

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/18/2015 12:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
Sub Total	100	20
Total	100	20

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

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 involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

(3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

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

(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations.

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

Strengths:

The research questions and related hypotheses for program impact (p. 19) are clear and appropriate for the project to evaluate teacher, school, and student outcomes. The use of a Blocked Cluster-Randomized Controlled Design uses an appropriate unit of randomization (schools) within blocks (districts) (pp. 19-20). This design addresses many threats to internal validity and the applicant includes additional strategies such as evaluating baseline equivalence and a sufficient sample size (power analysis p. 24). The proposal includes clear details about the sampling plan to produce a representative sample for the goals of the project and directly addresses a reasonable estimate of attrition due to student mobility over the course of the project (pp. 20-21).

The applicant identifies that they will collect data related to the implementation process (p. 23) and details are available in Appendix J. The inclusion of fidelity data collection and analysis and formative feedback to the developers for continuous improvement are strengths of the proposal.

The research design, if well-implemented, is posed to produce strong evidence of the program's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards. The assessment measures are appropriate for the questions asked.

The external evaluator (from AIR) has the necessary training and experience to conduct the proposed evaluation with sufficient budget allocated over 4 years (\$747,188, p. e411).

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 20

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Last Updated: 09/14/2015 02:06 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	40
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	75
Total	100	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

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 involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

(3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates that the proposed CRESEL project will build upon the research of CASEL in regards to student social emotional learning (p. 1), while incorporating research on culturally congruent learning environments and a focus on rural native students in Alaska. The applicant presents a compelling case that the proposed project will connect the research on the implementation of social emotional learning to the extensive literature on cultural connectedness and ethnic identity (p.2).

The applicant clearly demonstrates that the proposed project will successfully blend the implementation of social emotional learning activities with research on culturally responsive learning and the effects of these modifications on student achievement (p.3-4). The applicant demonstrates that the proposed project will generate new research that will be applicable in a variety of settings and further the understanding of key supports needed to overcome implementation barriers in rural and culturally-specific communities.

The applicant presents a strong case that the results of the proposed project will be replicable in a variety of settings including rural districts that serve a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students. The applicant presents a strong justification for the replication of the project by presenting data on the high percentage of teachers in Alaska who are not from the communities in which they work and do not have the cultural understanding to meet the needs of the diverse student population (p. 8) and demonstrating how the proposed project will be applicable in communities with teachers who lack a cultural understanding of the districts in which they work.

Weaknesses:

non identified.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly

specified and measurable.

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

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

(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly states the objectives of the proposed project in the context of building the capacity of school staff and afterschool staff to implement culturally relevant social emotional learning (SEL) for students, with the goal of blending the best practices of SEL with culturally responsive teaching (p. 8-9). The applicant provides a clear and robust plan for how each objective will be measured and the tools that will be used and data that will be collected (appendix J-1) to reach the stated program goals.

The applicant demonstrates that they have a comprehensive management plan for the proposed project that details the person responsible for each task, and a timeline for significant project milestones and activities. The applicant includes a strong plan for the planned professional development activities (appendix J4) which demonstrates a coherent plan to build the capacity of a number of different stakeholders and staff that will be involved in the project.

The applicant presents a strong plan to incorporate procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project, including the involvement of First Alaskans Institute to facilitate conversations with the communities where the project will be implemented (p. 17) which will ensure that the project activities are being implemented with a focus on the cultural understanding of the host districts.

The applicant provides sufficient information about how the results of the proposed project will be disseminated to support further development or replication. The applicant demonstrates that their position within Alaska and connection with other School Board Associations nationally will allow for the dissemination of the results of the project through six conferences held each year (p. 18) and through partner organizations in other states.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide sufficient information about the goal of embedding culturally relevant SEL in the afterschool setting. While the objective related to this portion of the proposed project are noteworthy there is insufficient detail in the management plan about the activities that will take place to address this objective and it is unclear to what extent the stated objective will be measured.

Reader's Score: 40

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 with reservations.

