

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2014 07:07 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Priority Questions		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
1. Cost-Effectiveness/Produc	1	1
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
1. Enable Broad Ad of Eff Pr	2	2
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 2: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Questions

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 national need and priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.
- (2) The likelihood that the project will have the estimated impact, including the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that unmet demand for the proposed project or the proposed services will enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale.
- (3) The feasibility of national expansion if favorable outcomes are achieved.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the unmet needs within the context of the absolute priority. Additionally, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the proposed project will address unmet demands and enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how the applicant will ensure future scaling should the proposed project have positive results.

Strengths:

1. The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) located in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit with 501C3 status and is applying as a novice i3 applicant in partnership with five states and John Hopkins University as their external evaluator. (Pages, 1-2,222) They have chosen high needs schools in diverse settings to spread the word that all settings can benefit from their model of developing effective principals.

The applicant has thoroughly addressed several priorities in their application: Absolute Priority 1a, developing and implementing models of support for novice principals and addressed the competitive priorities; improving cost-effectiveness and productivity and enabling broad adoption of effective practices. The applicant has identified these priorities both on their application forms and in their narrative.

The applicant has proposed an important and significant research project that will continue to validate their "significant results" and increase students' ELA and Math performance, as cited through several third party evaluations in several States already. (Appendix D, pages 17-154)

Through the well thought out activities and menu of previously developed curriculum and professional standards (Appendix C), this i3 validation research study has the high potential of validating effective activities, strategies, adult learning processes, and professional development that can scale up to Regional and National levels.

The applicant has been part of important research studies in the recent past and has gleaned years of lessons and experience. They were a part of the Executive Development Program for School Leaders (EDP), an offshoot of the National Center on Education and the Economy research which identified, that school leadership needs to be re imaged. (Page 2,4,7)

2. The applicant presents an excellent research review on the present state of the lack of principal effectiveness. They seek to train leaders with the ability to solve school wide problems, exhibit the flexibility to work with diverse situations and people, and lead systemic changes in schools. (Pages 5,6,7) They also show how inadequate the present leadership

training programs are and have established programs to meet the demands of principals with the expectations that they lead schools through systemic improvement initiatives involving the common core expectations, new assessments and high stakes principal and teacher evaluations. (Page 3)

The applicant's model presents as an alternative and improvement to traditional higher education coursework which is a very innovative option to principal preparedness. The applicant's approach draws from the professional training from the military, medicine, law and business. Their approach calls for sustained, cohort based, job embedded learning, including video interviews, case studies, best practice videos, game playing, simulations, and on line journaling, while establishing a community of practice, a sharp contrast to seat time in a University course.

The applicant's proposed project will address the unmet demands within the context of the Absolute Priority by developing and implementing an effective research model that will support novice principals both regionally and nationally. They have aptly cited research studies that describe the need for more effective school leadership and training in system changes in standards based educational settings. They describe the frustrations new principals have, as high percentages leave the profession, and teacher attrition rates increase due to poor leadership, resulting in poor student achievement. (Pages 3-6)

3. The applicant has a very strong likelihood of a positive impact and acceptance of its body of work at the national level for expansion because they have excellent results, experience, research studies, tools and the experienced staff necessary to scale this effort to the next level. This proposal is the culmination of an 11 million dollar R&D initiative which benchmarks the best educational leadership practices worldwide and also identified the best adult learning methods used in medicine and, law, the military and education. (Pages 9-10) The applicant's research studies are at the core of this proposal. (Pages 5, 6)

This proposal will add to the national database of principal effectiveness studies. They have learned from their experiences and will add aspects of this to their strategic professional development: coaching will extend the professional development and be more customized. (Pages 5, 6) This project can easily be replicated and scaled because it builds trained experts that can be utilized by the applicant. The train the trainer model builds in house experts and reduces on-going costs; the increased number of principals trained means that more people can be utilized by the applicant to scale up; the applicant's capacity is large enough to take on projects with a large number of trained personnel. (Pages 9-11)

The applicant has very adequately addressed the focus for a national scale up and explains how they will scale the project. They will create strong evidence based practices that will have a dramatic impact on student learning. The evaluation will contain three randomized trials, conducted in three states, focusing on middle schools to validate the results. The applicant will publish their findings in educational and professional journals.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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, 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.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to develop a clear set of goals as well as the applicant s plan for achieving those goals. In designing this plan, applicants should consider the risks that could prevent success and what strategies they will implement to counteract those risks to ensure the proposed project is implemented successfully and will achieve its goals. Further, applicants are encouraged to identify barriers to scaling the proposed project and address how they will overcome the identified barriers.

