

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2015 12:48 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: KIPP, Inc. (U215H150072)

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	45
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality of Mgmt. Plan	15	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	78
<b>Total</b>	80	78

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Skills for Success Panel - 7: 84.215H

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: KIPP, Inc. (U215H150072)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

(2) 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.

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

#### Strengths:

SFSH will train campus SFS instructors and teachers in its weekly lesson modules. These weekly lesson modules will be reviewed, refined, implemented, and published online so the strategies can be used in a variety of settings (p. 17-20).

The proposed project will refine and publish a sustainable, replicable non-cognitive skills toolkit for use by teachers and students in high need urban middle schools. The applicant will use these tools to produce well-prepared, resilient students and provide teachers and schools with the ability to consistently develop and refine student non-cognitive skills in the middle grades, test materials using a single case design, and build local, regional, and national capacity to sustain and replicate the practices through high-level research (p. 17-20).

The applicant clearly detailed that specific tools and products will be developed that will provide a demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. Programming will include: a series of field tested lessons and activities for 6th and 7th grade students designed to increase their non-cognitive skills; intensive training; and support for schools and teachers to make sure that the curriculum is implemented with fidelity. Additionally, the applicant will include an online platform of student modules with growth mindset classroom activities, experiential learning opportunities, and digital games (p. 21-23).

The applicant clearly noted the potential contribution of the proposed project to the development of theory in the field of study. KIPP Houston has already invested heavily in the development and refinement of this model and has been nationally recognized for their work. With additional funding, KIPP Houston will be able to test critical aspects of this model based on reliable evaluation tools (p. 20).

#### Weaknesses:

None 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 extent to which the proposed project is supported by Strong Theory.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.

(4) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.

#### Strengths:

The applicant clearly addressed the theory of action upon which SFSH is based. The theory of action is a systematic and integrated model which includes school leader, teacher, student, and family engagement—all within an action model that develops shared responsibility, strength-based collaboration, student ownership and continuous improvement (Dweck; Peterson) (p. 23-24).

The proposal represents an exceptional approach to the priorities because the applicant has systematically developed curriculum modules for middle school students that are grounded in non-cognitive skills development research, with lesson modules to be implemented on a weekly basis at the 6th and 7th grade levels in three middle schools. Each lesson module will focus on character strength and a concrete skill or concept while also emphasizing the growth mindset (p. 25).

With grant funding, the proposed project will have the necessary resources to systematically test the modules using statistical analysis. The applicant clearly detailed that specific tools and products will be developed that will provide a demonstration of promising new strategies that build on existing strategies. SFSH is a model that is learner-outcome driven and sustainable (p. 29).

Findings from quantitative and qualitative measures will be shared on a monthly basis in order to help inform continuous improvement efforts throughout the implementation process. This process includes the use of performance scorecards, frequent briefs and reports, and other feedback mechanisms to support continuous improvement (p. 30).

#### Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 45

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

**(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 relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant adequately presented the procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement by clearly outlining plans and timelines, linking project goals with staff assignments, and using technology for communication purposes (p. 30).

The applicant supplied a detailed management plan that noted objectives in relation to time, a budget, defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks associated with implementing the program (p. 31-36).

The applicant explained the relevance and demonstrated commitment of some partners associated with the proposed project (p. 36-37).

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant noted 70 university partners and listed some (e.g., Spring Branch, ISD, Harmony Public Schools, Rice University's Center for College and Career Readiness, YES Prep Public Schools), additional information was needed to determine the relevance of the stated partners and the roles of these partners in the implementation of the proposed program.

**Reader's Score: 13**

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Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: KIPP, Inc. (U215H150072)

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	45
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality of Mgmt. Plan	15	12
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	77
<b>Total</b>	80	77

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Skills for Success Panel - 7: 84.215H

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: KIPP, Inc. (U215H150072)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

(2) 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.

