

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/12/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Reader #2: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 20 | 19 |
| Sub Total | 20 | 19 |
| Total | 20 | 19 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 4: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
 - (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.
 - (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

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

- (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and
- (2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

Project goals and objectives are clearly expressed in the Project Design section and referenced in the Evaluation section. The Evaluation section is organized around the Quality Criteria and presents logical and understandable way to understand evaluation activities. The formative data will be collected according to a fidelity monitoring plan and reported to project implementation staff on a quarterly basis. This will further enable evaluators and project staff to stay on task and to continually work towards project improvement. The quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group is well described on page 15 and is a valid way to determine project impact. In addition to AIMS as the outcome measure, an alternate assessment for those unable to complete the AIMS with valid results will be used. A comparison group with similar demographics will be used. Use of propensity scores as a backup if adjustments are needed to equate treatment and comparison groups is an appropriate solution. There is an excellent explanation of effect sizes and their use on page 16. The data analysis from the quasi-experimental design using regression is very well described on page 17. Again on page 17, an excellent explanation is provided for why statistical tests would not be appropriate for students in an alternative school with an alternative solution for them. A well-researched instrument, which is cited on page 18, for student engagement will be used, which employed the use of Factor Analysis to determine construct validity. Using a performance-based rubric to assess technology proficiency is an excellent idea to measure ones ability to navigate and utilize a website. The products mentioned at the top of page 21 are excellent for use in replication and expanded applications of the evaluation. The evaluators are very qualified to conduct the evaluation. There are five evaluators involved in the project, one of whom is local and all of whom are independent. There is a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of each evaluator participating, and their level of participation in the evaluation. Fifteen percent of the total project budget is devoted to evaluation. This is very adequate to complete a thorough and competent evaluation.

Weaknesses:

There is no mention of how the comparison group will be matched. It is not clear what demographic mention in Appendix C and other demographics will be used in matching for a comparison group. It is not indicated how they might know if and when adjustments might be necessary to equate groups. It is not clear why comparison groups cannot be used in a quasi-experimental design to evaluate effects relative to attendance,

student engagement, college readiness, technology literacy, high school graduation, drop out rates, and college enrollment. There is no mention of what scales might be solicited from the Educational Planning Survey for College Readiness, referenced on page 18. It is not clear how the pre/post questionnaires for Postsecondary Preparation Knowledge will be analyzed and what will be done with the results. There is no indication of what criteria will be used in the technology proficiency rubric.

Reader's Score: 19

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Reader #1: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 20 | 18 |
| Sub Total | 20 | 18 |
| Total | 20 | 18 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 4: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
 - (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.
 - (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

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

- (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and
- (2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

The quasi-experimental design proposed is acceptable. Schools that are demographically similar to the project schools will be utilized as a comparison group, thereby adjusting for differences in student background between schools that were assigned to the treatment and comparison groups. This design increases confidence that differences between the treatment and comparison groups are due to the treatment, and not to initial differences in students' background characteristics. The applicants should also consider controlling for individual students' background characteristics as well as using demographically similar comparison schools.

The power analysis shown on page 16 suggests that the sample size is adequate for the detection of moderate effect sizes. The sample is large enough to detect program effects that are usually considered noteworthy in educational intervention (i.e., one quarter of a standard deviation difference between the treatment and comparison groups). The calculated statistical power is .80 which is usually considered adequate for an exploratory or developmental study. The applicant uses survey measures that have established reliability and validity, and which are relevant to the goals of the project. The description of these measures on pages 16-18 address issues of reliability, as well as the degree to which the measures relate to achievement and other important evaluation outcomes, documenting a network of meaningful relationships among the measures.

The evaluation design includes steps to assess the impact of differential levels of exposure to the program on students' outcomes. As described on page 17, the analysis will examine the relationship between the duration of students' involvement in the program and outcomes. This approach provides more information about the amount of exposure that is needed to produce program effects, and recognizes the potential impact of student mobility on program effects. Rather than assuming that all students in a building have attended the same school throughout all the years of an intervention, the proposal would take into consideration the fact that students' exposure to the program may be quite brief if they have changed between treatment and non-treatment schools.

The applicant has identified a qualified independent evaluator and had an adequate budget for evaluation. The evaluator has carried out multiple evaluations with similar interventions, and has worked with the populations that would be served by the proposed intervention.

Weaknesses:

More attention should be given to the differential effects of the program for equity. Illustratively, it is not clear whether the program would have similar effects for males and females.
The assessment of college preparation should include archival information about whether students have taken and passed gateway courses in high school that are associated with enrolment and retention in college.

Reader's Score: 18

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