

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 12:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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	23
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	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	2
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	70

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 1: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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 clearly evidences that the proposed project addresses the national need and priorities it is seeking to meet. For example, the applicant proposes to address skills and lack of pedagogical knowledge for teaching science of teachers with weaker qualifications in terms of experience, certification and post-baccalaureate coursework. The applicant's fundamental goal is to improve students' understanding of science and literacy skills, especially for English learners and low-performing students (Pages 4 and 5). Strengthening the content knowledge and instructional skill of their teachers has the potential to have an impact on increasing student's science literacy skills on a national scale.

The applicant provides sound evidence and relevant data to support the notion that it is highly likely 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. For example, treatment teachers made exceptional gains in their science knowledge. Students of the teachers outperformed students of control teachers by more than 40 percent. In 2008–2009, a second randomized controlled trial was conducted at six sites with over 130 teachers and approximately 6,000 students, and comparable benefits to teachers and their students were found. In terms of scale, the proposed train the trainer model single can indirectly affect the science learning of 3,600 students in one year (Pages 8 and 9).

The proposed goals, objectives and activities have promise to produce favorable outcomes. Therefore, the feasibility of national expansion of the proposed project is highly likely. As noted on page 9, the applicant's randomized study, the Making Sense of Science and Literacy intervention was shown to be equally effective when led by trained regional facilitators, as when led by WestEd developers, with comparable teacher and student gains.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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 evidences coherent, attainable performance goals that address improving the effectiveness of teachers. Improving teacher effectiveness has the potential to transform teaching and learning in ways that measurably increase elementary students' science and literacy achievement, prepare students to meet rigorous new standards, and close achievement gaps (Page 10).

The applicant evidences a plethora of detailed activities supported by a logic model consisting of specified strategies and anticipated teacher, classroom and student outcomes (Page 10). The project activities are adequate for achieving the goals of the proposal because they are geared toward ensuring that the objectives of the proposal are met.

Although the applicant indicates that they do not expect that any of the study activities will put participants at any additional risk, the applicant did sufficiently address how it would safeguard the confidentiality of all of the project participants. As noted on page e364, the applicant will ensure that the confidentiality of all participants will be maintained throughout the life of the project via members of the research team completing an online course covering research with human subjects and data security prior to the study's commencement. In addition, confidential information will be kept under lock and key. Knowledge about data security and keeping information under lock and key minimizes any potential breach in confidential data.

The applicant noted on page 19 grant funds will be to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. For example, one barrier addressed by the proposal is changes in school/district leadership. The applicant proposes to address this barrier, the applicant proposes to allocate significant resources to strengthen all teachers' effectiveness across the districts. The stability of a school's administration is of minimal significance when teachers receive resources necessary for them to be effective.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

The roles and responsibilities of the STEM director, senior project director, senior scientist, program lead, and technology lead are evidenced and are delineated and clearly articulated (Pages 21 and 22).

The applicant evidences a clear and concise timeline and milestones for completion of major project activities. The timeline and its associated milestones on pages 21 and 22 addresses project activities relative to teaching and learning, research, and evaluation as well as capacity building in an effort to meet the performance targets of the project. The proposed multi-year financial and operating model identifies all funds that will support the project at a national or regional level during the project period. All funds associated with the project seem reasonable and sufficient to support the project's proposed initiatives. The budget narrative clearly describes the funds that will be used for project implementation. The applicant provides clear documentation indicating that the budget is adequate to support the proposed project that costs are reasonable in relation to the goals, design, and potential significance as well as to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. The budget is inclusive of personnel, fringe benefits, contractual, stipends, supplies, equipment, travel, and indirect costs (Pages e346-e351).

As indicated by their resumes, it is clearly evident that the co-principal investigators/project director have appropriate experience necessary to managing large, complex projects. The current project director is the second one for GBG. The project director has been with FMS for 4 years but has been in Farmington for 20 years. The project director also possess a MSW degree in behavioral science plus 20 years' experience, with 10 of those years being in administrative and grant writing (e156- e156).

Weaknesses:

Annual meetings, ongoing phone calls, and e-mail consultation may not lend themselves to be the most effective means of operating the project at a national or regional level. These time periods and methods of communication also may not prove to be the most effect method for conducting teacher trainings and reviewing prototypes of the online portal. (Page 23). In addition, these methods of communication and consultation may also limit the impact of the teacher training.

