

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2014 10:11 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	32
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	16
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 5: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

This is a well-developed proposal that shows promise to help the students meet the goal of college success, including having a great deal of support from administration and major funders. One major issue is whether this program is novel enough since the organization has already been doing the working with intensive coaching and support since 2000. Aside for the uniqueness question, a few minor improvements would have moved this reviewer's marks to fully developed in other categories.

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:

The absolute priority was addressed:

- Table A2 shows the projects targeted 19 low-performing high schools free and reduced lunch 64%-95% and achievement scores significantly lower than state averages (e22).
- Model builds non-cognitive skills through mentors and cohorts of students with other college-focused students (e23).

The application states that this is a novel approach with the following:

- White House report 2014 – states that College Possible is an evidence-based innovative solution (e20).
- The concept of near-peers seems relatively novel where AmeriCorps volunteers full-time coaches: ACT tutoring, workshops and community-building (e24), intrusive advising (e25).

Advancement in practices are supported by:

- There is potential to advance practices because this project will work with 19 low-performing schools throughout the country (Philadelphia, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Milwaukee, Omaha, and Portland (e15) so a variety of experiences can lead to an understanding whether the program will work in different schools.
- The application states that there has not been research linking college success (mentoring) with non-cognitive skills and academic success (e26) and so this project can add data to determine if peer support can improve non-cognitive skills.
- Because the applicant has been a leader in national organizations and presented at the following conferences, the implication is that the lessons learned will be continued to be shared to a wider audience: National College Access Network, National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and National Partnership for Educational Access (e27).

Weaknesses:

The idea that this is a novel approach could have been more convincing

- Page e24 says, "Our program is novel in that other support programs not hosted directly by schools, do not have full-time staff present or dedicated to each school." This statement is difficult to believe or unclear because the reviewer has seen other full-time staff present and dedicated to schools.
- Another statement that lacks credibility or clarity is that the focus on college as a novel approach.
- Finally, since College Possible has been doing this program for over a decade, the reviewer questions how this program can be innovative.

Potential advancement of theory or practices could have been addressed in more detail.

- Contributions to advancing practices is implied because of memberships and work in 19 schools throughout country but the applicant did not say specific items such as templates, courses, guides, Websites, articles on how College Progress will contribute information.

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:

The project goals were clear and had coherence and the plan of action included a logic model and good detail.

- Goals for high need, low-income students to increase non-cognitive abilities, close education gap, and evaluate implementation and effectiveness (e28).
- The Developmental Assets Profile will measure non-cognitive skills change (commitment to learning, and positive identity) – e28-e29.
- The logic model overview on page e29 (small college-bound groups with trained coach improve non-cognitive and academic skills) will improve graduation and college success.
- There are good high level of strategies to reach project goals: mentor, build peer group, and practice non-

cognitive skills (goal setting, academic discipline, and confidence) through ACT test prep (e30-31).

- There is a good list of activities (table B4 on e31) of what students are doing.
- The applicant maps DAP to non-cognitive skills (e39).
- The logic model shows details of inputs, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and external factors (e164).

The applicant does a good job of identifying some potential risks and helpful strategies to address the risks:

- Support of school and district leadership: Meet with principals twice per year and district annually, quarterly updates, services are at no cost to school, written agreements from each district (e33).
- Access to data provided through agreements including previous grants and coaches at each school to assist with data gathering (e33).
- New site implementation (e34) could be a risk but lessons learned have minimized this risk because there already have been four other replication sites.

Weaknesses:

There is some concern with the goals and whether the project is developed enough to answer the questions about non-cognitive skill building.

- Goals do not appear challenging enough to graduate, enroll in college, and complete college at higher rate than peers (e29).
- It was unclear whether the academic ACT test prep vs. the non-cognitive skill building will influence the results.
- This application is not integrated with the other parts of the school.

Reader's Score: 28

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 application did a good job of addressing key responsibilities and milestones:

- Coaches meet with 12-15 students twice a week after school for two hours each week for two years.
- Table C1 shows timelines and milestones for 5 years for project administration and each goal (e35).

