

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/20/2014 09:53 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

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              | 26            |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Project Design                        | 30              | 23            |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>    |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan/Personnel             | 20              | 19            |
| <b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Project Evaluation                    | 15              | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 100             | 68            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 6: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

## 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 addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

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

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

**Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the applicant's proposed project addresses the absolute priority and the subpart that it seeks to meet. Additionally, the Secretary asks that applicants explain how the proposed project is unique. Applicants should explain how their proposed projects fit into existing theory, knowledge, or practice, and how their proposed projects will serve as exemplars for new practices in the field.**

#### Strengths:

The project is a complex and nuanced approach addressing priority three: improving outcomes for students with disabilities. It starts from the premise of low achievement, which is a reality for high needs students across the nation. However, the project intends to further understand and thereby address dis-aggregated response data by achievement level. If done, the project stands to make a compelling contribution to how interventions may be intensified according to students' individual needs. The project involved a multi-tiered system for gauging student development, requisite intervention, and a system for not only understanding their findings to tailor the system for each individual student. The project has a foundation of promising research, and while complex, the proposal clearly lays out the principles and sets out how the project would employ them. The project is aimed at improving math performance for students with disabilities.

#### Weaknesses:

The evaluation of the program is based on common core standards but common core standards lacks explicit accommodations or standards for students with disabilities. The work may not advance the field.

Reader's Score: 26

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) 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).

(2) 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.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address what activities the applicant will undertake in its proposed project, and how the applicant will ensure its project implementation is successful in achieving the project goals.

#### Strengths:

The program design is both thorough and excellent. It details the implementation of the project with great specificity. The project conducted a sample project involving 80 students, which is a reasonable size and produced compelling results that appear to be ripe for expansion. The project lays out goals that address professional development for educators using the program they will design, supporting the program, collaborating with family, revising the program as needed, and evaluating it.

#### Weaknesses:

There are five project goals, but not one can be measured. The project does not have a detailed outline of activities or measures for each goal. There is no complete plan for measuring the success of the project.

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.

(4) The extent to which the project director has experience managing projects of similar size and scope as the proposed project.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project and use that feedback to make improvements to the project, and the role of key partners and their impact on the long-term success of the project, and how the project director 's prior experiences have prepared them for implementing the proposed project of this size and scope successfully.

**Strengths:**

The management team is highly capable and has the benefit of having a large consulting firm experienced in applied behavioral and social science research. There is a clear structure for management, with outlined pathways that reveal some of the inner workings.

**Weaknesses:**

The timeline should have more benchmarks. The project does not address future resources for the project. The number of "consultant days" does not seem to be enough for a project of this size.

**Reader's Score:** 19

**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.

(4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, applicants should describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The Secretary encourages applicants to include questions about the effectiveness of the proposed project with the specific student populations being served with grant funds. Further, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify what implementation and performance data the evaluation will generate and how the evaluation will provide data during the grant period to help indicate whether the project is on track to meet its goals. Finally, applicants should also address whether sufficient resources, which may include the qualifications of the independent evaluator, are included in the project budget to carry out the evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/20/2014 09:53 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2014 12:11 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

**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                        | 30              | 22            |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>    |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan/Personnel             | 20              | 18            |
| <b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Project Evaluation                    | 15              | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 100             | 70            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 6: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

## 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 addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

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

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

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the applicant's proposed project addresses the absolute priority and the subpart that it seeks to meet. Additionally, the Secretary asks that applicants explain how the proposed project is unique. Applicants should explain how their proposed projects fit into existing theory, knowledge, or practice, and how their proposed projects will serve as exemplars for new practices in the field.

#### Strengths:

It is clear regarding the extent the applicant's proposed project will address Absolute Priority 3 – Improving Academic Outcomes for Students with Disabilities (pg. e16). The proposed project would implement a novel approach by coordinating and integrating system supports. Multi-tiered supports (pg. e18), systematic student-level assessment individualized data base (pg. e18), mathematics achievement in relation to Common Core State Standards and MTSS (pg. 21), focus on family collaboration (pg. e21), and implementation with high fidelity will contribute to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study. Experienced in implementing RTI structures for at least 10 years (pg. e23)

#### Weaknesses:

Training for teachers and the level of implementation with fidelity will be a crucial factor to the project's success (pg. e22). Need a backup assessment instead of reliance on assessments over common core standards in which evaluations do not have accommodations for students with disabilities yet.

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 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).