Reader's Score: 23

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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's proposed train-the-trainers model has remarkably economical per-student costs (Page 13). The applicant evidences a clear and coherent budget that identifies expected student outcomes before and after the practice, the cost per student for the practice (Pages e36 and e37). The costs are reasonable and planned according to the activities and expected outcomes of the proposal. The applicant clearly evidences specific activities designed to increase substantially the cost-effectiveness of the practice. For example, the applicant proposes supporting the development of highly effective teacher leaders to deliver high-quality professional development (Page 14). In addition, the applicant proposes to manage and conduct a randomized controlled trial to assess the project's cost effectiveness (Page 25).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not evidence a compelling discussion of the expected cost-effectiveness of the practice compared with alternative practices. The proposal also does not demonstrate 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.

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:

The applicant proposes to address Competitive Preference Priority 2 by establishing regional hubs of school districts, higher education institutes, and partners from business and philanthropy. The applicant sufficiently identifies the practice or practices that the application proposes to prepare for broad adoption, including formalizing the practice, codifying or 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. The applicant provides clear evidence indicating that replication of the proposal would be extended to all of the identified sites for implementation via the exact same process (Pages e63-e68).

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.**

General:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 12:01 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2014 11:14 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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	24
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	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	2
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 1: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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:

Elementary students do not have the essential skills needed for success. In particular, students from high-needs communities, are English Language Learners (ELL), or are from disadvantaged minority groups have the lowest achievement. They are also typically taught by teachers with weaker qualifications. (p. e21) Improving the pedagogical knowledge of science teachers, who work in schools with a large percentage of high-needs students, will improve the achievement of their students. (p. e22) Effective science instruction professional development (PD) is necessary “for reducing the achievement gap.” (p. e23) This project will fill a national need for improved science instruction, especially for high-needs students.

Previous application of the PD has shown a positive impact on science achievement, particular for students who are low achievers. (p. e23 and e24) Evidence of its effective when students are assessed on the New Generation Science Standards (NGSS) or the Common Core State Standards – English/Language Arts is important since many states are transitioning to these new sets of standards.

Page e26 describes the scalability of the project using a train-the-trainer model. The visual enhances the understanding of the reach that a train-the-trainer model can provide, so that expansion of the project is cost-effective. Most districts across the nation are experiencing cuts in funding, so a cost-effective plan for this project is necessary for expansion to occur.

MSSL has been found to increase student achievement regardless of whether the training was led by developers of the program or those who were trained by a facilitator. MSSL is further supported because the effectiveness of the program is not lost as teachers continue to train other teachers. (p. e26)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

The logic model shows the activities that must be accomplished to achieve the associated teacher, classroom, and ultimately, student outcomes. This clearly shows how the components work together toward positive results. (p. e27)

The three goals of the project have associated strategies which are clearly described on pages e27 through e36. Alignment between the strategies and their potential positive impact on goal attainment is supported by research regarding effective practices as appropriate. (Some strategies, such as Strategy F, page e34, do not need supportive research.) The applicant provides a well-developed plan for implementation with sound reasoning for the selection of the strategies and activities.

Barriers to implementation along with possible solutions for overcoming the barriers have been identified. (p. e37) These represent common issues for the success of any initiative. Because of the applicant's previous experience with implementing MSSL, knowledge about addressing these barriers has increased and resulted in "a project with a documented track record of identifying and addressing barriers to scale." (p. e37)

The solutions provided in the second column of Table 1 are logical and can be accomplished through the use of grant funds. Most include simply assuring that all teachers have been effectively trained. (p. e37)

Weaknesses:

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:

A timeline for the achievement of milestones includes the necessary accomplishments in the basic areas of the project. Capacity building and research & evaluation also have milestones. (p. e38 and e39) Their inclusion reinforces the applicant's commitment to these areas of the project.

Project staff have been identified and include personnel who have strong science education, fiscal, and project management skills. Most have been involved with projects with budgets well over one million dollars. (p. e39 – e40 and e149-e205)

Extensive information about expenses is shown on pages e340 through e359, with all costs broken down by the year of the grant. The detail provided, such as number of necessary travel days with associated costs on pages e342 and e343, indicate thorough planning of all needs related to the project.

Weaknesses:

Program Advisors and a Technical Working Group will provide support through annual meeting attendance and communication through phone conversations and email; however, it isn't clear how phone calls and emails will be initiated. In addition, should changes be suggested, it's not clear who is responsible for ensuring the changes are implemented, particularly since the PIs, program leads, and technology leads do not have channels of communication identified. (p. e40)

Reader's Score: 24

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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 identified specific reason for believing that MSSL is cost effective and has also provided calculations for the cost per student, (\$60.80 for elementary and \$10.13 for middle school students). (p. e35)

Modifications to the activities or strategies that could reduce costs will be identified.