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

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	38
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	73
Total	100	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

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 involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

(3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Strengths:

The applicant thoroughly outlines how this project represents a promising new strategy because it will contribute to the existing evidence-base by increasing understanding of the key supports needed to overcome implementation barriers in rural and culturally specific communities. Strong aspects include the processes and supports developed in this project will be relevant and adaptable to other rural, high minority, and indigenous communities who face significant barriers to implementation of evidence-based social and emotional learning programs (p. 22).

The project will be nationally significant because there has been almost no research on the successful implementation of culturally responsive Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs in communities and schools in which many rural, Alaska Native or Native American students are concentrated. The applicant documented that this consortium will contribute to the evidence-base by demonstrating the impact of culturally-responsive SEL approaches that are adapted and fully embedded into district and site-based teaching frameworks (p. 22).

The applicant adequately noted that this proposal will evaluate processes and supports necessary for SEL uptake and implementation in a variety of rural school types with a concentration of indigenous and economically disadvantaged students. It was also noted that the successful lessons from social and emotional learning approaches in these six distinct districts can have applications for implementation in high poverty, low-performing schools in rural communities throughout the United States. Feasible methods are detailed for the collected data that will translate to communities that have few supports for novice teachers from outside of the cultural context and will contribute to the evidence-base for low performing schools. The applicant noted that these results directly translate to all 54 Alaska districts looking for school improvement measures and turnaround strategies that can apply to their community context (p. 25-26).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.**
- (2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**
- (3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**
- (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths:

The applicant described how The Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) will partner with the American Institute for Research, First Alaskan Institute, and six culturally distinct school districts in Alaska to evaluate the effectiveness of CRESEL as a school improvement strategy to improve academic achievement of 1,800 students in 15 schools. It was also noted that measurements are linked to surveys and evaluation tools (p. 27).

The applicant provides a comprehensive description of its stated goals, objectives, and outcomes. Outcomes for improvement of culturally responsive Social and Emotional Learning are clearly specified and measurable. The applicant provides extensive details of its capacity to establish Capacity and Readiness, to incorporate Culturally Responsive Practices and Practices to improve climate, and to improve family engagement and connectedness. Clear examples are to establish school and afterschool personnel that implement SEL approaches, to increase Capacity and Attitudes to Support SEL at the District Level, and to improve supports for district SEL infrastructure. The applicant provided clear timelines, milestones, and key personnel with their responsibilities (e.g. the implementation of SEL Evidence-Based Curriculum by National trainers, webinars, and regional learning community). (p. 24, 177-178).

Strong plans are evident that feedback and opportunities for continuous improvement will be provided by key stakeholders. Details of feedback include data discussions by the Implementation Team who will also monitor progress in its bi-weekly meetings. Each district will submit logs documenting the dates and attendees of Leadership Team meetings and small staff workgroups, and SEL coaches will submit meeting and coaching logs on a monthly basis that includes the number of hours spent in each school, the target of their support, and what kind of support is provided (p. 34-35).

Feasible methods are detailed that sustain the processes and supports developed in this project will be relevant and adaptable to other rural, high minority, and indigenous communities who face significant barriers to implementation of evidence-based social and emotional learning programs (p. 22). Key aspects include presenting and sharing findings at the six conferences hosted per year for school boards, superintendents and district staff (p. 36).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant noted that the AASB also has relationships with school board associations nationally and participates in the national school board conferences, no specific data was provided as to how information would be disseminated to those organizations outside of the Alaska's districts.

Reader's Score: 38

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 with reservations.