Strengths:

1.The applicant has presented a complete and coherent plan that contains four goals with well aligned activities. In summary, they are: the recruitment of a sufficient number of Districts to complete three randomized control trials and reach 375,000 students; provide high quality professional development to 150 novice principals; provide coaching of novice principals; scale up the project to the National level.(Pages 13-16) They plan to use randomized control trials, and then a broad adoption by building local capacity in three states, codifying critical elements of the program and disseminating project results. (Page 2) The Appendices contain extensive documentation of the applicators developed curriculum,materials and processes.

2.The applicant will use grant funds for an extensive evaluation of their project in order to meet the need to scale up their model. The applicant will address the need for validation through i3 funding. They will create strong evidence based practices that will have a dramatic impact on student learning. The applicant will publish their findings in educational and professional journals. The applicant cites that by the end of the project, the randomized control trails in these three States will provide an incentive for broader adoption of EDP nationwide. The research will provide the evidence that it works and how it works, They address the fact that when they bring this to scale, the cost will be reduced to \$5,000 per participant. They will aggressively disseminate project information. (Page 11, 12) They have presented a reasonable budget related to their needs, objectives and plans.

The applicant has identified also identified several barriers to school site implementation. They have projected that school supervisors may get in the way of their training model and time commitments, so they have built in communication channels to include them. (Page 14) They foresee participants missing professional development, so they have adjusted times for them to catch up on missing work and join another cohort round. They have monetary incentives for filling vacant slots in the cohorts involved with the study which builds buy in.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

(2) The clarity and coherence of the applicant s multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional (as defined in the Validation Notice Inviting Applications) during the project period.

(3) The extent to which the project director has experience managing large, complex projects.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate both the successes and challenges of the project and use the lessons from their ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project to improve the project. Applicants also are encouraged to explain the organization's plan to operate the project at a national level or regional level during and after the life of the grant. Applicants are also encouraged to think about how the project director's past experience demonstrates an ability to manage large, complex projects, such as an i3 Validation grant.

Strengths:

1. The applicant has aligned the key staff with their responsibilities on a timeline which contains the completed training dates, annual performance targets and progress metrics for the five-year project. The applicant stated that they will use leadership summits, the evaluation and the communities of practice to gather on going feedback about the project. (Page 17) The applicant states they have carefully chosen key individuals to execute this project plan, resumes are in pages 158-220. In addition, the district partners have agreed to make this project a priority for their districts, participate in the Project Coordinating Committee and assign a strong administrator to serve as district liaison to NISL. The applicant has included the MOA's from the school Superintendents to show they are committed to release their principals for 27 days of training over an 18 month period.
2. The applicant has included a Multi-year Financial and Operating Model and Regional Scale-up Plan. (Pages 20-23) A detailed work plan is included which includes the topics and themes of the model. (Appendix J 6)
3. The applicant has named an experienced Project Director who is the CEO of NISL and has extensive experience managing large complex projects. Prior to joining NISL, she served as Associate Commissioner of Education and Chief Academic Officer at the Kentucky Department of Education. Her roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined. The Project Manager is a master faculty member and she will manage the day to day operations of the project. (Pages 25-26, 158-220)

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.
 - (3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.
 - (4) 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.

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

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

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The applicant should address whether the methods for evaluation would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards and how the evaluation design will ensure the project will be evaluated at the proposed level of scale. The response to this criterion should include a description of the proposed sample size and the estimated project impacts as well as the key components of the proposed project for implementation. 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:

I have not been assigned this section to evaluate.