(2) 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.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address what activities the applicant will undertake in its proposed project, and how the applicant will ensure its project implementation is successful in achieving the project goals.

#### Strengths:

Applicant has activities listed under the 4 main activities for the project that provide further depth of knowledge as to how the applicant will meet project goals (pg. e26-e30). Applicant addresses supporting families (pg. e30) with communication and collaboration which is a critical component of the project's success of improving achievement for students with disabilities. Applicant has well developed a logic model showing the inputs, the flow of information, and the desired outputs for the proposed project (pg. e28).

#### Weaknesses:

Project goals are not measurable to determine success of the proposed project (pg. 25). Applicant needs a more complete and detailed plan for achieving their goals as the four activities listed are re-statement of the 5 goals (pg. e26). Identification of potential risks and strategies to mitigate those risks is not addressed. Applicant's non-negotiables (pg. e27) need more detail as to who is responsible to make them happen and who will follow through with all of these items.

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.

(4) The extent to which the project director has experience managing projects of similar size and scope as the proposed project.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project and use that feedback to make improvements to the project, and the role of key partners and their impact on the long-term success of the project, and how the project director 's prior experiences have prepared them for implementing the proposed project of this size and scope successfully.

**Strengths:**

Applicant has a detailed management chart (pg. e31). Applicant has descriptions for each person on the proposed project (pg. e31-e36). Applicant has experienced personnel (pg. e16-e36) who have managed projects of similar size and scope as the proposed project. Applicant included a comparison between years of the project to show project success (pg. e38). Feedback between partners is worked into the proposed project (pg. pg. e36).

**Weaknesses:**

Timeline (pg. e39) needs to be fully developed with details and not lumping years together. Need meetings on a regular basis to ensure program success (pg. e36).

**Reader's Score:** 18

**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.

(4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, applicants should describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The Secretary encourages applicants to include questions about the effectiveness of the proposed project with the specific student populations being served with grant funds. Further, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify what implementation and performance data the evaluation will generate and how the evaluation will provide data during the grant period to help indicate whether the project is on track to meet its goals. Finally, applicants should also address whether sufficient resources, which may include the qualifications of the independent evaluator, are included in the project budget to carry out the evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

N/A - Reviewed by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

N/A - Reviewed by another reviewer.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/19/2014 12:11 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/18/2014 10:11 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

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

|  | 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              | 32            |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Project Design                        | 30              | 25            |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>    |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan/Personnel             | 20              | 18            |
| <b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Project Evaluation                    | 15              | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 100             | 75            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 6: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

1

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 addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

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

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

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the applicant's proposed project addresses the absolute priority and the subpart that it seeks to meet. Additionally, the Secretary asks that applicants explain how the proposed project is unique. Applicants should explain how their proposed projects fit into existing theory, knowledge, or practice, and how their proposed projects will serve as exemplars for new practices in the field.

#### Strengths:

This proposal is significant in that it addresses the identified absolute priority through the use of data-based individualization (DBI) for both students with disabilities and "students with severe and persistent math learning needs" (pg. 1). The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is an established strategy that has been applied to reading, but this project's focus on mathematics is significant to the research on its effect in math interventions. Furthermore, the evaluation of the impact on math achievement in the context of the Common Core State Standards and MTSS is unique, and has the potential for application across many U.S. states.

#### Weaknesses:

This proposal would benefit from greater development of the strategies for implementation to include family collaboration in supporting the development of an intensive intervention model. As noted within the proposal, "schools may require more focused implementation support for sustained DBI implementation" (pg. 8). Similarly, detailed evidence of a focused implementation support for families would add value to this proposal.

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 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).

(2) 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.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address what activities the applicant will undertake in its proposed project, and how the applicant will ensure its project implementation is successful in achieving the project goals.

#### Strengths:

This proposal's project design demonstrates a clear set of 'non-negotiable' items as part of the readiness phase (pg. 12). It also develops a clear set of on-site and distance-based implementation supports for schools. The development and use of materials based on the U.S. DOE's Office of Special Education Services (OSEP) National Center on Parent Information and Resources for Supporting Families supports the quality of the stated project design and implementation.

#### Weaknesses:

This proposal would benefit from providing information on who the members of the school-based teams will be, according to school titles. Addressing how the 28+ language spoken by the families in the identified school district will figure into planning and executing parent and community supports is called for here (pg. 18). Finally, providing examples from OSEP's resource center to illustrate what will be implemented by this project to support families will improve this element of the project design.

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.