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

#### Strengths:

The application presents evidence of viable take-away materials and processes that will support noncognitive programming for underserved youth. The array of materials and products, such as the toolkit of replicable project resources, field tested lesson plans and activities, will provide continual learning and training opportunities for teachers and students. The online availability of program modules for students provides accessible resources on a 24-hour basis, whereby students can continually learn and practice acquired skills. It is through these processes that the project activities and information can be replicated and effectively used in various settings (pp. e17-e21).

The application presents sufficient information to show that the proposed project will build on the strategies and project activities currently in place. Specifically, the overall focus will be to ensure that those associated with the project implementation are sufficiently trained on core characteristics that support the development of emotional, social and academic skills. One such strength of the strategies to be implemented is the creation of parent leadership teams where parents can actively provide project input and direct support to students and teachers (pp. e19-e21).

The application organization has a history of success in working with at-risk students using its current school model. Through the incorporation of both noncognitive skills activities and enhanced professional development training for teachers, the project will further contribute to the field of study. For example, the theory of action integrated model promotes shared responsibility, and strength-based collaboration between teachers, students and parents which focuses on student academic improvement (pp. e21-e23).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

**(1) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by Strong Theory.**

**(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.**

**(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

**(4) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The application presents evidence indicating that the proposed project is rooted in theory based approaches which focus on supporting career to college readiness for youth. The application incorporates noncognitive core concepts by which youth can gain the skills needed to transition into their chosen careers and/or college (pp. e25-e26). For example, one module asks youth to identify postsecondary goals and life plan which is used to create an individualized plan to help reach the goals identified (pp. e26-e27).

Overall, the activities presented are aligned with competition priorities as evidenced through the implementation of noncognitive skills instruction for middle school students. The exceptional approach the application presents such as aligning career and college focused activities with parental involvement provides a holistic approach to treatment thereby increasing the level of success of youth (pp. e25-e27).

The application presents effective methods and activities that are coherent and inclusive of noncognitive skills instruction. Specifically, the application proposes to include systemic testing of modules through the use of statistical data to analyze findings specific to noncognitive skills. The approach presented is logical to measure the correlation between noncognitive skills and academic success; this approach will further support research and development in the field (pp. e26-e28).

Overall, the plan to provide performance feedback to ensure continuous improvement is sufficient. The use of an evaluation team to provide feedback periodically regarding project activities is a logical approach to ensuring goals are being met and/or allow for project adjustments if needed (pp.14-15). Specifically, the creation of score cards, reports and briefs will be distributed regularly at staff meetings for purposes of improvement (e30-e31).

Weaknesses

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 45**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

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

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

**(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 relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**Strengths:**

There are multiple feedback mechanisms presented by the application to show there is a process in place to ensure feedback and continuous project improvement. The processes are inclusive of the use of technology, face-to-face meetings and progress reports by which project staff will be informed. Additionally, the scheduling of goal-oriented, monthly meetings will support the monitoring of project progress, and all other aspects associated with the project will support continuous improvement (p. e31).

The key personnel charged with the implementation of the project are identified. There is ample information indicating that all are experienced and capable of implementation and oversight of the proposed project activities. The application presents a comprehensive list of milestones and timelines for the project that will provide guidelines for the implementation and monitoring. The budgetary information presented illustrates how costs contribute to the project approach, and operations are logical and comprehensive (pp. e35-e37 & e53-e55).

The application provides some information to show there are partners associated with the project (pp. e37-e38).

**Weaknesses:**

The application identifies partners and indicates that as an established organization they have over 70 partners. However, there is no specific information describing the partners presented. Furthermore, the application does not provide any letters of commitment to demonstrate the commitment of the partners to this particular project.

**Reader's Score:** 12

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Last Updated: 08/21/2015 02:55 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: KIPP, Inc. (U215H150072)

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	45
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality of Mgmt. Plan	15	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	79
<b>Total</b>	80	79

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Skills for Success Panel - 7: 84.215H

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: KIPP, Inc. (U215H150072)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

(2) 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.