Weaknesses:

I have not been assigned this section to evaluate.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity - CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide--

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and
- (5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

Strengths:

The applicant has met all the criterion in this section within their application. The applicant has a coherent budget, cost analysis, a train the trainer model which will mean that more people can be utilized as trainers by the applicant to scale up at a lower cost; the applicant's experience and capacity is large enough to take on this complex project. (Pages 9-11)

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi - CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Strengths:

The applicant presented a well-defined and excellent proposal that contains leadership practices to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice. They have explained why there is a need for formalization and codification of the leadership model and have identified and developed materials, training and toolkits. They are committed to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice, and have included an excellent and very thorough evaluation plan.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning - IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning

1. The Secretary encourages applicants to propose projects that improve the coordination and alignment between early learning and development systems and elementary education systems in order to improve transitions for children from birth through third grade.

General:

n/a

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2014 07:07 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 05:35 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Priority Questions		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
1. Cost-Effectiveness/Produc	1	1
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
1. Enable Broad Ad of Eff Pr	2	2
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 2: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Questions

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 national need and priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.
- (2) The likelihood that the project will have the estimated impact, including the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that unmet demand for the proposed project or the proposed services will enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale.
- (3) The feasibility of national expansion if favorable outcomes are achieved.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the unmet needs within the context of the absolute priority. Additionally, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the proposed project will address unmet demands and enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how the applicant will ensure future scaling should the proposed project have positive results.

Strengths:

Implementation of the Common Core Standards has shown that most principals are unable to implement a major change, and in fact have never been taught how to do so. The applicant demonstrates in their proposal that hiring an effective principal is a powerful and cost-effective method to improve teacher effectiveness and raise student achievement. Data is shared to support barriers to ineffective leadership and that effective leadership can lower teacher transfers, teachers leaving the profession, and that most solutions do not provide the rigor or the current research to prepare leaders.

The applicant cites research making the case that principal leadership is the second most important factor on student achievement. They further cite relevant research on the poor preparation principals receive in grad school preparation programs and note that not one school has turned around achievement without a powerful leader. The data and intent of their project show a strategy that is likely to achieve the goals of the project and provide support to principals nationally. Their proposal will take on the issues of providing research based training for novice principals and coaching as they take on the work which aligns with the Absolute and Competitive priorities of this grant. (p. 6)

The project uses identified high standards for leadership and best practices and instructional leadership skills. They cite ISLLC Standards, Public Impact's competencies for turnaround leaders, and the Common Core Standards as their building blocks of the EDP, (p. 4) using accepted standards and tying their goals and activities to these accepted standards.

The applicant meets the criteria of Absolute Priority 1A through a model of training and support of novice principals and targeting student achievement as well as teacher and principal retention. They are using the Executive Development Program for School Leaders (EDP) which was developed over a four-year R & D initiative benchmarking the best adult learning methods and strategies across multiple career pathways. Using a tested and successful model will allow them to fine tune the model and add further data to their results.

The expansion of the EDP model to 150 school principals across three states will target more than 375,000 students beyond the initial treatment group. Their hope is to develop capacity in these states to support dissemination of the

findings and the model. The identification of the three states was strategic in that these states have low achieving students and a successful project will provide national visibility to the work.

The proposal details a model that shows a strong likelihood of success in making a significant impact on leadership development for the principalship. They shared the results found in their work with states in running statewide leadership development programs. They cited some powerful results and shifts in principal effectiveness and student achievement gains. They also share that work on these projects has created greater capacity and a more effective model based on the lessons learned.

The applicant cites a study by Cheney, Davis, et al (2010) comparing several exemplary leadership training programs and found the cost to be between \$100,000 to \$200,000 per graduate. They share that their EDP model showed student achievement results that were higher and the cost per graduate was \$10,000 to \$25,000 per graduate. This cost comparison is a strong indicator of cost-effectiveness.

The plans for national expansion are impressive and well-designed. The applicant is using a train-the-trainer model with rigorous standards and expectations for their Master faculty. This reviewer feels the attention to detail about how to consistently provide leadership development training across such a large scale shows great thought about how to leverage dollars and resources with fidelity.

The proposal strategically identifies middle school principals as the target. It allows them to track students for three years and there is little success in the research around turning around middle schools.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 20

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, 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.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to develop a clear set of goals as well as the applicant's plan for achieving those goals. In designing this plan, applicants should consider the risks that could prevent success and what strategies they will implement to counteract those risks to ensure the proposed project is implemented successfully and will achieve its goals. Further, applicants are encouraged to identify barriers to scaling the proposed project and address how they will overcome the identified barriers.