(4) The extent to which the project director has experience managing projects of similar size and scope as the proposed project.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project and use that feedback to make improvements to the project, and the role of key partners and their impact on the long-term success of the project, and

how the project director 's prior experiences have prepared them for implementing the proposed project of this size and scope successfully.

**Strengths:**

This proposal's management plan and personnel clearly identified the percentages of time per year for each of the individuals responsible for directing and implementing the project. The specific inclusion of staff to target quality reviews and to coordinate sub-grants suggests strong evidence of a cohesive management plan, with adequate support of providing timely feedback across personnel and partnerships.

**Weaknesses:**

This proposal's management plan and personnel lacks a timeline scheduling benchmarks within the delayed intervention design (pg. 24). The project timeline should include sub-bullets for individual benchmarks within each year for cohorts one and two. Using time-bound descriptors for planned meetings with team members, and avoiding words like 'regularly' will support the quality of a management plan (pg. 21).

**Reader's Score: 18**

**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.

(4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, applicants should describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The Secretary encourages applicants to include questions about the effectiveness of the proposed project with the specific student populations being served with grant funds. Further, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify what implementation and performance data the evaluation will generate and how the evaluation will provide data during the grant period to help indicate whether the project is on track to meet its goals. Finally, applicants should also address whether sufficient resources, which may include the qualifications of the independent evaluator, are included in the project budget to carry out the evaluation effectively.

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/18/2014 10:11 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/20/2014 04:10 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

**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                        | 30              | 0             |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>    |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan/Personnel             | 20              | 0             |
| <b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Project Evaluation                    | 15              | 11            |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 100             | 11            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 6: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

## 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 addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

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

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

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the applicant's proposed project addresses the absolute priority and the subpart that it seeks to meet. Additionally, the Secretary asks that applicants explain how the proposed project is unique. Applicants should explain how their proposed projects fit into existing theory, knowledge, or practice, and how their proposed projects will serve as exemplars for new practices in the field.

**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 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).

**(2) 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.**

**Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address what activities the applicant will undertake in its proposed project, and how the applicant will ensure its project implementation is successful in achieving the project goals.**

**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.**

**(4) The extent to which the project director has experience managing projects of similar size and scope as the proposed project.**

**Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project and use that feedback to make improvements to the project, and the role of key partners and their impact on the long-term success of the project, and how the project director 's prior experiences have prepared them for implementing the proposed project of this size and scope successfully.**

**Strengths:**

na

**Weaknesses:**

na

**Reader's Score: 0**

#### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**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.**
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**

**Note: In responding to this criterion, applicants should describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The Secretary encourages applicants to include questions about the effectiveness of the proposed project with the specific student populations being served with grant funds. Further, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify what implementation and performance data the evaluation will generate and how the evaluation will provide data during the grant period to help indicate whether the project is on track to meet its goals. Finally, applicants should also address whether sufficient resources, which may include the qualifications of the independent evaluator, are included in the project budget to carry out the evaluation effectively.**

**Strengths:**

The applicants propose a solid and transparent evaluation plan for the proposed project. The evaluation team appears to be highly qualified and experienced in program evaluation and assessment verified by the 100+ peer reviewed journal publications. The applicant includes a thorough project logic model (p. 13) showing project and inputs, activities, outputs, and evaluation outcomes. The applicant also include nice caveat such as a formative evaluation plan that is categorized into three components: 1) knowledge and skills, 2) processes, and 3) data-based instruction. There is a thick, rich, descriptive evaluation logic model on (p. 22). It includes a more detailed breakdown of evaluation goals, readiness inputs, implementation inputs, and outcomes (proximal, intermediate, and distal).

The evaluation activities align with project timelines and a delayed intervention timeline (p. 24). The applicant proposes a randomized control trial (RCT)-experimental evaluation research methodological approach (p. 22) which strengthens the quality of the evaluation proposal because it minimizes bias in the study. The applicant also discusses data collection tools such as survey instruments, interviews, and focus groups (p. 25).

The applicant will collect both quantitative and qualitative data (p. 23). There is appears to be some valuable discussion of formative and summative evaluation efforts (p. 24) which support promising evidence of implementation with fidelity. The applicants put forth a strong rational and review process for ensuring that the project is on track for meeting its goals. The three level review processes includes coordinators monitoring development, the director reviews of drafts, and an American Institute senior manager conducting a final review (p. 22). The evaluation team cites several solid research studies to provide additional support for their proposed approach and activities. The robust data analysis tools (Hierarchal Linear Modeling (HLM)) and sampling methods used to compute the minimal detectable effect size (.62) with the power of (.80) is supportive of a strong evaluation plan which is fully implementable with fidelity (p. 24). There is an implementation rubric in the Appendix, validity and reliability monitoring measures, details on the sampling methodology and statistical analysis design in alignment with What Work Clearinghouse evidence standards.