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

#### Strengths:

The proposed project, Project LEADS/Skills for Success Houston (SFSH), is designed to build upon, expand and share efforts in order to serve Houston's underserved students to persist to and through college. This is to be accomplished by the systematic development of non-cognitive skills such as grit, zest, purpose, etc. that have been correlated with success in life. The project is a research-based, collaborative project that will use a school-based systemic approach to build the capacity of schools and districts in establishing a program that involves key instructional staff as well as all stakeholders. The program is based on substantial research and theory that will improve high-need schools with diverse populations. The applicant has 20 years of successful experience in working with high-need students across Houston. This proposed project is distinctively equipped to share this transformative program with other schools and systems across the country. (p. e19)

The Seven Character Strengths, KIPP's innovative approach to character and the development of non-cognitive skills, are grounded in the research of Dr. Martin Seligman, Dr. Chris Peterson, and Dr. Angela Duckworth. (p. e21) KIPP's character work focuses on the seven highly predictive character strengths that, "across the major world religions and cultures, have been correlated to an engaged, happy, and successful life". (p. e21)

Based on theory of action, this integrated model includes "school leader, teacher, student, and family engagement". (p. e22)

Each grant year, staff will be trained in weekly modules that will be reviewed, refined, implemented, and published online.

Funding of this project will allow for the testing of critical aspects based on reliable evaluation tools and the testing and refinement of modules for parents, which is currently non-existent in the field. (p. e23)

**Weaknesses:**

None 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 extent to which the proposed project is supported by Strong Theory.**

**(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.**

**(3) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of research and development in the field, including, as appropriate, a substantial addition to an ongoing line of inquiry.**

**(4) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The project has adopted an evidence-based, four dimensional model of career and college readiness to build: (1) Key Cognitive Strategies; (2) Key Content Knowledge; (3) Academic Behaviors; and (4) Contextual Skill and Awareness.

KIPP has systematically developed curriculum modules for middle school students, which are grounded in non-cognitive skills development research as evidenced in Key Concepts and Skills for Success Responses. (p. e24) These modules focus on character strength and a concrete skill/concept while also emphasizing the growth mindset, which is critical to ongoing student development. Growth and will be implemented on a weekly basis in 6th and 7th grades at three middle schools.

Although the lead agency has regularly used a non-cognitive model, this project will also use individual student growth modules for student academic growth, with correlations between both. (p. e30)

Project findings will be shared regularly with the district implementation teams in ways that help to inform continuous improvement efforts. The applicant will also engage in the timely examination and reporting of data. The use of a developmental evaluation approach allows for the use of evaluation to provide feedback as support for developmental decision-making and course corrections throughout project implementation. This approach utilizes performance scorecards, frequent briefs, reports and other feedback mechanisms to support continuous improvement. In addition, evaluators serve as part of the implementation team and help to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, on-going process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change. (p. e29)

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 45**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

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

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

**(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 relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**Strengths:**

The SFS Project Coordinator, Instructors and Technology Specialist will implement a regular series of trainings and employ regular feedback, review, revision, and adjustment. A detailed chart, "SFSH Project Training and Continuous Improvement Activities", further details feedback and improvement activities. (p. e27)

The Project Coordinator will develop implementation plans and timelines and share the structure with team members and partners. Technology will facilitate regular communication among team members at different sites. Weekly staff meetings, conference calls, frequent email and technology-facilitated file-sharing all combine to ensure feedback and continuous improvement in project operation. A detailed implementation plan for each year of the project will be developed during the first month of operation. The project will follow a Rapid Start-Up process to ensure all staff members are prepared to begin operations on the first day of the project. (pp. e31-e34)

The proposed project has a sufficiently outlined budget and timeframe for the accomplishment of program objectives, responsibilities, and milestones.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the proposed project's lead agency has worked for a period of time with committed partners, the project did not include letters of support or list of committed partners. This information would have been helpful to inform the reviewer of the partner's exact roles, responsibilities, and level of commitment

**Reader's Score: 14**

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