Online PD would “facilitate program adoption in remote districts.” An online format will allow teachers to remain at their homes and does not require a trainer to travel to the site. This will reduce or eliminate travel expenses. More school participation will result because of easier access to the PD. (p. e35)

Cost effectiveness will be included in the summative evaluation of MSSL. The applicant provides formulas for these calculations as well as the assessment tool: Northwest Education Association tests. The applicant has thoroughly analyzed the necessary information for determining cost effectiveness as it relates to student achievement. (p. e36 and e37)

Weaknesses:

Budget information does not identify which costs are ongoing versus one-time. The applicant could improve this by adding a chart with this information in it.

Pieces of other requirements are missing. For example, the discussion regarding the cost-effectiveness of the plan is briefly mentioned on page e15. This competitive preference priority is developed on pages e19 and e20, but the explanation doesn't indicate specifically how cost-effectiveness is being addressed. To improve this section, the applicant should add a discussion how this project is cost-effective as well as plans for evaluating cost-effectiveness.

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:

The applicant has identified specific activities that are necessary for broad adoption. These are briefly described on page e20, but (a) is fully developed on page e33. The other necessary activities are also included in the project design section under Goal 2 which is directly related to CPP2, to enable broad adoption of the project.

Because Goal 2 is also the goal of Competitive Priority Preference 2, all the elements necessary for broad adoption have been identified on pages e31 through e34. For example, Strategy E, page e33, discusses the hub model for building regional capacity.

As part of the proposal, plans for the support of replication and adaptation have been included. For example, under Strategy F, page e34, the applicant discusses the testing of “the hybrid model of MSSSI, such that teachers will experience the 5-day summer institutes in person and then participate in online PLCs.”

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses.

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: 08/05/2014 11:14 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2014 05:46 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

Reader #3: *****

	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 #1 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 1: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

- (1) The clarity, 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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

(2) The 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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the 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:

The evaluation questions are clear, concise, and directly aligned with the three overarching project goals fully described on page 10 of the project design. The evaluation team is highly qualified and highly experienced as evident in the curriculum vitas, the samples of evaluation instruments, and the prior research studies in the appendix. The applicant embedding the evaluation activities into the key milestones and timelines table on pages 21 and 22 is an additional strength of the proposed project. The applicants also include strong evaluation formative and summative components as summarized on page 19. The barriers to project scale are presented in a table on page 20 and this is invaluable information that informs the implementation efforts of the evaluation plan.

The project evaluation is in direct alignment with the What Works Clearing House evidence standards in various ways. The sound randomized control research design using a mixed methods approach, a robust and rigorous data analysis tool such as Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) outlined on pages 25-36 of the grant proposal are strong examples of What Works Clearing House evidence standards. Additional What Works Clearing House strong causal evidence standards include appropriate sample sizes, acceptable minimum detectable effect size of .18, sample power of 80 percent, random assignment, the triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data, and the validity and reliability measures. The applicants thoroughly outline the project inputs, outputs, and student and teacher outcomes which add more strength to this fully-developed evaluation plan that is highly likely to be implemented with fidelity.

The evaluation activities are embedded in the project timelines table and this supports implementation with fidelity and the likeliness of the assessing the extent to which the project improves proximal, intermediate, and long-term teacher and student outcomes. The multitude of survey instruments includes multiple teacher and student surveys. It would have been ideal if the evaluation budget and the related activities in the budget narrative had been outlined and described in detail by year. However, it appears that the \$3,409,863 allocated over the five year grant cycle will be sufficient resources to carry out the evaluation activities proposed in the well-developed evaluation plan effectively and efficiently.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted in the project evaluation section of the proposed project.

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/07/2014 05:46 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2014 01:49 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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	29
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	29

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 1: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

- (1) The clarity, 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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

(2) The 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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the 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:

The project is a proven intervention that has had substantial public funding in the past and which has increased student achievement in science. It has trained thousands of teachers across urban, suburban, and rural districts (page e25 or 8 of the narrative). The proposal is designed to address mediating factors, (page e. 43) which are very important and they address these in a thorough manner. The project includes randomized control groups, adequate effect size for the sample, and will look at factors at the student, teacher, and school level. Given all these, the evaluation will lead to credible evidence of the effectiveness of the project and adheres to the standards of the What Works Clearinghouse.

