

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2014 12:27 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	14
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	77

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 9: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

This 3 year project is requesting \$3,000,000 to serve 3,000 K-6 students (of whom 50% are ELs) and their teachers at six focus schools in two school districts.

The applicant demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the criterion but provides inadequate details to fully support what is proposed in criterion 3, including how it will be carried out and the subsequent impact. See the comments for each criterion for more details.

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 applicant explains how it will address the identified absolute priority using a blended (face-to-face and online) professional learning model that integrates: instructional strategies designed to support EL learning; effective professional learning for teachers and instructional coaches; and support for district leaders to make necessary systemic change to improve instruction for ELs.

The applicant describes its combination of strategies for improving the learning experiences of ELs and their teachers as novel in both content and process (e19). The applicant illustrates their approach with concrete examples using three recently developed EL resources used in the project (e.g., State English Language Arts/Development Framework K-12, State ELD standards, and CA ELD Standards Online Professional Learning Modules) (e20).

Another unique feature of the ELPL model is its provision of substantial, ongoing support to instructional coaches so they,

in turn, can provide effective support to teachers (e23). While coaches are found in schools throughout the country, their knowledge and skills do not always extend to teaching ELs.

The project is designed to contribute to existing theory, knowledge, and practice with the potential to improve outcomes for ELs across the nation in several ways. For example, it will create and operationalize a professional learning model that brings together existing resources (i.e., the CA ELA/ELD Framework, CA ELD Standards, and CA ELD Standards Online PLMs). The professional development delivery mechanism is designed to meet adult learner needs and to provide supportive system changes to improve the quality of instruction for ELs. The project has integrated content that specifically focuses on effective EL instruction with both empirically-based principles for professional learning, and current practices in online learning as well as the importance of including district and school leaders in the process for capacity building (e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The 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 applicant clearly presents the project's four measurable goals (e27-28) while addressing expected outcomes for each component of the project (e.g., EL students, teachers, the development of communities of practices including trained coaches to support the teachers, district leadership and infrastructures required for student academic and social success). These goals are explained in clear operational detail in alignment with an explicit plan with relevant activities. The applicant provides a detailed plan for achieving the project goals which is tightly aligned with the project's logic model (e29). The project's implementation plan leverages the deep expertise reflected in the resources and instructional practices to be implemented, as well as that of the personnel involved in both the design and implementation of the project (e29).

The applicant includes a thorough logic model, which clearly aligns project inputs and outputs (activities and participation) with outcomes (short, medium and long) and project goals (e31).

The applicant identifies several potential risks (e33) to the success of the project and has built in design features to mitigate these challenges. For example, to address the fact that teachers and school administrators may find it hard to find the time and focus to complete project activities, the project is using three powerful EL resources that educators will recognize as directly relevant to their work, providing support through instructional coaches, and the blending of online with face-to-face learning opportunities to make the most of educators' limited time and resources.

The applicant clearly describes how the proposed three-year project will develop, pilot, refine, and study a new blended

professional learning model for elementary school teachers and the instructional coaches who support them, with the aim of improving ELs' academic achievement and English language development (e26).

Weaknesses:

The applicant lacked a clear description of the project's plans for parent engagement activities. It lacked evidence of how feedback from parents and families was used in the project design.

The applicant lacked a clear description of measureable outcomes for teachers participating in the professional development activities.

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 applicant provides a management plan overview for each year, covering all four phases of the project (Preparation, Implementation, Evaluation, and Dissemination) (e34). The applicant provides a general description for the metrics to be used for assessing progress, including successes and challenges (e.g., participation rates and types, participants' evaluations of professional learning sessions; annual pre- and post project surveys regarding instruction and coaching; online coaching logs; observation tools used by coaches to provide feedback; lesson and unit plans; and student work) (e34).

The applicant identifies the key personnel, by role and by name, who will provide project leadership, coordination and management support for the Project Team. It also provides information about additional staff with expertise in: EL instruction, standards, and assessment; professional learning; district systems improvement focused on ELs; and EL data analysis (e37). The expertise of key personnel is illustrated with resumes and a description of their experience in significant program areas.

The applicant includes letters of interest from the two school districts to be included in the project, plus a third school district which has indicated interest.

The applicant clearly describes its process to ensure continuous improvement among the Project Team administrative members.

Weaknesses:

The project Management Plan Outline lacks clear details regarding the persons responsible, specific activities, milestones, metrics and targets associated with each project goal and objective for each phase of the project. The objectives are not provided in measureable terms. For example, the objective for Phase 1 is described as "Development, Preparation" without providing measurable outcomes for how that the participant will know that phase has been successfully completed.

