

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2013 12:44 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	12
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	82

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - i3 Development - 4: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

The applicant presents a project to implement a system of Linked Learning Pathways to improve four low-performing high schools. The Linked Learning is a viable approach to transforming education by integrating rigorous academics with career-based learning and real-world experiences.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

Strengths:

This project will implement a unique approach. Linked Learning is a high school transformation approach whereby Pathways are created via rigorous college-preparatory academics; career-based learning that delivers technical knowledge and skills; work-based learning via job shadows, apprenticeships, internships; and personalized supports, such as counseling and supplemental instruction, to help students master the skills for college and career success (pages e20-e24). Linked Learning is a proven approach that will likely keep all students engaged in rigorous learning and motivated to succeed.

The proposed project will contribute to theory, knowledge, and practice by providing a greater understanding about how Linked Learning affects and promotes student outcomes; both cognitive and non-cognitive (page e23-e24). It will also contribute to school reform of low performing schools, and enhance student motivation, self-efficacy, engagement, and persistence.

The applicant presents an analysis of how the Linked Learning approach can impact students' non-cognitive skills and promote academic behaviors through practices such as requiring districts and high schools to choose pathway themes that address student interest; allowing and supporting students to choose a pathway that is based on their personal interest; or engaging students in authentic, career-related academic projects and tasks that are motivating and engaging (pages e26-e27). The analysis serves as an implication that the project will have impact on the students in schools served by the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.,

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

Strengths:

The project addresses Absolute Priority 2 – Improving Low Performing Schools, subpart (b) in that it implements a program and strategies intended to improve high-needs students' non-cognitive abilities. The proposed project has an explicit and highly developed strategy for infusing relevance throughout a rigorous academic and technical program of study in ways that are likely to increase not only cognitive student outcomes, but also the non-cognitive outcomes.

The applicant outlines an overarching goal for the project -- to improve both cognitive and non-cognitive skills of students in grades 9 through 12 participating in 12 high quality Linked Learning pathways that will be developed in 4 low-performing high schools. The proposed project has six objectives that are sufficient to accomplish the goal. Some of the key strategies for accomplishing these objectives include in-depth needs and capacity assessment and implementation planning; intensive "transformational" coaching at the pathway, school, and district levels; and ongoing leadership and professional development that build communities of practice across schools and districts (pages e28-e31).

The applicant specifies four clearly specified goals for the project that are aligned with measurable objectives and outcomes (pages e26-e29 and e68-e69). Some implementation strategies entail the provision of professional development and the design, piloting and dissemination of technology system, both of which are likely to help build capacity.

The applicant plans appropriate measures to address potential risks that undermined the success of the project (pages e29-e30). Risks addressed include data privacy, quality of services, and engagement of school staff. For example, because many people view student data and strict confidentiality protocols need to be followed, the applicant will build a SQL database to support the data warehouse it intends to build, thus protecting data confidentiality.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Management of the project will be a partner effort (page e32). The coordinated efforts from all partners will ensure development and implementation of the project is appropriate and meets the needs of the target population. For example, Connect Ed and the San Bernardino County Office of Education will have primary responsibility for technical assistance and professional development, such as pathway design and program of study, project-based learning, curriculum integration, and team teaching (page e31). The Institute for Evidence-Based Change will be responsible for helping the school district develop the Linked Learning Data Dashboard and support data development, collection, and reporting, as well as integrating this effort with their current Linked Learning Data Collection and Reporting System. SRI International will conduct the independent, quasi-experimental evaluation. The Alliance for a Better Community will focus on strategic communications and building buy-in among parents and employers.

The applicant demonstrates sufficient commitment on the project by partner responsibilities in project development and participation, and by letters of commitment and support outlining specific intent in support of the project (page e32 and Appendix G). Additionally, as confirmed in a letter of support from The James Irvine Foundation included in Appendix G, financial support for the project has been committed (pages e32 and e57).

