

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2016 02:58 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	45
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Total</b>	100	80

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - i3 Development - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.

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

### Strengths:

The applicant proposes to create a project to reduce suspensions, discipline and improve the academic achievement of 5,472 students and 479 staff members in 12 schools (4 elementary, 4 middle and 4 high schools) in Brooklyn School District 18 through restorative practice (RP) and social emotional learning (SEL) with a focus on equity (Page 1).

The applicant included data to suggest that African American students are two to three times more likely to be issued school suspensions than those of other racial and ethnic groups. In addition, racial inequality in discipline fuels racial disparities in long-term outcomes for students including graduation rates and disproportionate contact with the justice system.

The applicant also mentioned that new data suggests that the racial discipline gap directly contributes to the racial achievement gap and students with disabilities suffer disproportionately from suspensions as well (page 2). Recent national data showed that elementary school students with disabilities (SWD) are suspended at over twice the overall suspension rate and secondary school SWD are suspended at an 18% rate versus 10% overall.

The applicant included growing evidence that shows that RP and SEL are both a promising strategy for reducing suspensions and is primarily focused on changing the way that adults address discipline problems when they occur (Page 3). By integrating both strategies the project plans to create a foundation for RP and equity and can lead to improved academic outcomes and a reduction in behaviors that lead to suspension (Page 4).

The proposed plan will build on an existing plan that has been implemented since 2011 (Page 5 and 6). There are plans noted to continue their long-term partnership in the development of a more robust RP/SEL model.

Data was provided by the applicant to outline the targeted population (Table on Page 6), suspension rates, graduation rates and disciplinary incidents (Table on Page 7) to support the project.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses noted for this section.

**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 listed three goals for the project (Page 10 and 11); 1) improve academic outcomes for students in high needs schools, 2) Improve the program model and approach for supporting schools' implementation of an RP/SEL model that reduces the cause of exclusionary discipline and disparities and 3) scaling the model to replication. The goals objectives and outcomes are clearly listed with the phases for implementation (Page 14-16). A Logic Model with inputs and outputs (Page 16).

A management plan for the project was included and listed the personnel, very specific responsibilities, timelines and milestones for completing the tasks (Page 17-19). The applicant mentioned that the project will include two-phases; a learning pilot and roll-out phase.

The applicant stated that the "improvement science" approach will be used to share, review and analyze data from the project. The applicant also included the methods of how the schools and staff would contribute to the collection of data and the improvement process. The feedback from the data will be incorporated into staff training (Page 19 and 20).

The dissemination plans noted are to use the findings from the project for replication, creation of a training video and the development of an online resource center for educators. Once the findings have been released, the applicant will share them and include lessons learned in peer-reviewed journals, professional conferences, webinars and principal institutes (Page 20).

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses noted in this section.

**Reader's Score: 45**

**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:**

N/A – scored by another reviewer

**Weaknesses:**

N/A – scored by another reviewer

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   09/12/2016 02:58 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/26/2016 10:44 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	35
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	45
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Total</b>	100	80

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - i3 Development - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (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 extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

### Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates a significant disparity of the project schools in student discipline, academic achievement, and graduation rates compared to the city averages of all schools (p. 1). The district's suspension rates are higher than the NYC average; ELA and math scores and graduation rates are lower than the average, and a high percentage of high school students are chronically absent (p. 1). In each category the target population is outpaced by the city averages.

The proposed project intends to implement the Restorative Practices model for addressing discipline issues in schools, coupled with Social and Emotional Learning strategies that have been demonstrated through extensive research to be effective in improving student behavior and learning p. 3-4). The project will expand on these proven practices by utilizing strategies developed and implemented successfully by the applicants in previous studies. The applicant identifies two studies which found that discipline referred students who participated in a restorative conference had a lower likelihood of suspension than referred peers who received other consequences (p. 3; Anyon et al., 2014, Anyon et al., 2015).