The applicant does not provide letters of support to demonstrate broad support from all stakeholders. For example, there is no feedback from families or the schools to be served by the project.

It is unclear why the applicant is waiting until after funded to begin meeting with the district leaders (e.g., directors of professional learning, EL services, and curriculum and Instruction, e32) to determine what the district's professional learning system is and how it supports educators to improve instruction for ELs, rather than using this input during the planning stages to help inform the design of the proposed project.

The project states it will provide each district with an online professional learning platform specifically for ELPL activities and facilitate the district's understanding of how to use it, but it does not discuss how this may be accomplished or what barriers may exist in doing so with the different school districts and schools to be served (e32).

The applicant does not fully describe how the project team will work with the school districts. There is no clear description of the district level personnel, such as instructional coaches, who will be an integral part of the project's activities.

The applicant proposes an iterative process of project development and refinement that incorporates participant feedback without providing an operational description or plan for how this may be carried out among the districts and schools to be served (e33).

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/19/2014 12:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2014 08:37 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	27
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	79

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 9: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

This proposal addresses Absolute Priority 4, Subpart A.

The applicant has a strong track record of support of teachers, schools and districts, and they have a reputation of offering professional development to teachers across many domains.

The application proposes a robust and multi-tiered approach to helping six schools address the academic performance of the EL students.

The project is novel because it invests heavily in teacher training through blended learning and flexible formats, and user-friendly tools. The proposal also has two year professional development for coaches, as well as an investment in helping district leaders address system-wide EL performance, teacher training, processes, policies, and hiring practices. The idea of providing strong content knowledge and training that is tied to a network of support and practice for teachers and coaches is novel.

The plan incorporates the new ELD standards in California, and helps all teachers learn how to support EL learning through content instruction.

This project would be of benefit to the field due to its heavy focus on teacher and coach support, and the use of high quality tools and protocols.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The 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 proposal has four key goals that are all research based and are tied to one another in key ways. The supports for EL students begin with strong goals for their academic performance that are met through communities of practice for teachers and coaches. District leaders will learn to create a coherent system of professional learning for teachers, as well as a system of support for students. The logic model (p. 14) contains a strong list of inputs with many supports and resources provided by WestEd. There are multiple outcomes for students in the short, medium and long term. The logic model also contains project goals, which helps the reader see a bigger picture of the overall project and where they hope to take it. The narrative contains concrete examples of effective instructional strategies in four domains. There is a clear description of the professional development days and how they will be utilized, as well as the use of online learning. There is a plan in place to get teacher feedback and a process to look at student artifacts. There is a thorough description of the concept of integrated and designated ELD. This concept will be the foundation of the training for teachers and coaches.

Weaknesses:

The logic model does not contain medium or short term outcomes for teachers. (p. 14)

There are risks cited, but they do not appear to be unique to this particular project. (p. 16) The risks cited could be associated with the implementation of any project in an high EL school.

There is no mention of parent engagement and incorporating parent voice and training in this proposal.

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 contains a variety of metrics for assessing progress, and a management plan is contained in this section. The project team, including the project director, is qualified to implement the plan and have the background and experience to do so. Resumes provide evidence of experience and training to carry out the project. (p. 18) There are letters of support from the participating school districts. There is a fidelity matrix in Appendix J that describes in detail the measurement frequency, type, reporting schedule, and criteria for fidelity. There is narrative on the budget with justifications for expenses.

Weaknesses:

The management plan lacks details and does not give concrete breakdowns of when and where portions of the project will be implemented. There is no effort to incorporate stakeholder input into the design of the plan, or evaluation of the plan. Objectives and outcomes are not measurable. There is no plan for feedback from schools.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

N/A. Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/21/2014 08:37 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/20/2014 08:13 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	15	0
Total	100	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 9: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

N/A

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:

1.) The English Learn Professional Learning (ELPL) sufficiently addresses Absolute Priority 4, Subpart A (Improving Academic Outcomes for English Learners (ELs)). The project will target elementary school teachers and the instructional coaches who support them; thus, educators will be able to support ELs in achieving positive elementary and secondary school outcomes. The proposal targets six elementary schools in two school districts. (pp. 1, e26)

2.) The ELPL aims to improve the learning experiences of ELs and their teachers through a professional learning model that the applicant states is novel in both content and process. (p. 2)

The applicant proposes: instructional strategies designed to support EL learning; effective professional learning for teachers and instructional coaches; and support for district leaders to make necessary systemic change to improve instruction for ELs.