Strengths:

The applicant puts forth a clear and complete project design. It's clear they have thought through how this will roll out over the five years. The appendix J4 shows a list of activities, when they are to be done, and who is responsible for them. The activities align with the intent of the grant and increase the likelihood this project design is effective.

Goals are clearly stated with rationale for the number of schools to include, the number of participants, and a process for

a randomized control trial. Potential barriers are identified with plans to mitigate them. For example, they speak about the possibility that not enough schools will be inclined to participate. Their plan to cover all costs for districts and provide extra training slots outside of the study in an incentive that will attract districts.

The applicant shows a commitment to a valid evaluation in that they are following the recommendations made so they meet the rigorous evaluation What Works Clearing House standard. Using this standard and including the evaluators in the design is an effective way to increase likelihood for success for scale-up of the EDP.

A job embedded model of leadership coaching is an effective strategy likely to yield stronger results. Principals having a coach available to them at the beginning of their career is a powerful and more effective model.

The project design is thoughtful in addressing the potential barrier of higher level administrators interfering with the work they encourage novice principals to take on. They plan to mitigate this by holding orientations for all supervisors and communicating how to support principals in this project.

The selection of middle schools is a strategic move as it allows the project to look at three years of student achievement, is a difficult level to turn around, and they are crucial to college and career readiness. This strategy shows the thorough consideration by the applicants of how they can clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of their strategy in contexts that have been difficult to impact.

The applicant identifies multiple barriers and provided good plans to mitigate the barriers. They show thoughtfulness and a critical eye in anticipating issues that will arise and generating options they will use to address them. (p.17-18)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

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 clarity and coherence of the applicant s multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional (as defined in the Validation Notice Inviting Applications) during the project period.

(3) The extent to which the project director has experience managing large, complex projects.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate both the successes and challenges of the project and use the lessons from their ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project to improve the project. Applicants also are encouraged to explain the organization s plan to operate the project at a national level or regional level during and after the life of the grant. Applicants are also encouraged to think about how the project director s past experience demonstrates an ability to manage large, complex projects, such as an i3

Validation grant.

Strengths:

Staff and their roles and responsibilities are clearly identified with specific roles delineated. It's clear to see what the identified staff/entities will be doing within the grant structure and how they relate to each other. School districts are identified and letters of commitment are present with an intent to involve more districts and partners in the project.

A Key Project Milestones and Timeline chart gives an overview of the project and includes a table with Annual Performance Targets and Progress Metrics for the Five Year Project. It's clear the applicant has experience with this magnitude of a grant and they are able to draw on their previous work to provide specificity of targets and timelines. This reviewer found it easy to follow the management plan and see how it ties to goals and outcomes as well as budgetary costs. There is consistent alignment throughout the proposal that shows a clarity of focus and skill in presenting a coherent proposal.

The applicant demonstrates experience in managing a project as large and complex as this one. They share the work they've done in recruiting, training, and managing similar projects focused on principal leadership.

The financial model detailed shows consideration of cost per student issues. They clearly state that they will reach 375,000 students during the grant period at a cost of \$35 per student. As they scale up the model, they anticipate reducing the cost per participant by half which will encourage broad adoption throughout both partner states, and states that see the results. The attention to cost is an effective way to attract districts who are dealing with less than adequate budgets.

Key strategies for operating this project at regional and national levels are identified on p. 24. The applicant has a good understanding of organizational management and roles and responsibilities required to run a successful project. Their specificity will increase the likelihood of expansion and success.

The project team is identified and their resumes show broad experiences and expertise in work of this nature. Their past experiences show they will easily be able to manage this grant and help develop others to take up this work.

The applicant provides White Papers detailing the results of the previous projects and the results gained in student achievement. The thoroughness of these reports clearly shows an ability to conduct a project and do a rigorous review to measure results.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 25

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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in

diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) 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.

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

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

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The applicant should address whether the methods for evaluation would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards and how the evaluation design will ensure the project will be evaluated at the proposed level of scale. The response to this criterion should include a description of the proposed sample size and the estimated project impacts as well as the key components of the proposed project for implementation. 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:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity - CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide--

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing

multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and

(5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly provided a budget, explanation, and activities tied to both the goals and the absolute priority they selected. Their narrative clearly explains how costs will occur and most importantly, how costs will be reduced as they continue to expand the cohort and address more students in the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi - CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Strengths:

The elements of this proposal clearly address all of the criteria in this grant. Their management plan and project design are aligned to the Common Core standards and are based on a successful design. Their intent to add more sites in high poverty areas and focused at the middle level where there are few turnaround success projects will be an asset to replicability and scaling up.