- Previous report shows strong success and capacity to create data and do the work (e77-e164)

There is a lot of external support:

- Key partners did include multiple schools – with letters of support (e193), site agreements (e46-e60), and district agreements (e61- and commitment of office space (e36).
- Have procured 100% private sector match (e36) through AT&T (\$900,000), Burke Foundation (\$700,000), Claneil Foundation (\$60,000), Peter Kiewit Foundation (\$600,000), and M.J Murdock Charitable Trust (\$200,000) (e200-e216).

The continual feedback is addressed well in the application:

- Biweekly scorecard (e25 and Appendix J), coaching teams review real-time, senior staff members review once a month.
- Naviance database for each student (e37).
- College Possible leads weekly meetings for coaches and program coordinators supervise 6-8 coaches.

Weaknesses:

Milestones and metrics could be better:

- Did not see professional development as part of the plan, milestones, or a way to access coaches.
- Annual performance targets not clear.
- Metrics to assess program on ongoing basis are not detailed enough.
- The budget was not detailed enough.

Support from stakeholders could be broader:

- In addition to the support from the sites through the agreements, this reviewer would have liked to see a discussion or support from previous graduates, current students, and teachers.

Key personnel could have included more details:

- There was not an agreement from AmeriCorps.
- Not enough detail in the budget especially how to fund AmeriCorps.
- No resume for director.

Reader's Score: 16

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:

This section was reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

This section was reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	30
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	16
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	74

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 5: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

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:

Applicant seeks to serve 6,650 high-need, low-income students from 19 low-performing high schools in five states through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support that places full-time AmeriCorps service members in schools to provide near-peer mentoring. Detailed information on the characteristics of the participating schools is provided. (pages e19-23) The project's goals include increasing non-cognitive skills as measured through developmental assets such as achievement motivation and school engagement, thereby aligning closely with absolute priority 2b. (page e27) Applicant's prior work has been confirmed by five independent evaluations, including a 2013 randomized controlled trial led by a Harvard professor that found a significant positive effect on four-year college enrollment for low-income students. (pages e19-20) Applicant is poised to build upon those studies and the identified research base to identify which practices work to increase achievement for high-need students in low-performance schools and to support knowledge sharing with national organizations like the National College Access Network. (pages e26-27) Applicant's readiness to further evaluate its model and strategies to determine whether and how they help students build non-cognitive skills and ultimately increase academic achievement supports provides strong evidence of likelihood to advance the body of evidence and quality of practice in the field. (pages e26-27)

Weaknesses:

Given the focus not just on developing non-cognitive abilities but also increasing the academic achievement of the students the project will serve, a weakness of the application is its lack of detailed connection to college and career ready standards and the academic curriculum in the 19 schools it seeks to serve. For example, it is not clear what the connection is between the service hours Americorps members are spending with students and the academic curriculum they are studying during school hours. The connection of the research evidence cited to the during-school day practice of teaching is hinted at, but not thoroughly explored. (pages e26-27) Also, applicant has a decade-plus history of partnering successfully with low-performing schools to address barriers faced by high-need students, and, while its partnership with AmeriCorps to deliver 320 hours of direct service to high-needs juniors and seniors is relatively unique, it is not necessarily novel in the sense of introducing something new to what has been done before. (pages e23-24)

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 presents a fully developed project design. Applicant identifies three main project goals, each with specific objectives and measures. (pages e27-29) Building on the premise that barriers faced by low-income students are mostly identifiable and predictable, applicant provides a logic model that includes both inputs, outputs (specific activities and quantifiable participation goals), and short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. (page e164) The project activities are clear, coherent, and linked to goals to increase non-cognitive skills and/or improve achievement. (page e31) A detailed explanation of three risks (ongoing support of school leadership, access to required evaluation data, and new site implementation) is provided, along with specific strategies for mitigating those risks. (pages e32-34)

Weaknesses:

The logic model would be strengthened by more concretely connecting specific inputs with the long list of outputs (activities and participation goals), as well as providing quantifiable measures connected to the outcomes. (pages e164) Applicant does not focus on the work of the teachers in the schools it serves, and the lack of connection between academic teaching and AmeriCorps members' service hours indicates a potential area of weakness in the program design.