The requirements of Absolute Priority 3 are substantially met in that the project schools serve 5,472 students, where 90% are Black, and 80% low-income (p. 6). School discipline and suspension rates exceed peer schools within the city. The proposal's primary focus is to implement alternative strategies to exclusionary discipline, and identify the root causes of discipline issues for students through a variety to techniques identified.

### Weaknesses:

None

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 application provides specific goals and objectives that are reasonable in scope, and measurable in terms of outcomes (p. 15-16). The management plan is thorough in its scope and sequence. The timelines for implementation are clear and attainable (p. 14). The plan will begin with pilot sites in the first year; adjustments and corrections will be made based on observations from staff, students and personnel, allowing for continuous feedback in order to adjust as deemed necessary. In the second year the project will be expanded to the other schools identified based on the adjustments made in the pilot study. Feedback is planned continuously throughout the project for all participants at multiple points throughout the plan (p. 19). Planning meetings are scheduled at all levels throughout the timeline, and input from all levels is part of the continuous learning process imbedded in the plan. One of the three primary goals of the plan is for disseminating the results of the project; the project is designed to be easily scalable and disseminating the plan to a wider population is one of the overarching goals.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 45**

**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:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score: 0**



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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/26/2016 10:44 AM

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	34
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	44
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
<b>Total</b>	100	78

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - i3 Development - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (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 extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

### Strengths:

Significance is based on student needs. The applicant created a hypothesis as to what is believed to occur should the project be successful. Scores, graduation rates, reduced suspensions are what the applicant is looking to reduce or increase. The applicant is addressing the magnitude of and severity of the problem by dealing with the disproportionality of discipline toward young people of color, mainly black youth (Page 2). The applicant is addressing the impact of exclusionary discipline and addressing the risk factors leading to academic disengagement, school dropout and other issues (Page 2). Bringing relationship building into the classroom and school community is a strength as a part of the restorative justice social (RJ) and social emotional learning (SEL) are building blocks as stated on pages 3 and 4. They are working on building and improving skills such as handling anger, active listening skills, empathy, bias awareness and deescalating conflict (Page 3 & 4). The applicant spelled out that the project aims to reduce suspensions, discipline disparities. The SEL programming will develop skills necessary to improve areas such as handling anger, active listening, empathy, bias awareness and the ability to deescalate conflict.

### Weaknesses:

The project was explicit in many of the areas throughout the application. The project offers many ways that the applicant anticipates changing behaviors through the use of restorative practice and social and emotional learning, but could add depth so that the grant is shared and other would know greater details as to what was attempted.

Reader's Score: 34

### 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:**

All groups are included: students, staff and families. This project involves a parental component for grass roots support of the schools. They created a hypothesis as to what they believe will occur if they are successful. The applicant will use measureable means to determine improvements in test scores, graduation rates and reduced suspensions. The applicant is dealing with the racial disparity and working to improve both the inside and outside structures to benefit all students. On page 11-13 the applicant is bringing relationship building into the classroom and school community. The applicant is working on building and improving skills which will reinforce measureable goals. The applicant has spelled out in detail personnel responsibilities and what the expectations are as part of goal 2 on page 15.

**Weaknesses:**

It does not appear there are guarantees of sustainability or course correction if the hypothesis is not met. A confirmation of this would have added to the strength.

**Reader's Score: 44**

**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:**

N/A scored by other reviewers

**Weaknesses:**

N/A scored by other reviewers

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/23/2016 12:44 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/14/2016 08:16 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

**Reader #4:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
<b>Total</b>	100	17

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - i3 Development - 7: 84.411C

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (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 extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

**Strengths:**

Not applicable.

**Weaknesses:**

Not applicable.

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:**

Not applicable.

**Weaknesses:**

Not applicable.

