increases the likelihood of sustained instructional improvement in participating schools. The applicant has an online repository that will continue to house valuable instructional resources for participants. The applicant has consistently utilized multiple media—reports, conferences, etc.—to disseminate its findings and intends to continue this plan.

Weaknesses:

Because the applicant is seeking to implement proprietary programming, limited products and services will be available to the field following the end of the funding period.

Reader's Score: 11

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Note: We encourage applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:

(1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and

(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

In addition, we encourage applicants to participate in an optional Webinar hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences on March 6, 2015. This Webinar will discuss strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-experimental Design Studies. Applicants interested in participating in this Webinar may find more information at the following Web site: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=37>.

Strengths:

The applicant meets the WWC standards without reservations, utilizing a truly randomized selection process and experimental design approach; the sample size, for both teachers and students, is significant. The applicant intends to measure a host of interrelated teaching and learning factors, including both student achievement and teacher efficacy, as

well as affective and perception data. Validated instruments are being utilized to measure these elements. To triangulate their findings, evaluators are using multiple checks (e.g., student surveys to compare to teacher self-reporting; district teacher evaluations compared to their own). Process evaluation is robust, with multiple measures being utilized and validated instruments being employed to measure participant feedback on professional development.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the participant intends to use its process evaluation efforts to inform in a timely and meaningful manner ongoing program implementation.

Reader's Score: 18

Priority Questions

CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness - CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)

This priority funds projects that will identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources (as defined in the notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

The applicant specifically intends to reduce costs and manpower demands of its traditional service model through migration of its grounded programming to a blended model.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP3: Promoting STEM Education - CPP3: Promoting STEM Education

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education

(Please only assign a score of either 0 or 2 for this question.)

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on student growth (as defined in this notice).

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

None noted.

Weaknesses:

It's not clear how, specifically, the applicant will target STEM knowledge and instruction in its planned model. They're also not recruiting underrepresented groups to STEM teaching.

Reader's Score: 0

CPP4: High-Need Students - CPP4: High-Need Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Supporting High-Need Students

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;
- (b) Learning environments; or
- (c) Both,

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.
- (ii) Students with disabilities.
- (iii) English learners.
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.
- (vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.
- (vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 4 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The applicant addresses high needs students; the program model is specifically targeted to the learning of these students.

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score: 4

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U367D150026)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	29
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	12
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	87
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
1. CPP3: Promoting STEM ED	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
CPP4: High-Need Students		
CPP4: High-Need Students		
1. CPP4: High-Need Students	4	4
Sub Total	4	4
Total	107	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 9: 84.367D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U367D150026)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The significance of the proposed project on a National Level.
- (2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices.
- (3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

1. The proposed project is designed to increase the effectiveness of secondary instruction and improve students' academic literacy proficiencies and academic achievement. The Reading Apprenticeship program, introduced in 1995, will be modified for this proposed project by reducing the face-to-face professional development and adding locally led follow-up. (page 10) The proposed project will collaborate with two large high-needs urban districts in Chicago and New York City and district consortia in Texas and Michigan, reaching 2,000 middle and high school teachers.

2. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), "only 3% of U.S. 8th and 12th graders read at an advanced level, while fully two-thirds of our adolescents score below proficient in reading." (page3) The proposed project seeks to reverse the downward trend in student achievement. The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices is significant. The applicant has implemented the Reading Apprenticeship with statistically significant results according to previous studies completed by Kemple, et. Al. and Somers, et.al. (page 2) The modified Reading Apprenticeship framework will seek to provide the same high-level professional development as the original version, while incorporating more cost-effective delivery methods.

3. Based on prior evidence of success with other iterations of the Reading Apprenticeship, the applicant is likely to continue to demonstrate improvements in teaching and student achievement. The proposed project will investigate modifying the professional development design by reducing the face-to-face professional development to 42 hours with locally supported site-based and online support.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design and services of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design and services of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.
- (3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

Strengths:

1. The goals are clearly articulated in the proposed project. Each goal has two clearly aligned and measurable objectives.
2. The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. Using the methods in the proposed project, teachers will model literacy skills needed for the subject in order to help students build their comprehension strategies and make meaningful connections to prior knowledge. Teachers will reshape how lessons are taught by promoting collaborative, inquiry-based learning that will help student increase their literacy level in each subject area.
3. The professional development services to be provided by the proposed project appear to be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration. Each participant will receive 42 hours of face-to-face and online professional development with on-site follow-up in the first year of their involvement in the project, followed by locally supported monthly PLCs and team meetings in the second year.
4. No strengths noted.
5. The proposed project appears to focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals. The applicant states that the targeted groups are two large high-needs urban districts in Chicago and New York City and district consortia in Texas and Michigan. The applicant has listed the academic weaknesses for the Chicago target area. For example, in Chicago, 40% of 8th graders did not meet the national average in reading on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test. (page 26)

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.
2. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.
3. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.
4. The applicant did not explicitly address how it will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.
5. Although the applicant states that it will target high-needs populations, the proposal does not detail the demographics of the targeted populations that qualify them as high-needs other than Chicago's information listed on page 26.