Reader's Score: 28

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 plan is generally well developed but with some gaps. The project implementation timeline and milestones are well constructed, showing the responsible actor(s) for each action step and the appropriate, sequenced timeline for achieving that milestone. (page e35) Site-level agreements are provided for each of the districts the project will serve, in addition to letters of support from their districts, as well as philanthropic and business entities in the communities. (pages e36, e46-69, e193-216). The entire match has been secured already. (page e36) The project director is well qualified to run this project and has managed federal grants before with annual budgets. (page e37-238)

Weaknesses:

The evidence of broad support from stakeholders would have been strengthened with letters from parents indicating their support for the intensive after school services this program provides. The management plan make virtually no reference to the site level principals and the teachers at the school; the entire program seems to operate without clear connection into and interaction between the day-time academic program, which undercuts the ability of the interventions to be both timely and reinforced within normal school hours. The budget provides for heavy personnel expenses--parts of five directors or managers at the National Office plus part to all of 26 employees at the site levels. (pages e224) Yet nowhere is there budgeted any funds for the AmeriCorps members themselves who are delivering the interventions, or the professional development/training they will need to be successful during the 320 hours of service they are providing to high-need students through this program. This seems a significant weakness that is not explained in the proposal or budget narrative. (e224-227)

Reader's Score: 16

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:

This criterion was reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/28/2014 04:14 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/18/2014 09:07 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	28
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	70

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 5: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

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 applicant's aim to addresses Priority 2b Improving Low-Performing schools (non-cognitive) through a program known as College Possible. The program demonstrates high potential to make high school and college graduation possible for low-income students through intensive coaching by near-peer mentors, peer group support, and opportunities for academic and non-cognitive skill building. These efforts are designed to help close the achievement gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers in selected low-performing schools. The extent of support elements is consistent with the absolute priority criteria the applicant is intends to address. P. 3. (e19)

The proposed project represents a novel approach as compared with what has been previously attempted nationally by other funded projects to the following extent

- Program supports such as mentoring is restructured from a traditional approach to a more innovative, personalized approach to academic mentoring that will engage and empower high-needs students.
- Uniquely designed student mentoring/advising that is distinguished from other support programs by hosting support services directly by schools, have full-time staff present, and offers a dedicated staff for each school through AmeriCorps.
- Cohort model is different from many federal, private or school-based programs that operate via drop-in models commonly used by career centers and counseling programs where students can stop in and seek help usually when they

are having a problem.

- Over 6000 high need students in low-performing schools will receive over 320 hours in academic mentoring and advising support during a two-year period that focuses on college success.
- Partnering with AmeriCorps supports a cost-effective approach that affords the schools, and learners/students with the capacity to identify and access multiple ways of learning, such as self-driven, peer-driven, instructor-driven, and collaborative ways to achieve success (pp. 7-8) p. e23-e24

The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study was somewhat evident by the applicant's discussion of the importance of increasing number of college graduates and research on coaching and mentoring as strategies to build non-cognitive skills as a pathway to academic success as reported by researchers Bruce and Bridgeland (2014). P. 10. (p. e25)

Weaknesses:

While the applicants provides an adequately developed proposal for how the project will address AP 2 subpart b, there were two distinct areas that raises concern:

- Existing Theory, Knowledge and Practice to advance the proposed approach to develop and advance the field. The applicant did not adequately identify a theoretical framework in support of this project's premise. While there may be limited research available, the rationale for not being more detailed in their discussion was not adequate. P. 10 (e25)
- The applicant's College Possible, academic coaching (mentoring) approach description did not adequately define specific noncognitive learning and development skills or linkage to college and career-ready standards. Such a connection might enhance understanding about how the coaching (mentoring) and support services will be structured to advance high need student achievement motivation and engagement to increase their potential for success in transitioning from high school to college. Pp e19-20

It is important that the applicant clarifies the linkage between their primary goals and advancing knowledge and practice using their non-cognitive skills program to strengthen the significance of this project.