**Weaknesses:**

The four proposed evaluation questions (p. 22) do not align the project goals and objectives (pp. 10-11). The evaluation goals (p. 22) align with the project primary objective (p. 10) but not with the five project goals on (p. 25). The rigorous evaluation methods proposed appear to be appropriate to address the evaluation questions and project goals, however, it is unclear if all the evaluation questions will be addressed.

**Reader's Score:** 11

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/20/2014 04:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/18/2014 02:20 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

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

|  | 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                        | 30              | 0             |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>    |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan/Personnel             | 20              | 0             |
| <b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Project Evaluation                    | 15              | 11            |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 100             | 11            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 6: 84.411C

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

Applicant: American Institutes for Research (U411C140029)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement (Optional)

**General:**

NA. 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 addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

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

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

**Note:** In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the applicant's proposed project addresses the absolute priority and the subpart that it seeks to meet. Additionally, the Secretary asks that applicants explain how the proposed project is unique. Applicants should explain how their proposed projects fit into existing theory, knowledge, or practice, and how their proposed projects will serve as exemplars for new practices in the field.

**Strengths:**

NA. Scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

NA. 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 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).

**(2) 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.**

**Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address what activities the applicant will undertake in its proposed project, and how the applicant will ensure its project implementation is successful in achieving the project goals.**

**Strengths:**

NA. Scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

NA. 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.**

**(4) The extent to which the project director has experience managing projects of similar size and scope as the proposed project.**

**Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project and use that feedback to make improvements to the project, and the role of key partners and their impact on the long-term success of the project, and how the project director 's prior experiences have prepared them for implementing the proposed project of this size and scope successfully.**

**Strengths:**

NA. Scored by another reviewer.

**Weaknesses:**

NA. Scored by another reviewer.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**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.**

**(4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**

**Note: In responding to this criterion, applicants should describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The Secretary encourages applicants to include questions about the effectiveness of the proposed project with the specific student populations being served with grant funds. Further, the Secretary encourages applicants to identify what implementation and performance data the evaluation will generate and how the evaluation will provide data during the grant period to help indicate whether the project is on track to meet its goals. Finally, applicants should also address whether sufficient resources, which may include the qualifications of the independent evaluator, are included in the project budget to carry out the evaluation effectively.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal specifies five goals (pp. 10-11), a logic model with outcomes (p. 13), and four evaluation questions (p. 22). These are important to the implementation of a quality evaluation design as they can assist the applicant to structure an evaluation that is targeted at the project's critical outcomes and processes.

The proposed evaluation will use a randomized controlled delayed-intervention design (p. 23). In the application of this design the eight elementary schools participating in the study will be randomly assigned to one of two cohorts. One cohort of schools will implement project activities beginning in 2015-16 and the second cohort will begin implementation in 2016-17. This delayed implementation will allow the second cohort to serve as a comparison group for Cohort 1. The use of this design will help to control for many threats to internal validity.

The proposed sample size will provide for a minimum detectable effect size of .62 (p. 24). Based upon effect sizes found in previous studies (p. 6) this is a reasonable minimum detectable effect size.

The proposed impact evaluation will conduct multiple tests of statistical significance. The evaluation analysis will apply an appropriate adjustment to control for increasing Type I error (p. 23). This is important to assisting to draw a valid conclusion based upon the outcomes of the statistical testing.

The proposed evaluation will assess the fidelity of implementation of the intervention. Existing rubrics that provide descriptions of full, partial, and low implementation will be used for this purpose. Assessing implementation is an important factor in a solid evaluation study. Without such information if the outcomes do not show a positive treatment effect, it is not possible to determine whether or not that lack of expected results is because of an ineffective innovation or due to the innovation not being implemented as it was designed.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal does not detail how evaluation question 3 (p. 22) will be addressed.

The proposal includes no detailed plan to provide periodic data to help indicate whether the project is on track to meet its goals.

Thirty-one consultant days are to be allocated to evaluation activities. This does not appear to be appropriate to a project of this scope and size.

**Reader's Score:** 11

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/18/2014 02:20 PM