The applicant shares information on the principal leadership project and in the appendix, goes into great detail about what the curriculum consists of and how the topics will be presented over the period of the grant. The topics identified are high leverage practices that with mentoring and coaching will contribute to highly effective principals.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 2

IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning - IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning

- 1. The Secretary encourages applicants to propose projects that improve the coordination and alignment between early learning and development systems and elementary education systems in order to improve transitions for children from birth through third grade.**

General:

Applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 05:35 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 12:58 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	17
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel	25	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Priority Questions		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
1. Cost-Effectiveness/Produc	1	1
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
1. Enable Broad Ad of Eff Pr	2	2
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	60

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 2: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Questions

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 national need and priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.
- (2) The likelihood that the project will have the estimated impact, including the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that unmet demand for the proposed project or the proposed services will enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale.
- (3) The feasibility of national expansion if favorable outcomes are achieved.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the unmet needs within the context of the absolute priority. Additionally, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the proposed project will address unmet demands and enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how the applicant will ensure future scaling should the proposed project have positive results.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a solid rationale for implementing a program that would impact school leadership for novice principals. The applicant demonstrated how this model will create a significant impact across the field and has the impact to support principals from across the nation. As stated in the application on page e18, the program could increase student achievement for more than 375,000 students in approximately 750 schools. This information substantiates the idea of broad adoption. The applicant listed a partnership with organizations that will contribute resources, best practices, and new strategies for school leaders. The applicant included letters of support and commitment on pages e303 – e308. On page e20, the applicant provides evidence that model has research-based practices and shows evidence of promise which supports the likelihood of the success of the program. On page e25, the applicant shows evidence that there is a shift in the priorities of school leaders which further supports the impact of the program.

Weaknesses:

On page e21, the applicant indicated that there was a high need for high quality leadership development courses but did not include any supporting data to show how the program would address a specific need for each identified school district. Although the program would likely have a positive impact on school leaders, it would be helpful to understand the specific needs of each district and what the program will do to address those needs.

Reader's Score: 17

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, 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.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to develop a clear set of goals as well as the applicant's plan for achieving those goals. In designing this plan, applicants should consider the risks that could prevent success and what strategies they will implement to counteract those risks to ensure the proposed project is implemented successfully and will achieve its goals. Further, applicants are encouraged to identify barriers to scaling the proposed project and address how they will overcome the identified barriers.

Strengths:

On page e29, the applicant provided a logical plan with goals that are clearly aligned with activities. As evidenced throughout the application and on pages e323 – e327, the goals and activities are standards and research-based. The goals are supported with required training that is ongoing throughout the duration of the program. On page e30, the applicant anticipated barriers to the success of the project and included incentives to encourage participants to continue working in the program. On page e33, the applicant provided evidence to show how their program would create high quality principals that would require less need to train ineffective principals. By training novice principals at the onset of their roles, the applicant makes a clear argument that this model would be more cost effective than attempting to correct issues that might arise later on. On pages e33-34, the applicant states a commitment to gathering data and feedback during the duration of the program which will be helpful in documenting lessons learned during the scale-up portion of the grant. On page e34, the applicant also describes a plan for disseminating information with other educators around the nation about the findings of the program.

Weaknesses:

On page e30, the applicant stated that the training time that is involved is extensive and requires active participation. Although the district leaders have agreed to management time, it is unclear how the principal will be able to participate at each session with the demands of being a school leader. It would be helpful to see a plan that will be used to ensure that the principals will have sufficient coverage to support the school during the time away (27 days) from their campus. This is an important factor to consider when working with schools that may have a smaller staff and fewer resources.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

(2) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional (as defined in the Validation Notice Inviting Applications) during the project period.

(3) The extent to which the project director has experience managing large, complex projects.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate both the successes and challenges of the project and use the lessons from their ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project to improve the project. Applicants also are encouraged to explain the organization's plan to operate the project at a national level or regional level during and after the life of the grant. Applicants are also encouraged to think about how the project

director s past experience demonstrates an ability to manage large, complex projects, such as an i3 Validation grant.