Reader's Score: 29

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project and of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors.

(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 extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation.

Strengths:

1. The applicant clearly provides a description of appropriate staff assigned to the project. Key personnel identified to work on the project will include Principal Investigator, Co- Principal Investigator, Co- Project Managers, Lead Evaluator, and Evaluation Methodologist (pages 29-30) Personnel identified for this project are highly qualified and experienced in the areas related to the project design as evidenced on pages 36-40 and their resumes in appendix.

2. The proposed project has adequately articulated a management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. In the appendix, the Timeline of Professional Development and Evaluation Activities notes the personnel responsible for each activity for each of the grant years.

3. The proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project and project evaluation. Key personnel will devote sufficient time to the project to ensure the project implementation. The applicant has appropriately budgeted for personnel, travel, and evaluation. The subcontractors included in the budget will be responsible for providing coordination, communication, and plans for sustainability to the partner school districts, which will increase the likelihood that all district will complete the project on time and within budget.

Weaknesses:

The timeline is presented on an annual timeframe; thus, the timeline lacks specificity to ensure all milestones will be reached in a timely manner. (page 31) The timeline could have been made stronger by providing an estimated start date, possible deliverables, and key personnel responsible for task completion. The proposed timeline does not provide a realistic indicator for successful implementation. The milestones should be used to determine if an acceleration of effort to catch up is needed or if critical tasks are not completed, indicating the grant is in jeopardy of failure.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to continue the proposed project after the grant period ends. In determining the adequacy of resources and the potential for utility of the proposed project's activities and products by other organizations, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations.

(3) The extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

1. The proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond Federal financial assistance. The applicant will rely on the support and commitment of key stakeholders in the school districts , as well as its partners to sustain the program beyond Federal funding. The letters of support indicate the partner and school districts' commitment to continuing the project.
2. No strengths noted for this subfactor.
3. The applicant provides a clear plan to disseminate information regarding project outcomes that will enable others to use the information to increase the effectiveness of secondary education . Information will be disseminated through its website, books, articles, and presentations at conferences such as AERA and the National Science Teachers Association. (page 34)

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.
2. The applicant did not explicitly address how the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products that may be used by other agencies and organizations. The products and services in the proposed plan are proprietary, thus making it unlikely that the information will be shared beyond the participants in the program.
3. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

- (1) **The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.**
- (2) **The extent to which the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**
- (3) **The extent to which the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
- (4) **The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project s effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.**

Note: We encourage applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:
(1) **WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook:** <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/ideviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and
(2) **IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers:** http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

In addition, we encourage applicants to participate in an optional Webinar hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences on March 6, 2015. This Webinar will discuss strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-experimental Design Studies. Applicants interested in participating in this Webinar may find more information at the following Web site: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=37>.

Strengths:

1. The applicant has demonstrated an adequate approach to ensuring that the evaluation methods are feasible and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. The applicant will contract with IMPAQ International to conduct an independent evaluation of the proposed project. The proposed evaluation will apply an RCT (randomized controlled trial) design to assess the impact of RA's comprehensive strategies.
2. The applicant demonstrates the use of objective performance measures that are related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data. The independent evaluator will collect teacher and student surveys, observations, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), state test data, and formative data for the impact evaluation (page 50).
3. The applicant demonstrates how the evaluation collect data that can be used to provide performance feedback.. The independent evaluator for the project will provide formative feedback based on data gathered through surveys, observations, and district- and school-level interviews.
4. The applicant demonstrates that methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. The evaluation will include experimental and control groups in an RCT design. The applicant also addresses attrition and ensures that a baseline equivalence is determined. The applicant has ensured that sufficient resources have been placed on the evaluation process. The proposed project will have external evaluators in place to determine the effectiveness of the proposed program. The evaluator will have necessary resources at her disposal. The evaluation budge was calculated based on the personnel and time needed to complete the evaluation .

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.
2. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.
3. The evaluation plan outlines several intervals of data collection, but there is no reference to providing the applicant with periodic feedback . This feedback would be valuable in guiding decisions that may need to be made regarding needed project modifications. The evaluation section could be strengthened by defining a timeframe that the applicant would receive feedback to guide efforts to make modifications to the proposed plan.
4. No weaknesses noted for this subfactor.

