

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2013 10:33 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	32
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	20
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	12
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
<b>Total</b>	100	74

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - i3 Development - 5: 84.411C

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

## 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 approach presented in the application is novel in that it presents a first attempt to evaluate whether the implementation of the two programs, SchoolKit and PATHS, will result in improved school performance in low-performing schools (student academic performance).

The proposal also presents a novel approach as it looks closely at the implementation process of these programs which has not been done previously to any large degree. It presents an attempt to evaluate whether coordinated and integrated social-emotional learning (SEL) efforts will result in turnaround in persistently low-performing schools and the academic performance of children who attend them.

A randomized clinical trial to test the effectiveness of the two programs (SchoolKit and PATHS) will provide research findings that will advance the knowledge and practices in the field of non-cognitive skills of students in low-performing schools. The application presents results from previous studies which support these programs on pp. 4-6.

The significance of the proposed project is very well defined in the literature review on pp. 1-7. This provides a detailed explanation of the need for this study. For example, previous research has found that SEL skills promote engaged learning and long-term academic success (p. 3).

##### Weaknesses:

The application does not specifically address how the proposed project might reduce costs for school districts.

Reader's Score: 32

### 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 addresses Absolute Priority 2 since the project will be conducted in the Chicago Public Schools, one of the lowest-performing school districts in the nation.

The partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) presents an opportunity for this project to impact one of the lowest-performing school districts in the nation which aligns with Absolute Priority 2.

The activities to meet project goals are clearly defined on pp. 12-15 and J-2, J-3, & J-8.

The tracking tool presented on Appendix J-5 presents a good overview for how the project will be managed and evaluated. Plans are explicit and align to project goals.

#### Weaknesses:

More specific details on the project outcomes could have strengthened this application. For example, on p. 10, the proposal states that there will be fewer behavior and higher levels of student engagement. However, there is no information provided to specify a target for the outcomes for these two areas. Another example of insufficient detail occurs on p. 14. The application states that the SEL Leadership Team will be encouraged to develop a plan for communicating with the broader school community. Rather than simply stating that this will be encouraged, the application would have been strengthened if specific examples were provided for how this communication plan would be developed and implemented.

Potential risks and how these can be mitigated were not discussed.

Reader's Score: 20

### 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 partnerships for the proposed project (pp. 15-16) will enhance the applicant's ability to address the goals and outcomes of the project (PSU, CPS, American Institutes for Research).

The independent evaluation which will be conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) will provide quality feedback on whether or not the project is meeting its goals and objectives.

Stakeholder commitment is evident as stated in the letters of support included in the application.

Feedback and continuous improvement procedures are discussed thoroughly in the application (pp. 16-18). Frequent monitoring (e.g. bi-weekly phone meetings) and an advisory board will provide good oversight for this project.

**Weaknesses:**

Although Appendix J-2 presents a good overview of the project plan and activities, it does not provide detailed information on the performance targets or how these will be measured. Objectives are also ill-defined. For example, an activity is presented as: planning for and supporting PATHS implementation. Details on specifically how this support would occur (e.g. an action plan and/or objectives) is not presented.

**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:**

Personnel identified to support the proposed project bring a wealth of experience and background. They all seem very well qualified - especially the PI [REDACTED] and Co-PI [REDACTED] and the Evaluation Director [REDACTED].

**Weaknesses:**

None identified.

**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 scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/24/2013 10:33 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2013 01:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	30
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	23
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
<b>Total</b>	100	78

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - i3 Development - 5: 84.411C

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

## 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 applicant described a detailed plan that describes an evidence-based approach to increasing social-emotional which will increase the non-cognitive abilities of lower performing students. The approach in the application describes using research-based strategies along with the PATHS Curriculum and the CASEL SchoolKit. On page e19, the applicant included a logic model that describes how the program will be implemented along with teacher, student, and school outcomes. Page e20 of the application included evidence that showed the success of the model when used in schools with similar backgrounds as opposed to schools that did not use the SEL model. The results from the reviews showed favorable increases in academic performance and fewer conduct issues. This information was helpful in determining the likelihood that this project would have similar results and would have the capacity to impact a large number of students. The applicant provided additional research to further support their position about the effectiveness of this model on pages e21-e24.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant included a statement on page e24 that was confusing as it related to a previous statement made on e18. The statement stated that "the evaluation design did not allow us to draw definitive conclusions about whether CASEL's school-wide approach is superior to classroom-based SEL program". Page e18 included information that stated that the attempt was the most ambitious attempt ever to determine if the efforts of school-wide program would be more effective than classroom programs. It was difficult to determine if the applicant felt confident that the project could demonstrate if the program would yield the programs outcomes that are outlined in the application.