Strengths:

On page e35 – e36, the applicant identified the school district partners and external partners. The partners' roles have been clearly described to ensure the success of the program. On page e37, the applicant also included a table of milestones and completion dates that are consistent with the activities described in the program design. In appendix, the applicant included descriptions of each unit of study that will be used during each training session. The descriptions were helpful in determining if the program had a clear plan for training throughout the duration of the project. On page e37, the applicant included Annual Performance Targets and Progress Metrics to determine the effectiveness of the program at various stages. This table is helpful in ensuring that there will be consistent progress monitoring during the program. On pages e41- e45, the applicant identified key personnel along with a list of their responsibilities. The persons listed have sufficient experience in working in similar roles. For roles that have not been filled, there was a job description for each role with information to show how the candidates will be selected for those positions.

Weaknesses:

On pages e35-e38, the applicant described a process for gathering ongoing feedback but did not include a contingency plan for meeting completion dates. Since this program requires (28) days of off-site training, it is likely that some school leaders may need to make-up sessions if they are unable to attend on scheduled days. It would be helpful to see a plan that describes the resources that are available for school leaders who need to make-up a training. On page e35 and e44, the applicant described clear roles and responsibilities of the Project Coordinating Committee but did not describe a plan for involving the future partners. This information would provide a better understanding of how the plan will be expanded to include those partners in future years.

Reader's Score: 20

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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project s effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) 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.

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

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

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The applicant should address whether the methods for evaluation would meet What

Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards and how the evaluation design will ensure the project will be evaluated at the proposed level of scale. The response to this criterion should include a description of the proposed sample size and the estimated project impacts as well as the key components of the proposed project for implementation. 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:

Reviewed by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

Reviewed by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity - CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.**
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide--

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;**
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;**
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;**
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and**
- (5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.**

Strengths:

On pages e73-e76, the applicant included information in the application that was (1) a clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served; (2) a compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices; (3) a clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding; (4) identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and(5) a project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi - CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Strengths:

On page e77-e-80, the applicant included information that (a) identified the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification, (b) evaluated different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners, (c) provided a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity, (d) committed to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning - IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning

1. The Secretary encourages applicants to propose projects that improve the coordination and alignment between early learning and development systems and elementary education systems in order to improve transitions for children from birth through third grade.

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2014 10:51 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel	25	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
Priority Questions		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
1. Cost-Effectiveness/Produc	1	0
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
1. Enable Broad Ad of Eff Pr	2	0
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	30

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 2: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Questions

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 national need and priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.
- (2) The likelihood that the project will have the estimated impact, including the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that unmet demand for the proposed project or the proposed services will enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale.
- (3) The feasibility of national expansion if favorable outcomes are achieved.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the unmet needs within the context of the absolute priority. Additionally, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the proposed project will address unmet demands and enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how the applicant will ensure future scaling should the proposed project have positive results.

Strengths:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reviewed 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, 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.
- (2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to develop a clear set of goals as well as the applicant's plan for achieving those goals. In designing this plan, applicants should consider the risks that could prevent success and what strategies they will implement to counteract those risks to ensure the proposed project is implemented successfully and will achieve its goals. Further, applicants are encouraged to identify barriers to scaling the proposed project and address how they will overcome the identified barriers.

Strengths:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reviewed 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 clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional (as defined in the Validation Notice Inviting Applications) during the project period.

(3) The extent to which the project director has experience managing large, complex projects.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate both the successes and challenges of the project and use the lessons from their ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project to improve the project. Applicants also are encouraged to explain the organization's plan to operate the project at a national level or regional level during and after the life of the grant. Applicants are also encouraged to think about how the project director's past experience demonstrates an ability to manage large, complex projects, such as an i3 Validation grant.

Strengths:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) 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.