Reader's Score: 18

Priority Questions**CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness - CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness****1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)**

This priority funds projects that will identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources (as defined in the notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

The applicant has modified the established Reading Apprenticeship program with a reduced number of face-to-face professional development sessions. The participants will gain more support through locally led follow-up for teachers as a means of reducing project costs. By implementing this model, the applicant will likely introduce a cost-saving program while increasing local capacity.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP3: Promoting STEM Education - CPP3: Promoting STEM Education**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education**

(Please only assign a score of either 0 or 2 for this question.)

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on student growth (as defined in this notice).

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The applicant states in Goal 1 that it will ensure that 20% of the participants in the proposed program are STEM teachers.

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to explicitly illustrate how it will work with STEM teachers to develop their skill sets for increasing literacy in STEM classes.

Reader's Score: 0

CPP4: High-Need Students - CPP4: High-Need Students**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Supporting High-Need Students**

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;**
- (b) Learning environments; or**
- (c) Both,**

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.**
- (ii) Students with disabilities.**
- (iii) English learners.**
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.**
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.**
- (vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.**
- (vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.**

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 4 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The proposed project will address the needs of high-need students in Chicago and New York public schools. These districts have high concentrations of disadvantaged schools. In addition, these schools have demonstrated poor performance as measured by NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests and standardized tests such as Explore, Plan, and ACT. Teachers will be trained in methods to implement literacy instruction effectively across multiple disciplines.

WEAKNESSES:

No weaknesses noted.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **4**

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/27/2015 12:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U367D150026)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	34
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	11
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	12
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
1. CPP3: Promoting STEM ED	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
CPP4: High-Need Students		
CPP4: High-Need Students		
1. CPP4: High-Need Students	4	4
Sub Total	4	4
Total	107	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 9: 84.367D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U367D150026)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The significance of the proposed project on a National Level.
- (2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices.
- (3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

ACT and College Board national exam results indicate that a high percentage of students are unable to handle the quantity and complexity of assigned reading and writing in a variety of subject areas. The Reading Apprenticeship Across the Disciplines (RAAD) project's approach to addressing this problem is significant because through professional development, it focuses on improving not only secondary students' academic achievement, but also their learning dispositions, metacognitive skills, and academic literacy proficiencies across disciplines. Of additional significance, the project's professional development is designed to address teachers' conceptual understandings, as well as practical implementation of content (page 9).

The applicant cites studies that collectively suggest that the proposed project effectively improves student achievement on state-mandated norm-referenced tests in English language arts, reading comprehension, history, and science. as well as demonstrating positive effects on teacher practice (pages 12 & 13).

RAAD will extend the reach of its existing project to include secondary teachers of academic subjects in two additional large high-needs urban districts, Chicago and New York City, and in district consortia in Texas and Michigan.

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design and services of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design and services of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.
- (3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the

proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(4) The extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.

(5) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

Strengths:

Appendices E2, E3, E5, and E7 in the application present examples of the project's courses, the RAAD framework, a cross-disciplinary professional development agenda, and a timeline of activities. These elements of the program are detailed in the project's Logic Model, which consists of clearly specified, aligned, and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes along with their interrelationships (pages 14 – 27). For example, the applicant, in collaboration with participating districts, will recruit middle and high school ELA, science, and social studies teachers. These teachers will engage in professional development that focuses on processes that content area teachers would teach students, such as strategies and discourse rules that shape successful reading in their disciplines. Many of these students are high-need or otherwise disadvantaged.

RAAD will provide follow-up support through online professional learning communities. This feature provides a way for teachers to collaborate at a distance in a model that has the potential to enhance the probability that teachers will apply their training to their teaching.

Professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services. Participants receive 42 hours of planned hybrid professional development—a mix of face-to-face and online with on-site follow-up, followed by monthly PLCs and team meetings. The content of professional development sessions is comprehensive and summarized on pages 25 – 26.

Through participation in local capacity-building activities and cross-disciplinary school teams, the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. For example, one of the project's partners, the Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI), is the New York City Department of Education's focused effort to expand the number of middle schools that prepare students for college and career success. It includes a focus on literacy across the curriculum, teacher collaboration, and dedicated time for extensive reading (page 25).

Weaknesses:

The project does not meet criterion B (4) in that it does not specifically prepare participants to contribute to or teach in fields in which shortages have been demonstrated, such as STEM and special education. Rather, it seeks to implement literary instructional practices only to the repertoire of teachers of general academic disciplines.

Reader's Score: 34

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project and of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project personnel, the Secretary considers:**

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors.**
- (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 extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation.**

Strengths:

The project's director and one of its two co-directors have worked together for 20+ years implementing and refining Reading Apprenticeship with the investment and partnership of educators, researchers, local and national foundations, and the Federal government. Also key to the execution of this proposed work are 80+ consultants around the country, many of whom are active classroom teachers with RA experience and expertise.