**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:**

As related to addressing Criterion C.2, the applicant is proposing a quasi-experimental design. As stated on page (20), "...the evaluators will conduct a quasi-experimental design (QED)..." In meeting WWC with reservations a QED is appropriate. In postulating causal claims, these claims are strengthened when randomization is possible, but also strong with matching techniques in the absence of a true-experimental design. The applicant's matching utilizing propensity scores was thoroughly explained on pages (23 and 24). The applicant will be utilizing the propensity score approach proposed by Rosenbaum (2002), which is considered the gold standard in forming an equivalent comparison group. Propensity score technique is based on calculating a conditional probability known as a propensity of being in the treatment condition given a set of covariates. The covariates that will be used to match the treatment group per the applicant will be (a) grade-level; (b) ethnicity; (c) SES; and (d) behavioral factors. These are appropriate and sufficient covariates. As related to Criterion C.1, the five research questions on page (21) are directly related to the proposed project design. To address the impact question, the applicant proposed analytical method will be hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). Given that the data are nested (districts-schools-classrooms-teachers-students), HLM is an appropriate method to address the impact research questions. The applicant provided a detail discussion of the Level-1, and Level-2 exogenous variables, which are all appropriate given the impact research questions, see page 24. In addition, the evaluation plan included specific information related to the expected effect sizes, hence, the ability to estimate the sampling sizes needed for acceptable power. The plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively, with appropriate expertise in advanced statistics as required by utilizing a complex statistical method of HLM for the impact questions.

**Weaknesses:**

The sample sizes for the treatment and comparison groups are not adequate to meet the Department of Education's requirement of a minimum detectable effect size (MDES) of .25. The applicant's sampling plan will allow detection of MDES of .35 for the impact research question, see page 23. Also, the target values for the outcomes were not provided, without target values some of the outcomes to be measured are not operationally defined.

**Reader's Score:** 17

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/14/2016 08:16 PM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/14/2016 09:38 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

**Reader #5:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	35	0
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	45	0
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
<b>Total</b>	100	16

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - i3 Development - 7: 84.411C

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Inc. (U411C160035)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

- (1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.
- (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 extent to which the proposed project addresses the absolute priority the applicant is seeking to meet.

**Strengths:**

not reviewed

**Weaknesses:**

not reviewed

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:**

not reviewed

**Weaknesses:**

not reviewed

**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 with reservations.**

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

**Strengths:**

The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce suspensions, disciplinary disparities, and to improve "progression through K – 12 levels of school (Abstract). The treatment is the implementation of an "integration of restorative practices (RP) and social and emotional learning (SEL)" (Abstract). The proposed project has three goals and for each goal there are several objectives and outcomes (P 14 – 16). The outcomes are divided between implementation outcomes (e.g., production of "manuals and tools", P 15) and project impact outcomes (e.g., improve progression of high needs students, P 15). The evaluator will conduct the measurement of outcomes (P 14 – 16). The overall project is summarized in a Logic Model (P 16). For evaluation purposes the goals and objectives are sufficiently clear and there appeared to be potentially measurable outcomes, all of which are critical for an effective evaluation. It is also noteworthy that data is to be collected using published surveys and school records (P 14 – 16) with demonstrated, acceptable psychometric properties. For example, the proposal calls for the use of established measures such as the Authoritative School Climate Survey and the Teacher Observation of Classroom Adaptation–Checklist (P 22).

The first phase is for the development and testing of the intervention. This is to take place in three pilot schools (P 11). The evaluator will use a mixed method approach to studying the pilot implementation (P 20), which is an appropriate approach. Phase 2 is for full implementation and in this phase the evaluators will use a quasi-experimental design with treatment and control conditions to test the efficacy of the intervention (Abstract). Phase 2 will involve nine additional schools (P 11, P 20 – 21). The narrative provides a table that clearly states the evaluation questions for both the implementation study and the efficacy study (P 21). For example, the evaluation question for the implementation study has to do with the fidelity of implementation. For the efficacy study, one of the questions is about student progression the grades. The evaluation questions are appropriate in respect of the project intentions.