The outlines strategies that are sufficient to provide feedback and continuous improvement on the project (page e33). A Linked Learning Dashboard will be implemented that tracks key indicators such as engagement (e.g., attendance, high school completion, suspensions and disciplinary actions), achievement (e.g., GPA, course completion, math and ELA test scores); work-based Learning (e.g., internships, skill certificates earned); and postsecondary Outcomes (e.g., dual enrollment, postsecondary enrollment, 1st-year credits earned, persistence, and attainment). Tracking of indicators provides pertinent feedback on project activities and student progress while also providing an indicator of how the project is progressing. A second method that is of sufficient fidelity to provide feedback on the project and allow for continuous improvement is the use of teacher survey data that will provide formative feedback. This will provide feedback on the development of pathways over time, implementation, or identify factors that support or act as barriers.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not present an authority structure to support management of the project. Further, a plan that aligns project goals, objects, activities, persons responsible, and a timeline to guide staff in the management of the project is not presented. The absence of this information makes it hard to determine if oversight of the project is adequate to ensure accomplishment of project goals.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

Strengths:

Key staff assigned to work with the program is clearly identified and are qualified and experienced as evidenced by the description in the narrative and the resumes in the Appendices (pages e34 and the Appendix). Staff working on the project is representative of the partner organizations. This representation provides for the development of a strong foundation for the project and appropriate oversight. ConnectEd's Director for Pathway Learning and Teaching, will serve as Project Director.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/19/2013 12:44 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/23/2013 07:19 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	85

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - i3 Development - 4: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

Strengths:

The proposed project does present a novel approach to identifying and addressing the impact of increasing high school drop out rates in our nations urban centers by introducing an integrative approach to learning that applies academic rigor with real world experiences in preparing disaffected youth for college and careers. Based upon its evidence in advancing student outcomes, Linked Learning has gained large support from the Ford and Skillman Foundations to begin launching Linked Learning in Houston and Detroit. Linked Learning boasts its students gains centered around the following factors: 'motivation and engagement, attendance, achievement, credit accumulation, on time grade-to grade transition, and high school completion (pg 3). Although an unfunded mandate, the enactment of AB790, which has become the primary strategy for transforming high schools. Linked Learning provides a unique opportunity to improve student outcomes as contained in its "Four Essential Program components(pg 4). Linked Learning is aligned to the Common Core. Additionally, the seven features of the Linked Learning that provides the overall framework for implementing Linked Learning district-wide (pg 6,7). Further this proposal contributes to the knowledge and practice by providing an approach to learning that engages disaffected youth in areas that have not been traditionally explored in an effort to provide college and career opportunities to youth in traditionally under-served low-performing high schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

Strengths:

The proposal fully addresses the absolute priority as outlined in this competition by aiming to address all aspects of the students high school's experience(s) by increasing both the cognitive and non-cognitive student outcomes as a result of the Linked Learning approach. The Linked Learning approach does not gear students to selecting a career; rather, providing students with life long learning skills which will ultimately wrought life-long success. Additionally, Linked Learning provides a framework for employer engagement. The six primary objectives of Linked Learning allows for it to meet its stated goals and objectives (pg. 13, 14). One of the potential risks identified was that of the sustaining at all levels- district, school, as well as Linked Learning associates.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project s long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The management plan submitted clearly articulated the roles and responsibilities that will be provided by the respective stakeholders in the Linked Learning partnership in realizing and implementing project objectives. The proposal provides evidence of support and commitment from key stakeholders- James Irvine Foundation , and many others (Appendix G). The proposed project has a clear and definitive plan in place to provide continuous feedback as well as make necessary modifications. (Appendix J).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

Strengths:

The applicant adequately outlines its proposed staffing plan to include listing the persons responsible for project implementation. The applicant presented a staffing plan that clearly identified how it plans to implement the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/23/2013 07:19 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2013 05:34 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	24
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	84

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - i3 Development - 4: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

Strengths:

The proposed project: Linked Learning San Bernardino, links rigorous academics with work place experiences and focuses on both college and career readiness--which makes it a novel approach compared with other academy initiatives. There is a recognition that Pathways/Academy implementation is not new, but this approach has seldom been systematic. The phenomenon of the program connected to visionary leaders (that eventually leave and the project atrophies) is counteracted by a 4-point certification system coupled with a focus on building a district-wide/community-wide commitment at the highest organizational levels. This project proposes to contribute to theory & knowledge by collecting school-level data in the areas of 1) impact on student cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, and 2) deeper focus on motivation, self-efficacy, engagement, and persistence (pg. 23). A longitudinal study by MDRC (pg.23) shows effectiveness of career academies in various ways and provides a foundation for the Linked Learning effort. It appears that the study of this i3 effort would contribute a much better understanding of how to implement and design pathways and the ways in which Linked Learning could improve student non-cognitive and cognitive outcomes.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses were not identified.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

Strengths:

The proposed project addresses absolute priority 2b. Motivation and self-efficacy are the major intervening non-cognitive factors in the Linked Learning approach and the proposal convincingly makes the case that there is significant focus in particular in these two areas.

Project goals are explicit and systemic: 1) 2 of the participating HSs will achieve Linked Learning certification (see rubric, pg. 149-165), 2) all 4 of the participating HSs will develop 2 more Linked Learning pathways, 3) by end of year four, 35% of students will enroll in Linked Learning pathways, 4) develop, with the district the structures that support Linked Learning, e.g., school choice, transportation, common planning time, etc., 5) develop and use a system of student performance metrics to support ongoing rigorous evaluation, 6) conduct a rigorous, quasi-experimental evaluation.

The goals and activities are included. The key potential risk identified is that of sustained leadership at all levels of the schools, the district, and within the community--this risk has been mitigated by focusing on policies that stress the importance of leadership commitment.

Weaknesses:

There is not a logic model for the entire project, which would help in visualizing the inputs and outcomes.

Reader's Score: 24

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Key responsibilities and tasks for ConnectEd and partners during year one are included in a matrix (pg.35) and the metrics/tools that will be used to measure progress are located in J3. ConnectEd's responsibilities are primarily professional development and technical assistance, 1) including pathway design, 2) project-based learning, curriculum integration, and team teaching, 3) work based learning and performance assessment, 4) building capacity of school district to coach principals and lead teachers, 5) using the data dashboard and formative evaluation.

There are letters of support from partners (IEBL, SRI, ABC), including the County and City district superintendents, a state senator, California State University-San Bernardino, and from the James Irvine Foundation which has pledged 2.5 million

for this effort.

Partner responsibilities include: Institute for Evidence Based Learning--developing, with the district, a data dashboard; SRI--evaluation; Alliance for Better Community--strategic communications and building buy-in with employers and parents.

The data dashboard being developed by IEBL will track indicators that ultimately provide mechanisms for feedback, e.g, engagement (attendance, HS completion, suspensions, referrals). Also, as highlighted in the evaluation timeline (pg. 134), there are numerous measures that will be developed and utilized to ensure feedback and continuous improvement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

Strengths:

The proposed staffing, especially in the first year, appears to be adequate. ConnectEd staff have robust experience and expertise in pathways for learning/academies. Additionally, the partners' expertise appears to provide a strong complement to the lead partner roster of participating staff.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses in staffing were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2013 05:34 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/25/2013 08:20 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	0
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Personnel	10	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	14
Total	100	14

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - i3 Development - 4: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

na

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

Strengths:

na

Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

Strengths:

na

Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

na

Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

Strengths:

na

Weaknesses:

na

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measureable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The evaluation questions address student outcomes, implementation of the approach by teachers, teacher participation in activities, and how context impedes or facilitates implementation. As such the questions are appropriate and follow from the goal. The goal of the proposal is to provide a curriculum linked to college and career success and grounded in local employment needs and to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach for replication.

The external evaluator is a company whose staff have the skills and experience to conduct the evaluation as well as knowledge of the Linked Learning approach and previous experience with it which helps ensure that the evaluation plan will be implemented as proposed.

Formative assessments will provide feedback for improvement (p. 20) and there will be two quasi-experimental designs: one to follow a single cohort of students in mature pathways and the other in schools with new pathways.

