

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/23/2015 06:00 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Los Angeles Unified School District (U215H150111)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	43
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of Mgmt. Plan	15	15
Sub Total	80	76
Total	80	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - Skills for Success Panel - 10: 84.215H

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Los Angeles Unified School District (U215H150111)

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 applicant clearly outlines how the proposed project will be used to expand an existing resource—the Mindset Kit—for both their school district and others (pg. 2) and contribute to the evidence for combining complementary strategies of parent and student trainings in growth mindset (pg. 5) by evaluating the products' impacts on student outcomes. The applicant additionally proposes a replication component (bringing and evaluating the toolkit in other schools) during year 3 of the project (pg. 6; 21), which will assist in the transferability of information learned in the project to other sites; The results of the evaluation could help inform whether the program is effective for all schools or whether certain contextual factors help determine the success, providing valuable information for similar schools considering using the product.

Weaknesses:

Beyond the expansion of the Mindset Kit, it is unclear how findings from the project will be disseminated to other sites or to impact the field of study. There is no information on whether the project plans to disseminate anything publicly (i.e. a report, a brief) for this purpose.

Reader's Score: 18

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 proposes to expand upon an existing, free online tool – the “Mindset Kit” in four middle school site. The applicant provides a clear description of the theories underlying their project design, stemming from Farrington and colleagues (2012) five factors of non-cognitive development (p. 6) and theories on Parental Engagement. Within this section the applicant describes current initiatives in the district that address some of the five factors, while highlighting how Mindset for All will focus on a yet unexplored factor, growth mindset (pg. 6), clearly highlighting how the current project will align with ongoing initiatives (absolute priority 1). The applicant describes the population served as being within the Los Angeles “Promise Zone,” highlighting the high percentage of youth in poverty, and high percentage of non-native English speakers (pg. 1), fulfilling the requirements of absolute priority 2 to serve high-needs populations. The applicant provides a clear and thorough logic model (pg. 9) that describes the outcomes of interest. Finally, the applicant provides a clear description of how they will incorporate continuous feedback into the project performance (pg. 12), highlighting this as a key part of their assessment plan (pg. 22). The applicant will employ peer-learning as well as formal meetings to review evaluation data to adapt the project implementation as needed (pg. 12).

Weaknesses:

The applicant suggests that the first three months of the project will be dedicated to creating new content for the Mindset Kit (pg. 14). It is unclear how much of the content for this project will need to be created vs. is pre-existing and how this new content will be created. Since this grant is not intended for the creation of new strategies, more information is needed to understand exactly how the existing tool will be adapted.

Reader's Score: 43

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 provides a detailed timeline with set milestones and a clear indication of responsibility for each task (pp. 14-15). The applicant provides sufficient justification and detail of the role and commitment of each partner organization, including providing MOUs in the appendix. The applicant has clear mechanisms in place, including team and school site meetings, to ensure the execution and implementation of the project (pp. 12-13) and ensure timely response to any issues that may arise.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Los Angeles Unified School District (U215H150111)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	45
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of Mgmt. Plan	15	15
Sub Total	80	80
Total	80	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - Skills for Success Panel - 10: 84.215H

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Los Angeles Unified School District (U215H150111)

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:

(1) A fully developed plan is presented with the likelihood that the products developed with this project will be used in other settings. Applicant indicates that with this Mindset for All proposal will integrate GEAR Up staff to support this teacher-training and parent engagement tools that will assist with the development of non-cognitive skills in middle school students to support academic and lifelong success using the growth mindset model (page e14). Anticipated outcomes include increased academic motivation and non-cognitive skill development available to educators and parents and added value to implementing complementary strategies at home and in the classroom to develop non-cognitive skills.

(2) The proposed project is currently building upon current community to include teachers and parents (page 2). The program will implement 15 lessons designed for teachers and 10 lessons for parents to create community engagement. Applicant indicates that the dual focus on the two most important existing strategies and influences on the students' academic trajectory – school and home – will facilitate skill development. Applicant indicates that by building upon free resources and making changes based on lessons learned, this project will make significant contribution to growth mindset practices and strategy use at home and at school (page 5).

(3) Applicant provides a listing of proposed project partners (Appendix A) and involvement of parents and teachers (page 5).