It is a strength of the proposal that elements of the evaluation are included in the Management Plan timeline and milestones (P 17 – 18), thus indicating that attention has been given to the integration of the evaluation with the total project.

For the efficacy study there are to be nine schools in the treatment condition and nine in the control condition. The narrative describes an appropriate power analysis (P 23). The schools are to have similar student populations (P 21). For comparison purposes teacher practices related to RP will be assessed in the control schools (P 21). Baseline equivalency across students will be established using propensity score matching techniques (P 23 – 24). Baseline data for example will be collected on school climate variables and student achievement (P 21 – 22). It is noteworthy that baseline data collection activities are included in the Management Plan (P 18), which suggests that the importance of baseline data is recognized.

The narrative also notes the possibility of attrition but argues that the sample size is large enough that reasonable attrition will not have impact study (P 23). It is noteworthy that the project has strategies for reducing attrition (P3 of timeline pages). The methods of analysis are thoroughly described and quite acceptable (P 24 – 25).

Given that measures of impact on students is only meaningful to the extent that the treatment is implemented with fidelity, the narrative describes strategies for measuring implementation fidelity (P 25; Appendix C-P2). There is to be a threshold of acceptable implementation fidelity (P 21, 23). The narrative cites previous work suggesting that they should be able to reach acceptable fidelity levels. The attention to implementation fidelity is a strength of the proposal.

The budget for the evaluation is between 18 and 20% of the total request which should be more than adequate. There is to be an external evaluator (P 17, 25). The narrative notes the evaluator's expertise in evaluation and the management of large-scale funded projects (P 25). Such an external evaluator is an important resource for proposed projects.

### **Weaknesses:**

There are no target values for the intended impact on students. For example, while the innovation intends to reduce "exclusionary discipline and discipline disparities" there is no target to be reached that would indicate success of the program. Neither is this information available for the improvement of student progression. Neither is there specific information on how closing gaps or disparities (whether discipline disparities or academic achievement disparities) will be measured, and yet these appear to be important intended outcomes. A stronger proposal would provide targets by which to judge success.

There is too little detail on how some of the outcomes will be assessed. For example, a major objective for the treatment is that progression through grades be assessed. However, other than occasional references to school records, the narrative provides no details on how progression will be measured. For example, one could set a target value of increased retention from one grade to the next. The data would be the percent of rising students at each grade level (though this data would have to take into account students moving to other schools).

The Logic Model is very general with only the coarsest articulation between components. For the Logic Model to be helpful for an evaluation, this model conveys too little information in that all inputs lead to all outputs leading to all outcomes. A stronger proposal would present a more fine-grained articulated Logic Model.

Some of the entries in the Management Plan regarding the evaluation are quite ambiguous. For example, one of the first things in the Management Plan is to hire evaluation staff and yet the evaluation staff has already been named in the proposal. There is also an entry about confirming the "measurement section," but exactly what "confirm" means is unclear, especially since the measurement devices should already be known. There is also an entry on planning the quasi experimental design but the study design should already be completed as part of the proposal. It is unclear as to whether the narrative has something different in mind or is merely referring to activities already done as part of the proposal process. A stronger proposal would not have ambiguous elements in the Management Plan.

Although fidelity of implementation is given considerable attention in the narrative, the narrative never seems to consider that the needed threshold might not be reached by all teachers. A stronger proposal would describe a backup plan for when fidelity fails, or how failures of fidelity are to be handled within the impact study.

With an evaluation budget between 18 and 20% of the total request, the request is high. A stronger proposal would more thoroughly justify the higher cost of the proposed evaluation.

The external evaluator's resume documents expertise in issues relevant to the proposed intervention; however, there is only one entry in her resume that documents evaluation experience, and that entry is for small project (\$118,000). It would strengthen the proposal if the proposal documented evaluator experience with project at the scale of the proposed project.

**Reader's Score:** 16

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/14/2016 09:38 AM