Reader's Score: 28

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:

Strengths:

- The applicant clearly identifies two primary project goals, including objectives and an explicit plan or actions and activities to achieve its goals. Pp. 11-16. A logic model of the proposed project was described as Theory of Change (Logic Model): College Possible's Theory of Change rests on the premise that barriers faced by low-income students are

mostly identifiable and predictable. Pp. 15-18 (e27-29)

- Applicant acknowledges that a project of this size and scope (19 partner schools across 8 school districts in 5 states) holds a number of risks. The following are identified risks to the project plan along with plans to mitigate those risks: Ongoing support of school leadership and access to evaluation data. A complete, well-developed description of these potential risks to project success and strategies to mitigate those risks were evident or demonstrated by a detailed discussion of solutions on Pp. 16-18. (e27, e29)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

- Logic model was not complete and clear. While the applicant did describe the Theory of Change (Logic Model) as the College Possible's Theory base, there was not an adequate attempt to describe the pathway of linkage between this framework, goals, objectives or activities of this proposed project which change rests on as the premise that barriers faced by low-income students.
- No targets for each year or metrics to monitor progress toward goals and objectives and there was a discrepancy between test scores and what were actually project outcomes.
- No connection to the curriculum and pedagogical practices.

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:

Strengths:

- The College Possible's 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. Pp. 16-19 (p. e34)

- The project's letters of support from key partners are strong and demonstrate commitment of broad support from stakeholders whose participation is critical to the project's long-term success. Signed binding Site Agreements from 19 high schools/districts further evidences the extent of support. All schools provide detailed activities that each partner will perform (Appendix A: Memoranda of Understanding). Letters of support (Appendix G) further demonstrate the commitment and enthusiasm of school partners. All high schools have committed to providing office space within their buildings for coaches, facilitating access to students and sharing data as allowed by law.
- College Possible describes a strong site-based management structure providing capacity for effective program oversight. Review of the feedback systems provides evidence that the procedures are adequate for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.
- Director has experience managing College Possible Programs since 2004 and AmeriCorps programs for over 10 years as well. She has overseen replication of four other sites and managed large-scale federal grant projects. p. e37
- In addition, the applicant also addressed how the project team will evaluate the success or challenges of the project through it comprehensive management plan and evaluation strategies and how they will use that feedback to make improvements to the project. The role of key partners and their impact on the long-term success of the project is fully described on p. 18 (p. e36), which is supported by letters that were reviewed in the appendix.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

- Budget does not clearly define costs of the management especially AmeriCorps and the coaches.
- While the director does appear to have qualifications that are aligned with the project needs, the director's resume is missing from the Appendix and the narrative. Therefore it was not possible to fully assess the extent of experience and qualifications that were briefly mentioned in the narrative on p. e 37.

Reader's Score: 17

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:

This section was reviewed and scored by a different reviewer.

Weaknesses:

This section was reviewed and scored by a different reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/18/2014 09:07 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/18/2014 04:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	0
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	13
Total	100	13

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 5: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

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:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

Weaknesses:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

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:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

Weaknesses:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

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:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

Weaknesses:

Another reviewer reviewed and scored this section.

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:

(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.

The applicant describes five research questions, including two relevant implementation research questions and three summative questions that are part of a quasi-experimental design using propensity score matching. Appropriate methods are described in regard to how the applicant plans to address the implementation, confirmatory, and summative questions. These include conducting a mixed method study using descriptive statistical analyses for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data (page e38). Details are provided regarding the use of propensity match scoring and hierarchical linear modeling to conduct a confirmatory analysis, in order to determine the two-year impact of the program on non-cognitive skills as measured by the Developmental Assets Profile (page e39).

(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.