Reader's Score: 30

### 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 applicant included a detailed project design that described project goals and objectives. The applicant included information that detailed a timeline in accordance with the various phases that was realistic and consistent with program goals. Page e28 of the application included training activities that were supportive of goals for both school-wide implementation as well as classroom implementation. The applicant includes a plan for leadership team meetings, coaching, and professional development, and workshop activities to ensure the successful implementation of the program at various phases. Page e29 describes opportunities for the leadership team to have ongoing involvement in the overall implementation of the project. The applicant also provides opportunities for teachers and other staff members to provide feedback and receive ongoing coaching to ensure that the program is embraced.

#### Weaknesses:

On page e33, the applicant included information stating that implementation of key activities will be monitored against due dates and performance targets but did not describe how this monitoring would be conducted. The applicant mentions the use of log notes and sign-in sheets but does not describe how those will be useful in monitoring various performance targets.

Reader's Score: 23

### 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 applicant has secured strong partnerships that have a strong commitment to the project. As evidenced on page e31 and e32, each of the partners has substantial experience and has committed to provide services or resources to the program as needed. Some of the partners have also agreed to serve in an advisory capacity where they will review progress towards timelines and goals. On page e32, the applicant describes a partnership with NoVo Foundation that

will provide financial support to each participating district for a 3 year period. The applicant included information to show how the funding will be used to leverage and expand SEL programming. The applicant also described a partnership with AIR which will collect and report data on the program goals and performance outcomes. These partnerships strengthen the likelihood that the projects will be able to continue after the grant is completed.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**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:**

On pages e34 – e36, the applicant described all of the key individuals who would be responsible for the oversight of the program. The individuals identified have substantial experience in their various areas as well as experience in using the CASEL model. By using a proven model with an experienced team the applicant presented a strong opportunity to implement the program with a strong knowledge and leadership base.

**Weaknesses:**

None 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. Another reviewer reviewed this section.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A. Another reviewer reviewed this section.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/24/2013 01:46 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2013 01:44 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	33
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	22
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
<b>Total</b>	100	80

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - i3 Development - 5: 84.411C

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

## 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 application is unique in its approach to couple a strong implementation process with an evidence-based SEL program for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the SEL program. Research shows schools that have implemented the Path program with fidelity had stronger student outcomes. The applicant is proposing to increase the fidelity of the program by adding and testing a strong model of SEL implementation (pages e22. e23). The applicant provides a wealth of research to support the program's theory, that increasing the fidelity of PATHS implementation will lead to an increase in student social and emotional skills and behaviors (pages e22. e23).

The project is also novel in aligning and blending SEL curriculum and lessons within the new Common Core Curriculum. In low performing schools, teachers are often reluctant to use class time on anything that detracts from students learning the content standards. The project is addressing this issue by aligning the SEL curriculum with the Common Core which will lead to stronger teacher buy in and participation (page e29).

Findings from this study will strengthen the field of SEL by addressing a challenge that is common to implementing any SEL school program. The project can be used to help schools and the SEL providers better understand the supports, functions, processes and tools needed to increase fidelity of implementation (page e19, e22). The applicant demonstrates that it is a national leader in SEL and has the capacity and desire to disseminate the project findings through their national networks (page e36).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states that this project is unique and ambitious in evaluating whether a “coordinated and integrated SEL efforts” is powerful enough to turnaround persistently low-performing schools” and academic performance but does not provide research to support this hypothesis (page e18).

**Reader's Score: 33**

**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 will improve low performing Chicago Public schools by strengthening students' social and emotional skills. The applicant provides strong research to support the positive effects of the Paths SEL program on students' social-emotional well-being and academic achievement (p.e25).

The applicant provides a clear and detailed plan to implement the Path's +School Kit including goals, objectives and strategies. The applicant provides a very detailed timeline including the amount of time designated for each activity, persons responsible for implementing the activity and milestones to evaluate progress. (pages e27-e31 & Appendix J, pages e224-e229). The applicant demonstrates strong implementation experience and skills by providing a thoughtful, detailed and clear timelines for all activities. It is clear that the applicant has thought carefully about implementing all aspects of the Paths + School Kit and will be ready to implement the project immediately.

**Weaknesses:**

The application could be strengthened by providing a stronger and more detailed plan for the schools receiving the Path's program only (pages e27 and e28). The applicant does not provide potential risks or solutions to addressing potential risks.