The project and the evaluation will examine effects at the student, teacher, and school district level in urban, rural, and suburban districts. As such, they are prepared to answer questions about the project effects at different interaction levels and in different settings. The evaluation plan will also provide information about the scalability of the project.

The evaluation plan includes random assignment and a large enough sample size to detect effect size. It also includes specific measures, see pages e 38-43, such as the PASS, SQI and MQI to measure teacher teaching and learning and student achievement.

The project team and the evaluators are well-qualified and equipped to conduct the evaluation. The qualifications of the team and their experiences are an absolute advantage to the project and evaluation. A generous budget is provided for evaluation to ensure the plans can be implemented as outlined.

Weaknesses:

The study questions on page e43 are clear and concise, but throughout the narrative, the goals and questions seem to change, for example, the questions on page e.43 are different from the questions on page e24, which seem to focus on teacher preparation and teacher retention. Though they are always about scale and cost-effectiveness, and the plan is well-written.

There is a detailed plan with milestones (page e38) but this could have benefited by using month/year milestones, rather than the very broad January 2015- December 2019 as provided.

Reader's Score: 29

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/07/2014 01:49 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 04:12 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

Reader #5: *****

	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	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	2
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
IP: Supporting High-Quality Early Learning		
1. Early Learning	0	0
Total	103	72

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2014 Validation Grant Review - 1: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: WestEd (U411B140026)

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 built a case for helping disadvantaged students; the national need is identified on pages 4-5 and supported by data

There is a train- the- trainer model in place for scalability

Applicant provides evidence of previous professional development in the project area, therefore a track record has been established

The project has been shown to improve student achievement as evidenced by information on pages 6-7

The program has expanded into more than 20 states (page 8)

MSSL is replicable in a variety of settings and has been shown to be effective in a national randomized study

MSSL has the potential for broad impact in terms of scale; can result in 20 trained teacher educators; when these educators work in pairs with 24 teachers, each of those 24 teachers can impact an average of 25 elementary school aged students for a total student impact of 3,600 in a single district

The scalability heightens as discussed on page 9 should the WestEd instructor lead four or more facilitation academies

Weaknesses:

None identified

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 provides detailed goals with specific strategies on pages 10-18 of the proposal

There is a clear logic model provided on page 10 identifying the inputs, MSSL strategies, teacher, classroom, and student outcomes

The project goals are well aligned to the strategies that support attainment of the goal

There are clearly established strategies to overcome barriers on page 20

The table on page 20 provides four barriers with a detailed explanation of how grant funds will be used to overcome the barrier

The project has a track record of identifying and addressing barriers as discussed on page 20

Weaknesses:

None Identified

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:

On page 21, the applicant provided a table with key milestones from 2015 to 2019

Ø

The roles and responsibilities of key project staff is outlined on pages 22-24

Ø

The multi-year plan on pages 23-24 is very detailed and concise

Ø

The applicant has detailed plans with a graphic illustration of the hub model to be employed to build capacity of key stakeholders on page 16, figure 6

Ø

The project director has experience managing a large, complex project with expertise in research, management, fiscal planning, dissemination and scaling

Weaknesses:

None Identified

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

None identified

Weaknesses:

∅ The applicant did not sufficiently address one of the three areas above, nor did the applicant address all of the five priorities required.

∅

Per student costs are not addressed in the proposal to maintain or improve student outcomes; the applicant needs to present detailed information regarding how this will be done while at the same time

∅

Applicant states on page 3 there will be an exploratory study conducted to establish cost-effectiveness. This needs to be more specific to include student outcomes before and after practice in the budget; a compelling discussion to prove cost effectiveness compared to alternative practices

∅

The applicant should specifically address the plan for sustainability of the project beyond the i3 grant funding period

∅

Activities to redesign the most costly components of the practice should be presented

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:

The applicant will train regional teams composed of university partners, cadres of teacher leaders, and district literacy and science specialists to lead Making Sense of Science and Literacy (MSSL)

The applicant will prepare for broad adoption and formalize practices through development of an open-source digital library of student work and exemplars, video of effective practices available through the Teaching Channel and train teacher leaders to facilitate online professional learning communities; this will help with replicability and adaptability

Regional hubs will be established for sustainability and adaptability of critical project components to different teaching and learning environments

Weaknesses:

None identified

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/06/2014 04:12 PM