Weaknesses:

The amount of time to be devoted to the project by key personnel is not provided, nor is there a specific hierarchy of responsibilities and direction indicated, thereby making it difficult to determine the extent to which sufficient and reasonable leadership will be available and have the authority to effectively carry out the proposed project.

It is not clear how or on what timeline RAAP will develop leadership and sustainability with local organizations and evaluation structures to support and sustain the program at district or regional levels.

The timelines and milestones for Teaching & Learning, Research & Evaluation, and Capacity Building responsible partners are presented in too broad a manner to provide a clear and logical flow of events (page 31).

Reader's Score: 11

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to continue the proposed project after the grant period ends. In determining the adequacy of resources and the potential for utility of the proposed project's activities and products by other organizations, the Secretary considers:**

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations.**
- (3) The extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides support for schools such as teacher teams and teacher leaders and creates collaborative cultures of literacy with extensive administrative support. This is a strong foundation upon which the project can build sustainability by the participating schools.

WestEd has and intends to continue providing outreach services that include a website (www.wested.org), a social media presence, and print products that disseminate information about its projects to a broad range of audiences. The applicant distributes information books, book chapters and articles, and makes presentations in conferences such as AERA and the National Science Teachers Association.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states its intention to create sustainability beyond the grant by making connections between the RAAD approach and other reforms, pressures, and opportunities (page 32). However, the proposal does not indicate what these connections would be nor does it describe how it intends to make them. Consequentially, estimates of the potential effectiveness of this strategy would be questionable.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.
- (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
- (4) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Note: We encourage applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:

- (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and
- (2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

In addition, we encourage applicants to participate in an optional Webinar hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences on March 6, 2015. This Webinar will discuss strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-experimental Design Studies. Applicants interested in participating in this Webinar may find more information at the following Web site: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=37>.

Strengths:

The relatively large number of schools (50) in the evaluation suggests the probability that a significant variation in personal and school culture will result in a rich data set.

Participating middle school students will be recruited from districts in Texas, Illinois, Michigan, and New York. Half of these schools will be randomly assigned to a treatment group that will be given access to the RAAD intervention during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, while half of the schools will be randomly designated as a control group that does not have access to the intervention during this period.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide rigorous evidence regarding both the implementation of RAAD and its impacts on student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. The goal of the impact evaluation is to identify the effects of RAAD on student and teacher outcomes at the end of the 8th grade. Therefore, within each school, the impact evaluation will focus on a subset of participating grade 8 ELA, science, and social studies teachers at each school. The focus on 8th grade is laudable because it will reflect the results of cumulative effects of having exposed most students to RAAD across multiple subjects in the 7th and 8th grades rather than only examining discrete benchmarks.

Formative assessments and capacity building assessments are presented as responses to evaluation questions that

relate directly to objectives. The proposed evaluation questions are also aligned with the research design, and will yield appropriate data for measuring the effects of the intervention.

The student evaluation component of the project not only examines academic achievement such as program impacts on students' reported reading strategies, but also gathers data on program effects that affect student performance. This is a unique feature of RAAD deserving recognition. These effects include student attitudes, behaviors, and dispositions such as attitudes about intelligence and the value of effort (page 15), which are considered significant predictors of academic success and are key targets of the RAAD intervention.

Weaknesses:

One of the formative goals of the evaluation is to investigate participating 7th and 8th grade teachers' implementation of RA instructional practices (page 34). Since 7th grade teachers participate in the professional development and implementation of the model though not in the evaluation, it follows that data will not be available to indicate the extent and quality of 7th grade teachers' application of the training.

Although a treatment and control group comparison design will be used, the proposal provides no indication that baseline data will be used to inform the comparison, thus limiting information concerning differences in growth over time between the groups.

Reader's Score: 16

Priority Questions

CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness - CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)

This priority funds projects that will identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources (as defined in the notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

The proposal reduces personnel and travel costs by migrating from face-to-face contact to an online professional development model. This lowers personnel costs by reducing the amount of time and transportation expenses otherwise required for this process.

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 1

CPP3: Promoting STEM Education - CPP3: Promoting STEM Education

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education

(Please only assign a score of either 0 or 2 for this question.)

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on student growth (as defined in this notice).

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

Although approximately 30% of participating teachers teach STEM subjects, there is no indication of specific professional development for teachers of STEM subjects.

Reader's Score: 0

CPP4: High-Need Students - CPP4: High-Need Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Supporting High-Need Students

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;
- (b) Learning environments; or
- (c) Both,

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.
- (ii) Students with disabilities.
- (iii) English learners.
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.
- (vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.
- (vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 4 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each

priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The project is designed to support teaching and learning across disciplines and prioritizes low-performing schools serving high concentrations of English learners and students living in poverty (page 27).

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
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