

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/13/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
Sub Total	20	17
Total	20	17

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 7: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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 project narrative includes clear and measurable evaluation goals and research questions. The data collection strategies and elements clearly address each of the project goals, with measures appropriate for each goal. Overall, the data collection process and methods (e.g., document reviews, teacher surveys) should provide sufficient information about the project implementation to provide high quality information during each year of the project.

The evaluation methods include both qualitative and quantitative strategies, which are analyzed with techniques appropriate for each specific evaluation goal and research question. This variety of data collection methods and strategies should provide high quality information about the key project elements for further development and replication.

The narrative indicates that the project evaluation contractor has extensive experience conducting large-scale initiatives similar to the proposed project. The amount of funds budgeted (10% of the total grant request) should be sufficient to produce a complete and thorough project evaluation, as it provides for 14 weeks of work in years 1-3 and 18 weeks of work in year 4.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear from the evaluation narrative (page 26 of 35) if the control district will be in California or some other state. If it is another state, some of the outcomes measures (i.e., the summative state test data) would need to be adjusted. This would likely require the use of lower power statistical methods, possibly reducing replicability and utility in other settings.

OUSD has numerous projects underway in their high schools that focus on increasing achievement and reducing performance gaps between white and Hispanic/Black students. It is not clear from the evaluation narrative if the evaluation design fully accounts for or addresses the other programs that might impact the overall project student achievement outcomes data. The evaluation analyses must remove the impact of these

other projects in order to reflect the effects of the Oakland Accelerates project only, to provide sufficient information about the key elements of this project for further development or replication.

Reader's Score: 17

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
Sub Total	20	17
Total	20	17

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 7: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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:

Three very relevant and appropriate questions guide the evaluation. These relate to program implementation, program impact, and the impact of particularly effective strategies of the program.

Numerous strategies are described and clearly explained relevant to the implementation study. Researchers will conduct reviews of appropriate documents and will assess the "dosage" of the program in the participating schools. This is quite important for a plan to assess the impact of the program when delivered with fidelity. Researchers will also survey the students and teachers on their understanding of and satisfaction with program services.

The authors carefully describe which implementation data will be quantitatively analyzed and which will be analyzed using qualitative strategies. This is clearly explained and appropriate.

For the impact study, the authors focus directly on the primary outcome -- student outcomes overall, and student outcomes for under-represented groups. The plan clearly lists 7 specific and quantifiable outcome measures that are perfectly relevant given the intervention and its goals (getting kids through HS and into postsecondary).

For the analysis, the authors appropriately suggest a Regression Discontinuity design and mention a similar school district to serve as a comparison district.

It is a real strength that there is a specific research question articulated focusing on the replicability of the program. Moreover, the description of the implementation study suggests that there will be sufficient information for readers to understand the primary elements of the program.

The authors mention a cost of 10% of \$3 million allocated to the evaluation. The authors describe an experienced research firm that will conduct the evaluation.

Weaknesses:

For the analysis, the authors appropriately suggest a Regression Discontinuity design and mention a similar school district. There is a weakness here as the authors choose only one district -- if that control district also experiences its own district-specific changes during the program period, this would undermine the conclusions drawn. I would suggest a complementary analysis in which the researchers also build a comparison group from among SEVERAL reasonably similar districts across the state, in which the comparison students from these districts are matched up specifically to a twin in the treatment district. This analytic strategy would not fall victim to the N=1 comparison district problem.

Moreover, the authors also do not describe how they will gather the very specific 7 outcome measures from non-participating districts. (e.g. hit college benchmarks on ACT exam or earn an AP score of 3 or better). The measures themselves are very reasonable -- it is not obvious how these will be gathered from non-participating districts and students.

The authors mention a cost of 10% of \$3 million allocated to the evaluation. The authors describe an experienced research firm that will conduct the evaluation. The proposal would be stronger if more description were given of the various costs of all aspects of the evaluation.

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