3.) The applicant proposes to draw on the existing knowledge base to create and operationalize a scalable approach focused on the academic and linguistic learning needs of ELs, contributing to theory, knowledge, and practice that can be used nationwide. (p. 9)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The 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:

1.) The applicant successfully proposed a clear plan with activities aligned with project goals. The application includes a fully developed logic model that included multiple short, medium and long term outcomes. (pp. 14 & D3, 9-16)

The Project Goals are: ELs better understand complex texts, fully engage in complex tasks, understand and use academic English, and experience higher achievement; teachers, in a community of practice, increasingly implement effective academic content and English language development instruction for ELs; instructional coaches, in a community of practice, support teachers to successfully implement effective EL instruction; and district leaders strengthen professional learning systems to ensure coherence, sustainability of improvement, and a strong focus on EL needs.

2.) The applicant mentioned several potential risks to project success and identified proposed strategies to mitigate potential risks. One potential risk mentioned included challenging focus and time pressures for project participants. The plan to mitigate that particular risk was the support of instructional coaches and the blending of online and face-to-face learning opportunities to make the most of educators' limited time and resources. (p. 16)

Weaknesses:

1.) Parental engagement activities and outcomes were not included in the project 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:

1.) The applicant clearly articulates key responsibilities and well-defined objectives including timelines and milestones for major project activities. For example, Figure 3 (ELPL Management Plan Outline (p. 17-18)) included a clear timeline for development, preparation, implementation and evaluation of the proposed project with Activities and Annual Targets included.

The annual performance targets the applicant will use in Phases 2 and 3 to monitor project success are realistic. For example, the applicant proposes to: increase EL student proficiency on the annual state ELA and ELD assessments and district-administered summative assessments; increase teacher knowledge and skills on effective EL instruction which will be measured via ELPL final evaluations; increase coach knowledge and skills to support teachers of ELs as indicated in post-project surveys; and strengthen the district system for long term program continuity.

2.) The proposal contained letters of interest from two partner districts in Appendix A. (pp. 17, Appendix A)

3.) The applicant comprehensively outlined several procedures to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. For example, the applicant will conduct focus groups with teachers at each intervention school and conduct interviews with site and district administrators to collect data with the end result of suggestions for improvement. In addition, annual reports and a final report will help future scaling of the ELPL model. (pp. 16, 20-25)

4.) The combined project leadership team brings to the table years of experience to successfully manage a project of this size and scope. Dr. [REDACTED] the Project Director and Lead Content Designer, has a wealth of experience in implementing ELD Standards. (pp. 18-20, Appendices)

Weaknesses:

2.) The proposal was not clear on stakeholder participation, leading to concern regarding long-term project success.

3.) The parental feedback component was missing from the proposal.

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:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/20/2014 08:13 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/16/2014 04:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

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	12
Total	100	12

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 9: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

This is a well-organized and well written proposal. It includes an extensive literature review to support the significance of the project. The proposal includes support for district leaders as well as teachers, which has been shown to be an essential feature of effective and sustainable program change. There is existing buy-in from key districts. It includes a strong and well-articulated logic model. The proposal includes clear, relevant and well-specified goals and objectives with clear timelines to meet the goals and objectives.

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:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer 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:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer 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:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer.

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 is well organized and provides sufficient details to rate the quality of the project evaluation.

A quasi-experimental design is appropriate for the Impact Study given practical limitations to random assignment. The authors include sufficient information to describe the sample and matching procedure for the quasi-experimental study (pp. 21-22). The four research questions included in the impact study outline are well articulated and relevant for studying the impact of the project (p. 21). The Implementation Study includes ten research questions that probe important implementation domains including frequency of meetings, impressions of use of new practices, and challenges faced. A range of objective and subjective data sources are used to measure formative and summative outcomes. Measures and procedures are appropriate and clearly linked to the research questions (pp. 22 & 24).

The authors outline potential limitations due to the sample size at the school-level for the Impact Study. The analysis plan is appropriate and the authors clearly explain how the sample size will produce a plausible minimal detectable effect size given the data to be collected.

The key components and outcomes are clearly articulated.

Dr. [REDACTED] is qualified to serve as project director, and other named staff members have strong resumes that support their qualifications for their roles on the project. The proposal includes letters of support from the two targeted districts with clear interest in having teachers participate and permission to use district facilities along with interest from a private foundation for matching funds.