Weaknesses:

(1) 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:

(1) Applicant presents a project based on strong theory; the applicant addresses the overall plan of implementation that is based on two overlapping bodies of research: a) research on non-cognitive development, specifically growth mindset theory; and b) research on parent engagement practices that support student non-cognitive development (page 6). A logic model is provided based on the strong theory (page 9).

(2) Priorities one and two are fully developed as addressed within this proposal (page 10); the proposed project provides an exceptional approach to meeting the non-cognitive needs of the targeted students.

(3) Applicant indicates that this program is designed to enhance classroom and home learning environments so that they operate as cohesive efforts. The project is set-up to meet the established criteria. Coaches will work with parents and teachers so that the growth mindset content messages are the same using similar language and techniques to make home and classrooms mutually reinforcing (page 11).

(4) The monthly peer learning exchanges will allow teachers the opportunity to raise any concerns they face in implementing the strategies learned as well as providing the opportunity to share techniques that are working well with the students. These ongoing meetings will allow for the review of progress and/or delays. Interventions will then be able to be made. As stated, the program has defined feedback and continuous improvement mechanisms built in (pages 12) with refresher training provided for the teachers (page 14).

Weaknesses:

(1) 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:

(1) Applicant indicates that there will be co-program directors that will oversee the implementation of the program and they will convene quarterly partner meetings at each of the program components to review and implement updates from each school (page 12). The evaluator will provide updates on the implementation progress based on program data and school site meetings will be held monthly. This represents a defined plan for program management.

(2) The proposed management plan indicates that the two directors will be facilitating the implementation of the program (page 13); they are GEAR UP 4 LA directors that will devote a percentage of their time to this project. The full-time project manager will oversee day-to-day operations, ensure that logistic issues are addressed and check in with the coaches at each site (page 13). Key activities and responsible partners are presented in outline for with timeline and task commitments (pages 14-15). It is strength that the money is linked to the services rather than management. With the GEAR UP directors' leadings, this will allow for a better integration of services and should facilitate sustainability.

(3) Memoranda of understanding detailing the commitments of each of the partners have been included (Appendix A). These documents demonstrate a strong commitment to the project success.

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Los Angeles Unified School District (U215H150111)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	45
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of Mgmt. Plan	15	15
Sub Total	80	80
Total	80	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - Skills for Success Panel - 10: 84.215H

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Los Angeles Unified School District (U215H150111)

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 Applicant builds upon the successful Growth Mindset toolkits which are online and provided as a free resource. The Stanford University researchers who developed this resource are an integral part of the product refinement and demonstration of this project in a high-need area.

Based on the information which is provided, it appears there will be significant contributions to the Growth Mindset literature from the proposed project. This was determined in part by the linkage with the key researchers into non-cognitive factors and the potential for advancement of the current strategies, specifically in the area of academic mindset. (page 4)

The applicant clearly describes the targeted middle schools which clearly meet the criteria as high-needs including "Promise Zone" schools where English Learners are served. This appears to be an appropriate target group of students for participation in this study. (page 1)

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:

Applicant clearly bases the project design on strong theory related to both noncognitive factors and parent engagement based on the citations and description of Farrington's research and that of Wang, for example. It is clear from the description that the intent is to create new products and improvements of proven existing strategies. (e24)

The logic model on page e25 presents activities and implementation strategies to support the project.

The combination of activities related to both academic mindset and parent involvement provides an exceptional approach as both teachers and parents will receive growth mindset training. Coaches working with teachers and coaches working with parents will receive the same training. (e26-e27)

Information is provided on continuous improvement based on teacher and staff meetings and input opportunities. (e27) Continuous improvement is further described in the Management section as well and appears adequate for the project design. (e28)

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:

Additional information is provided related to feedback and program improvement that seem appropriate for the project design. (e28) This includes partner team meetings and school site meetings.

A full-time project manager is proposed to oversee day-to-day operations of the program. This person will address logistical issues, management of coaches at each site and serve as the liaison with project partners and evaluator (e.29) . This level of supervision should ensure project activities are implemented as designed and provided fully developed supervision for a project of this magnitude and complexity.

A table with timeline, activities, and responsibilities is provided and appears to be fully developed. (e31)

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Status: Submitted

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