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

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

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The applicant should address whether the methods for evaluation would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards and how the evaluation design will ensure the project will be evaluated at the proposed level of scale. The response to this criterion should include a description of the proposed sample size and the estimated project impacts as well as the key components of the proposed project for implementation. 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:

Strengths:

The applicant is proposing a multi-site cluster-randomized control trial. As stated on (p. 30), "To measure EDP effects, the independent evaluator will conduct longitudinal, multi-site cluster-randomized trials (MSCRT) in three states to estimate the impact..." In postulating causal claims, these claims are strengthened when randomization is possible. In addition to this exceptional methodological approach to the evaluation, the applicant provided several important components related to the evaluation plan, (a) the key research questions which will guide the evaluation (see pages 33-36); (b) the key outcome variables being measured which are related to answering the research questions (see page e=38, Table 3); (c) the effect size, hence, the sample size needed for acceptable power to detect the effect size posited; and (d) the types of quantitative analyses which will be used to answer the research questions. The applicant has cited and explains throughout the evaluation section, how the evaluation plan adheres to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) recommendations. In addition, the applicant also addressed the possible issue with all studies involving people; the external threat to validity, "mortality" was addressed on page 39. The applicant will measure differential attrition between the treatment and control groups, which will provide a measure of bias estimation of the intervention effect.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses with this criterion.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions

CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity - CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:

(a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.

- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide--

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and
- (5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

Strengths:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi - CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi

- 1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:
 - (a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.
 - (b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.
 - (c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.
 - (d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Strengths:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning - IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning

1. The Secretary encourages applicants to propose projects that improve the coordination and alignment between early learning and development systems and elementary education systems in order to improve transitions for children from birth through third grade.

General:

Reviewed by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2014 10:51 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2014 11:23 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	0
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel	25	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Priority Questions		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity		
1. Cost-Effectiveness/Produc	1	0
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi		
1. Enable Broad Ad of Eff Pr	2	0
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 2: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: National Institute for School Leadership (U411B140009)

Questions

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 national need and priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.
- (2) The likelihood that the project will have the estimated impact, including the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that unmet demand for the proposed project or the proposed services will enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale.
- (3) The feasibility of national expansion if favorable outcomes are achieved.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address the unmet needs within the context of the absolute priority. Additionally, the Secretary encourages applicants to explain how the proposed project will address unmet demands and enable the applicant to reach the proposed level of scale. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how the applicant will ensure future scaling should the proposed project have positive results.

Strengths:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable for this 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, 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.
- (2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to develop a clear set of goals as well as the applicant's plan for achieving those goals. In designing this plan, applicants should consider the risks that could prevent success and what strategies they will implement to counteract those risks to ensure the proposed project is implemented successfully and will achieve its goals. Further, applicants are encouraged to identify barriers to scaling the proposed project and address how they will overcome the identified barriers.

Strengths:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable for this 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 clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional (as defined in the Validation Notice Inviting Applications) during the project period.

(3) The extent to which the project director has experience managing large, complex projects.

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how the project team will evaluate both the successes and challenges of the project and use the lessons from their ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project to improve the project. Applicants also are encouraged to explain the organization's plan to operate the project at a national level or regional level during and after the life of the grant. Applicants are also encouraged to think about how the project director's past experience demonstrates an ability to manage large, complex projects, such as an i3 Validation grant.

Strengths:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable for this 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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups.

(4) 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.

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

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

Note: In responding to this criterion, the Secretary encourages applicants to describe the key evaluation questions and address how the proposed evaluation methodologies will allow the project to answer those questions. The applicant should address whether the methods for evaluation would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards and how the evaluation design will ensure the project will be evaluated at the proposed level of scale. The response to this criterion should include a description of the proposed sample size and the estimated project impacts as well as the key components of the proposed project for implementation. 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:

Thirteen clearly stated and important evaluation questions covering program, implementation, impact, and cost-effectiveness are provided on pp 36 and 37 of the application.

This mixed-methods evaluation is unusually broad and deep using sophisticated and rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods (observations, surveys, interviews, case studies) appropriate for its wide range of evaluation questions. The extensive array of evaluation activities for this project fully map over the program logic model including competitive preference priority one (Cost Effectiveness).

The impact evaluation at the core of this proposal is a set of three multi-site cluster-randomized trials implemented in three different states. Any one of these three trials individually would have met the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence standards without reservations, provided there is not significant overall or differential attrition. As a set, they provide an opportunity for two strong replications and possibly a combined analysis providing exceptional power and utility.

The evaluation plan addresses potential threats to validity and success of the experiment with credible solutions for dealing with lack of buy in, potential attrition, and spillover of the intervention to the control group (pp 38 and 39).