Weaknesses:

Although the key components and outcomes are clearly articulated, the authors do not include a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation.

The proposal would benefit from additional details about the proposed HLM analysis, including levels to address nesting of students within teachers/classrooms within schools.

The sample section does not include details on which schools would be eligible to participate. The proposal refers to partner districts but does not name these districts except on Applicant Info Sheet (p. e126). The proposal would benefit from detailed descriptions of the districts or schools and letters of support from the district leadership.

Implementation questions and planned data collection are clearly outlined in Appendix J; however, the data source includes only attendance records and the proposal would benefit from a multi-method, multi-source approach to data collection.

Reader's Score: 12

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/16/2014 04:24 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2014 02:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

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	12
Total	100	12

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 2014 Development Full Panels - 9: 84.411C

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411C140031)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

NA scored by another peer 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:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

NA scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

NA scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer

Weaknesses:

N/A. Scored by another peer reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The proposal authors identify an intervention, titled "ELPL", designed to improve academic outcomes for K-6 English Language learners by implementing a blended model of face-to-face and online professional development for teachers and coaches (pp. 2-3) and district wide, systematic supports. They propose the use of integrated and designated ELD instruction (p. 3). Their comprehensive intervention is clearly described and theoretically grounded (pp. 5-6).

Targeting multiple levels, including teachers, coaches and district leaders strengthens the intervention. The multi-level design of the intervention is effective and consistent throughout the application, in the goals (p. 10), the questions (p. 21), and the implementation questions (p. 23). Differentiating between implementation questions and overall study questions was helpful.

The authors propose a mixed methods design which is appropriate for the proposed implementation and evaluation analyses. They target important mechanisms, like student interaction with complex texts and classroom learning routines, and propose to use qualitative and quantitative measures to capture them. They do an excellent job of collecting longitudinal data on many measures. They propose observations at three time points, to triangulate with survey data and compare with coaching observations.

The authors identify a mixed methods quasi-experimental design (pp. 21-22), which is appropriate for answering the proposed study questions.

The authors propose key implementation questions (pp. 23-24) that are well thought out, and connect questions to both qualitative and quantitative data sources. They provide a fidelity matrix (Appendix J).

The proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively, through REA, which has sufficient resources and extensive evaluation experience to carry out the project.

Weaknesses:

The target population is generally identified, making it difficult to evaluate the study design (They do identify Fairfield and Sacramento on e126, but not in the narrative and do not provide information about the identified locations). The questions identified on p. 21 identify three student outcomes and only one teacher outcome. The teacher outcome encompasses many different mechanisms - knowledge and skills about several different processes. The implementation questions break this down into more specific, measurable questions; however, further specification of the connection between the implementation evaluation and the outcomes evaluation is needed.

More details are needed about the matching process to determine baseline equivalences (p. 21). Six intervention schools and six control schools will be selected, but further details about how the schools will be selected would strengthen this proposal (p. 21). More details about how the two districts will be selected, and why the schools are separated into two cohorts, with 2/2 schools in cohort 1 and 4/4 schools in cohort 2, are necessary. The proposed HLM analysis does not describe levels of analysis, but it appears that children will be at level 1 and students at level 2 (pp. 22-23). More justification about the number of schools and the involvement of two districts are needed. More details about how the evaluation will account for variation across districts would be helpful, as the intervention will be implemented at a district level.

While the authors target important mechanisms, like how students interaction with complex texts (pp. 14, 21) and classroom learning routines (pp. 21, 23), these are difficult processes to measure well. In the implementation study questions listed on p. 23, they propose observations, state summative assessments and interim assessments as measures for student learning activities, but more description is needed as to how they will combine qualitative and quantitative measures to show this. Similarly, they propose to use observations, logs, teacher and coach surveys and admin interviews to measure how instruction is integrated and designated in the classroom, but more description about how these measures will be combined, analyzed and used to demonstrate changes in teaching practices and everyday classroom routines is needed. They propose observations and three time points, to triangulate with survey data and compare with coaching observations (p. 24), but more explanation is needed about which kinds of qualitative methods they will use and how they will integrate these different types of data.

Although there is some discussion of how the intervention will be evaluated for fidelity of implementation, a comprehensive plan for fidelity still needs to be developed that identifies adherence, exposure, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness and program differentiation. Appendix J does provide a fidelity matrix that describes in detail attendance records, but more details are needed for other forms of fidelity data. The proposal does not specify a particular qualitative method of analysis.

Reader's Score: 12

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/19/2014 02:05 PM