The applicant describes an analysis plan that include measures of central tendency, frequency, and dispersion (page e40) to conduct an implementation study that will contrast sites and implementation over time. A plan to analyze qualitative data is provided and includes coding transcripts, thematic content analysis and thematic summaries. Details are provided regarding a quasi-experimental design for studying the impact of the program on the non-cognitive skills of participants. These details include; a plan to determine a comparison group by applying propensity score matching and using covariates such as prior achievement in math and reading, and a plan to implement a two-level hierarchical linear model to analyze pre and post-tests scores from a matched sample (page e41). A proposed sample size of 2,660 is mentioned, along with a minimal detectable effect of .12 calculated from a power analysis.

The applicant describes a plan to use propensity match scoring and logistic regression to address two summative outcome questions related to secondary school completion rates and post-secondary enrollment rates for students who participate in program activities compared to a control group.

(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.

The applicant provides a table on page e42 that clearly describes thresholds for acceptable implementation for key

components 1 and 2 of the project. Examples include; the percent of students who will attend college focused peer group sessions; the percent of coaches who will attend weekly meetings; and the percent of disadvantaged students served by the program.

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

The applicant describes sufficient resources to carry out the proposed activities. For example, the applicant has budgeted \$61,632 for year 1 of the project, over \$100,000 for years two and three, and over \$70,000 for years four and five. The qualifications of the third party external evaluation firm are suitable for project activities.

Weaknesses:

(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.

It is unclear if the methods used to address the research question regarding college enrollment will be sensitive enough to be accurate. For example, it is unclear how or if the applicant will consider college enrollment rates for students that may enroll in college more than nine months to a year after high school graduation.

(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.

It is unclear how the applicant plans to adjust for attrition and missing data. It is also unclear how the applicant will track students that do not appear in the National Clearinghouse data.

(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.

No weaknesses noted.

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

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 13

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/18/2014 04:21 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2014 08:31 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	0
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	11
Total	100	11

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 5: 84.411C

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: College Possible (U411C140049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

This section was reviewed and 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:

This section was reviewed and scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

This section was reviewed and 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:

This section was reviewed and scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

This section was reviewed and 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:

This section was reviewed and scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

This section was reviewed and 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:

2. The analysis plan using HLM analysis for summative outcomes should answer the research questions regarding changes in student non-cognitive skills, secondary and post-secondary enrollment. The sampling procedure, MDE, and statistical analysis should produce defensible analysis of the outcomes.

Weaknesses:

1. While the proposal includes "evaluators" in the narrative as data collectors, survey administrators (p. e39, e42) and other roles it is not clear who these individuals are or if they are part of the ICF external evaluation team. The only evaluator credentials included are for ICF [REDACTED]. In previous evaluation work for CP ICF provided only data analysis services not comprehensive external evaluation. The lack of detail regarding the involvement of the external evaluator in this proposal may indicate the same arrangement in this study. This lack of oversight of data construction and collection activities means that ICF cannot assure the data sampling. The proposal also does not include the involvement of ICF in communication with PC in regard to feedback regarding the fidelity of implementation of the project.

The same lack of definition applies to implementation fidelity data (p. e39) it is unclear which "evaluation" staff are being referred to in the proposal, their actual time on-site, and qualifications. All of the validation measures proposed are indirect as opposed to direct, confirmatory, observation of program implementation.

No information is provided about the reliability/validity of the CP Student or Coach Feedback Survey instrument is provided. Without these data or samples of the instrument to provide evidence of its face validity it is not possible to judge its utility or research validity.

3. In previous research regarding CP included in this proposal it was demonstrated that there was a correlation of a higher GPA with a higher ACT, gender, more PC coaching hours, high school completion, college enrollment, etc.. The causal relationship of GPA to CP is not discussed in the proposed analysis. Given the significance of this variable and the two-way arrow of causality possible it would seem important to include this outcome measure in the analysis.

4. It is not possible to judge the sufficiency of the funding provided for this evaluation due to the lack of detail regarding the services to be provided (e.g., travel, frequency of on-site observation, number of evaluation staff, etc.).

Reader's Score: 11

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2014 08:31 AM