Both QEDs will use propensity score matching to compare students in the pathways to similar students not in the pathways, which is an acceptable approach when random selection or assignment to groups is not possible.

Student and teacher surveys will collect non-cognitive data and the evaluators say they will work with partners to ensure that student survey data is linked to extant student data and triangulated with qualitative data. Analyses will study similarities and differences to inform replication. (p 25)

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how and if outcomes for different populations of students (e.g. race, ethnicity, ELL, etc.) will be studied. Exact numbers are left for the reader to calculate for QED2 which is an inconvenience. Further, (p23) "Pathway students in QED 1 will be matched" –propensity score matching may be assumed but it is not stated who they will be matched with and to what end.

Reader's Score: 14

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/25/2013 08:20 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/18/2013 05:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	0
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Personnel	10	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	14
Total	100	14

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - i3 Development - 4: 84.411C

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career (U411C130103)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. In determining the significance of the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project would implement a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally.

(2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will substantially improve on the outcomes achieved by other practices, such as through better student outcomes, lower cost, or accelerated results.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. In determining the quality of the proposed project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

(2) The clarity and coherence of the project goals, including the extent to which the proposed project articulates an explicit plan or actions to achieve its goals (e.g., a fully developed logic model of the proposed project).

(3) The clarity, completeness, and coherence of the project goals, and whether the application includes a description of project activities that constitute a complete plan for achieving those goals, including the identification of potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the management plan articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives, including the timelines and milestones for completion of major project activities, the metrics that will be used to assess progress on an ongoing basis, and annual performance targets the applicant will use to monitor whether the project is achieving its goals.

(2) The extent of the demonstrated commitment of any key partners or evidence of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success.

(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. In determining the quality and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The adequacy of the project's staffing plan, particularly for the first year of the project, including the identification of the project director and, in the case of projects with unfilled key personnel positions at the beginning of the project, that the staffing plan identifies how critical work will proceed.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The clarity and importance of the key questions to be addressed by the project evaluation, and the appropriateness of the methods for how each question will be addressed.

(2) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

Strengths:

The evaluation will be provided by a highly qualified team of three persons from SRI all of whom have prior experience evaluating the California Linked Learning District Initiative. The experience and work products the team brings from this prior evaluation will be very helpful in supporting the current set of evaluation activities. Although the proposal did not include information on the FTE allocations of these individuals or the total hours or days to be contributed to the project, the budget allocations for the evaluation indicate adequate resources have been allocated for a successful evaluation.

Because the Linked Learning Pathway Program has already been provided for and set to be implemented in the four target schools, this proposal is primarily a research and evaluation proposal and provides an impressively broad and deep array of evaluation activities examining in detail the implementation and effects for the Linked Learning Pathways Program.

The proposal includes four clearly stated and important evaluation questions (p 20). The proposal is unusual in that three of the four evaluation questions concern implementation and contextual factors that will affect replication. Intervention dosage will also be assessed and made a part of the analysis. This proposal, therefore, has an unusually high potential to provide research findings which provide deep insights regarding implementation challenges and how implementation affects outcomes. The proposal is also strong in providing ongoing formative data to the project managers concerning implementation and functioning of the program.

The core research design involves two separate quasi-experiments in which outcomes of participating and nonparticipating students in the four schools will be contrasted. The treatment groups will consist of students participating in the Linked Learning Pathways Program while control groups will be built using propensity scores for matching. Each quasi-experiment will examine a different aspect of the program implementation with one involving just two schools and the other four schools. This design should provide a reasonable defense against threats to validity in interpreting differences between the experimental and control groups on outcome variables.

The proposed sample size and minimal detectable effect size were explicitly addressed in the proposal.

This is a very strong evaluation plan which clearly articulates key components of the program's logic model and includes a broad array of academic and non-cognitive measures.

Weaknesses:

The proposal did not explicitly provide a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation but this should not be too difficult to do since the protocol has already been developed for reviewing and certifying effective implementation of the Linked Learning Pathways Program.

Reader's Score: 14

Status: Submitted
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