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

Strengths:

Not applicable.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	38
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	73
Total	100	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

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 involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

(3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a fully developed project. The applicant has clearly described the link between non-cognitive skills and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as defined by the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (p. 1). Innovation in the proposed project comes in the fact that the applicant plans to apply this existing evidence-based intervention with supports necessary to overcome implementation barriers in rural and culturally specific communities (p. 4). While the current project is targeted toward implementation with native Alaskans, the national significance of the project is in the fact that it will be relevant and adaptable to other rural, high minority, and indigenous communities who face significant barriers to implementation of similar programs (p. 4). The applicant has addressed replicability by indicating that successful implementation of the current project in six districts can be translated to all 54 Alaska districts (p. 8). This claim is plausible because the intervention is designed to be used in communities with novice teachers that are from outside the cultural context of the community which is typical across the state.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

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

(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

Overall, the applicant's project design and management plan are well developed. The applicant has provided clearly stated goals, objectives, and outcomes. An appropriate plan for measurement including teacher ratings of student's social and emotional skills, observer ratings of classroom climate, student trainings of school climate and cultural climate, and administration of surveys to key district staff is included (p. 9).

The management plan includes a table clearly presenting the implementation timeline. Roles, responsibilities, and experience of project staff are also clearly presented in table format (p. 15). The majority of the project activities including Culturally Responsive SEL Approaches, District Social and Emotional Learning Infrastructures, and Establishment of Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning Approaches are clearly described (p. 10-11).

The applicant's plan to ensure feedback and continuous quality improvement is strong and will be managed by the applicant's evaluation director. Components include biweekly meetings, monitoring implementation against due dates, and comparison of implementation log data against the project plan. A specific strength of the application is the plan to include First Alaskans Institute to host guided conversations and stakeholder interviews with community members with documentation to be analyzed for quality improvement (p. 17). The primary dissemination route proposed in this application is through the Association of Alaska School Boards relationships with other schoolboard associations nationally through conferences (p. 18).

Weaknesses:

The applicant has expressed an intent to disseminate findings nationally. However, the majority of the narrative describing the plan for dissemination is state specific. Specifically, a whole paragraph is devoted to describing how the state school board is the "go to organization" and how they hold multiple conferences per year. The applicant highlights the fact that multiple members of the team are nationally recognized experts in their fields. The application could have been enhanced by further description of plans to share the information on a broader spectrum such as plans for submission to peer-reviewed journals or presentations at national conferences .

This application could be strengthened by more in-depth discussion of the afterschool services component of the project. Most of the narrative on this topic is broad and general. For example, the applicant references uneven exchange of information between educators and after-school program staff and how SEL approaches and competencies can add to after school programs. Inclusion of information about what types of after-school programs would be recruited for the project and type and frequency of communication could have enhanced this section.

Reader's Score: 38

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 with reservations.

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

Strengths:

Not applicable.

Weaknesses:

Not applicable.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/17/2015 06:01 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/15/2015 11:41 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
Sub Total	100	19
Total	100	19

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - i3 Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Association of Alaska School Boards (U411C150085)

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 involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(2) The national significance of the proposed project.

(3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.

(2) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

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

(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations.

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

Strengths:

The evaluation questions outlined in the proposal appear to address the major areas of the project (pg. 19). Evaluation questions 2 and 3 appear to be measured using appropriate and reliable data from a variety of sources (Appx J-1). The sample outlined in the evaluation plan appear to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. The data collected to measure student outcomes appear to be robust and varied (Appx J-1 & pg. 22) and to include a variety of collection methods. For example, covariate measures include The Emotional Exhaustion Scale from the teacher version of the Maslach burnout Inventory. The evaluation includes information surrounding the data collection and analysis of implementation activities from the project (pg. 23). The HLM analysis information (Appx J-3), including power analysis (pg. 24), appears to provide sufficient evidence of sophistication necessary to answer the proposed questions. An explanation of the analysis of the qualitative data collected throughout the evaluation is included in Appendix J-2. The schedule of data collection activities provides a clear guide of what will be collected and when (pg. 22). The experience and professionalism of the identified evaluation staff as well as the appears to be sufficient to conduct the outlined activities. The spread of the schools warrants the high cost of the evaluation.

Weaknesses:

Evaluation question 1 measuring teacher attitudes and readiness are measured with self-report perception data (Appx J-1). Data from observations or objective assessments could provide stronger evidence than simple attitude or self-report scores.

Reader's Score: 19

Status: Submitted
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