The proposal shows a very systematic and thoughtful approach to data analysis for each of the evaluation questions. The HLM analysis will provide a powerful and robust examination of the project core impact and is supplemented by well-established qualitative methods including grounded theory and triangulation to support inferences.

Evaluation questions four and five address the issue of differential effectiveness of the project for diverse student groups and settings (high versus low SES schools) at the end of year four.

Details concerning the measurable threshold for acceptable implementation of the project are contained in Table 2 on page 53 of the application.

The evaluation proposal identified a highly qualified team of evaluators at research centers at Johns Hopkins University and Old Dominion University that are well resourced and well-qualified to implement the evaluation.

The project budget shows an evaluation allocation of \$2.2 million or about 12% of the total project budget which should be adequate to support effective implementation of the evaluation.

Weaknesses:

The proposal describes Round1 and Round 2 training of principals (pp 27-28). Round 1 training is delivered by "Master Faculty" to 150 principals that are a part of the three-year randomized control trials. Round 2 training is provided not by "Master Faculty" but by "NISL certified trainers and is delivered to 600 principals near the end of the project. Round 2 training is not a part of the randomized control trial and is not addressed in the evaluation design or activities. Since there are no evaluation questions or activities focused on the implementation of Round 2, where the intervention is brought to its fullest implementation using a trainer of trainers model, the project fails to "study the project at the proposed level of scale" (Evaluation Criterion #3). It is questionable if the intervention can be rapidly scaled by a factor of four and still be as effective but the difference between Round1 and Round 2 training is not just a matter of scale. The qualifications of the trainers for Rounds 1 and 2 are not the same and there is good reason to question if the Round 2 training would be as effective as the Round 1 training as a function of the trainer qualifications. The use of the Round 2 trainer of trainers model was an important part of the rationale for regional and national scalability of the project but it's effectiveness will remain unproven.

Reference documenting full scale implementation within the project period:

Table 2. Annual Performance Targets and Progress Metrics for the Five-Year Project
Completed EDP for nontreatment cohorts 600 educators complete EDP by 12/31/19 (p 22)

The evaluation plan for this proposal was very well developed earning 28 of 30 possible points.

Reader's Score: 28

Priority Questions**CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity - CPP 1: Improv Cost-Effectiveness and Productivity****1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that address one of the following areas:**

- (a) Substantially improving student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs.**
- (b) Maintaining student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**
- (c) Substantially improving student outcomes while substantially decreasing per-student costs.**

Other requirements related to Competitive Preference Priority 1:

An application addressing this priority must provide--

- (1) A clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice, and a clear calculation of the cost per student served;**
- (2) A compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices;**
- (3) A clear delineation of one-time costs versus ongoing costs and a plan for sustaining the project, particularly ongoing costs, after the expiration of i3 funding;**
- (4) Identification of specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice, such as re-designing costly components of the practice (while maintaining efficacy) or testing multiple versions of the practice in order to identify the most cost-effective approach; and**

(5) A project evaluation that addresses the cost-effectiveness of the proposed practice.

Strengths:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi - CPP 2: Enabling Broad Adoption of Effective Practi

1. Under this priority, we provide funding to projects that enable broad adoption of effective practices. An application proposing to address this priority must, as part of its application:

(a) Identify the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice (i.e., establish and define key elements of the practice), codifying (i.e., develop a guide or tools to support the dissemination of information on key elements of the practice), and explaining why there is a need for formalization and codification.

(b) Evaluate different forms of the practice to identify the critical components of the practice that are crucial to its success and sustainability, including the adaptability of critical components to different teaching and learning environments and to diverse learners.

(c) Provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for developing materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that other entities would need in order to implement the practice effectively and with fidelity.

(d) Commit to assessing the replicability and adaptability of the practice by supporting the implementation of the practice in a variety of locations during the project period using the materials, training, toolkits, or other supports that were developed for the i3-supported practice.

Strengths:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning - IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning

1. The Secretary encourages applicants to propose projects that improve the coordination and alignment between early learning and development systems and elementary education systems in order to improve transitions for children from birth through third grade.

General:

Not applicable for this reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2014 11:23 AM

General:

This section was reviewed by a different reviewer.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 12:58 PM