**Reader's Score: 22**

**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 applicant provides a strong, detailed management plan including activities, objectives, persons responsible for implementing and participating in the activities, milestones, annual and incremental performance targets (page 32, Appendix J-2&J-3). A major strength of this application is the history of collaboration that exists between all partners on the management team. The project will be managed by a team of experts whom have worked with each other on projects aimed at strengthening students' social and emotional skills in schools, including the evaluator, AIR (page e31). In addition, they are building off of an existing project in which CASEL is assisting Chicago Public School District in developing district policies to support SEL in their schools (pages e32). The support and involvement of the district in this initiative is critical successful implementation, scalability and sustainability. The applicant provides a strong plan for progress monitoring implementation and making quick course adjustments as needed. Having strong implementation measures is necessary to effectively evaluate project implementation (page e33). The applicant has committees at all levels of the project that will meet regularly to review implementation and use evaluation data to make course corrections (page e32).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found in this section

**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 and their partners have knowledge, expertise and experience developing, implementing and evaluating SEL programs in schools. The Project Investigator is a co-creator in the Path's programs. The project has several CASEL staff that has participated in the development and implementation of the CASEL school kit in other schools. The project staff includes personnel that have worked in Chicago Public Schools and know how to work within the large school system. The evaluator has content expertise and experience implementing the PATHS program in another large urban and can use this experience to determine appropriate implementation measures (page e209).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found in this section

**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 scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   09/24/2013 01:44 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2013 12:36 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

**Reader #4:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	0
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	0
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	0
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Personnel	10	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	15	13
<b>Total</b>	100	13

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - i3 Development - 5: 84.411C

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

**General:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

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:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

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:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**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:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**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:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A - scored by another reviewer.

**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 scope and sequence of the research questions is clear and directly relevant to the proposed project objectives of increasing both the fidelity of PATHS and resulting positive impacts on student socio-emotional skills (p. 21). The use of a cluster randomized trial is an appropriate strategy for determining outcomes in treatment and non-treatment schools, as is the strategy to use a pairwise matching procedure to promote similarity between school-level characteristics in treatment and non-treatment schools (p. 21). The use of the measures described (p. 23) in conjunction with information provided through teacher logs (p. 24) will support the evaluation of project goals and objectives. The description of the set of assumptions used to generate the power analysis is a strength, given its use as a guide for data collection. The fact that the evaluation plan also includes information related to measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation is an additional strength (p. 25).

### Weaknesses:

While the proposed research questions effectively target outcomes, they do not address the process by which the outcomes will be reached. Particularly given elements of the program model that involve the SEL coaches and the SEL Leadership team in activities that set the conditions for implementation (p. 13-14), qualitative information regarding the functioning of these teams and the progression of each team's work toward a vision that supports readiness to implement the proposed model would support the ability of the project to be helpful to others who may seek to implement it. Although SEL coaches will provide the management team with information on teacher attendance and the amount and kind of support that is given (p. 18), the evaluation of the project goals could be further augmented by the inclusion of periodic observations by evaluators to compare against data provided by SEL coaches and teachers.

**Reader's Score:** 13

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/24/2013 12:36 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/23/2013 04:04 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

**Reader #5:** \*\*\*\*\*

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

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - i3 Development - 5: 84.411C

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: The Pennsylvania State University (U411C130091)

## 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:

N/A scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A scored by another reviewer.

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:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**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:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**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:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A scored by another reviewer.

**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 proposal articulates three primary research questions (p. 21), comprehensive description of measures (p. 23 and Appendix J), and an overview of how each research question will be addressed. Description of the analytic model provided in Appendix J is credible and directly aligned with the research questions and provides a sophisticated model appropriate for the evaluation.

The evaluation plan provides a clear description of the power analysis, assumptions, and minimum detectable effect sizes (p. 25).

The evaluation includes a clear approach for assessing fidelity of implementation and key components to be assessed. Further, an implementation threshold is provided on page 25, indicating successful implementation at 65% or greater on key components.

### Weaknesses:

The student-level assessment of social and emotional skills appears to be over-aligned with the intervention (p. e236). The evaluator (AIR) and the intervention developer (CASEL) developed The Teacher Rating of Child SEL. This is a concern because the primary outcome measure may be directly linked to the intervention (i.e., the items on the measure were directly taught to intervention students), which biases the results towards the students in the intervention group. What Works Clearinghouse does not include results for assessments that are directly aligned with the intervention, therefore, to avoid this concern, the proposal should include a standardized measure of social emotional skills in addition to the Teacher Rating of Child SEL, such as the Behavior Assessment System for Children or the Social Skills Rating System.

**Reader's Score:** 14

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/23/2013 04:04 PM