

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2016 02:10 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	30	30
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	31
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Total	100	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Validation - 1: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

The severity of the problem is addressed sufficiently: 27.5% of first year students need remediation in English at CSU; the project will expand the number of students served, scale up to another state and improve the quality of the current ERWC program in California.

The ERWC project is an innovative approach to address student deficiencies and a promising strategy to address lack of college prep in English. Across the United States, students enter college unprepared based on their performance on college placement tests. This project is innovative because of the way CSU supports the identified high schools ramping up the curriculum in English, assists high school teachers with pedagogy, includes strategies for high needs learners such as English language learners and students with disabilities, along with providing professional learning and coaching for teachers. It is rare to see this combination of so many approaches wrapped into one project.

The ERWC is an exceptional approach in that there are not adequate solutions available to address the lack of college readiness among high school students entering college and an approach that partners high schools and higher education is unique.

CSU makes a strong case for significance with detailed descriptions for many of the factors that contribute to the problem such as: the need to increase college completion, the need for all college students to enter college academically prepared, and statistics such as the startling news that 51.7% of high school students who enter two year colleges are placed in remedial courses due to lack of proficiency in basic skills.

Weaknesses:

None Identified.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

National publications and presentations have generated interest in ERWC from around the country; no such program exists to support high school students to increase their level of college readiness in English, which partners higher education and high schools.

Work has already been done preliminarily with the partnership between California and Washington (p. 12). This indicates the two states have been working together and have established a relationship and commitment to this project to make the full scale up more attainable. An example of work already done is that a transitional "Bridge to College English" course that encompasses nine ERWC modules has been put in place. In addition, leaders from WA attended workshops in CA in 2015 and 2016, and a CSU faculty member traveled to WA to work with a cadre of teacher leaders.

The i3 grant will allow ERWC team to create more tools/strategies through the proposed implementation in Washington.

The applicant proves through evidence that grant funds are needed to scale up and knock down barriers to have a more far-reaching impact.

Within the application, there is a specific list of states already interested in the ERWC project.

The barriers to broader implementation of the ERWC exist in several categories: breadth of curriculum design; availability of a range of professional learning opportunities; strategies for ELs and students with disabilities; differences in policy contexts in other states; and human resources and capacity. The applicant plans to allocate funding to address each of these barriers through project implementation.

Weaknesses:

None Identified.

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

The Logic model outcomes are aligned with research questions. Figure 6 on pg. 19 has a column with project outcomes and for each of the three outcomes, there is an explanation at the end of the exact research question the outcome connects to. For example, outcome 1 is connected to research questions 1 and 2. This satisfies the first criteria.

All elements of the Logic Model (p.19) are specifically laid out in Figure 6. The applicant has explained in extensive detail how all elements of the first criteria above will be addressed.

West Ed (a reputable organization) will be responsible for the conducting the project evaluation and assist with some aspects of feedback and improvement. The WestEd project team will assist the project with both criteria two and four in this regard. An example of the work WestEd will assist with is soliciting and reviewing feedback from study teachers in their initial implementation & making revisions if needed. This relates to achievement of project tasks and milestones, as well as continuous improvement.

The table on pp. 23-24 include specific timelines, tasks and personnel responsibilities. This is a strength related to the second criteria in that the applicant has established reasonable milestones, outlines exactly what tasks will be accomplished by these deadlines and who is responsible for doing so to achieve objectives of the project.

The budget narrative is fleshed out well with a clear breakdown related to funding allocation and will allow applicant to achieve project objectives in a timely manner.

Weaknesses:

The three goals should be stated in more measurable terms. In order to be measurable, goals should be quantified. For example with goal 1, the applicant should provide a percentage of students it plans to equip, for example: Equip 100% of the students involved in the project...with strong critical reading, writing, and language skills based on college and career-ready standards.

More information is needed on scaling up at the regional level. The applicant should explain in more detail how it plans to expand the project within the California area to scale up, just as they explained how they plan to do so in Washington.

Reader's Score: 31

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) 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. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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Last Updated: 08/16/2016 08:39 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	15
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	30	25
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	28
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Total	100	68

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Validation - 1: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

Thorough explanation was provided detailing the magnitude of low levels of college completion is a significant national challenge. The research cited also supports the severity and impact of low levels of college degrees.

The data from the West Ed study shows significant and positive results for students participating in the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) in California (p. 2, 3).

The proposal makes a strong argument for the ERWC to be considered a promising new strategy and shows how the proposed plan will build on that strategy to help students improve their literacy skills in order for students to begin college academically prepared. On p. 9 and 10, the proposal states numerous studies have documented statistically significant and positive results. More than 850 comprehensive and alternative high schools off the course to its seniors. ERWC has been approved to meet college eligibility requirements for California's public universities.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

The proposal details an unmet demand for the ERWC in order for high school graduates to be ready for college level English courses especially in the states mentioned on p. 11. For example, 44 % of students in California and 73% of students in Washington did not meet college content ready level in ELA. A number of states have moved toward using the College Content-Ready level exam for college placements. The number of inquiries about ERWC further establishes the unmet demand.

Five barriers were clearly identified and clear explanations on how they will be addressed was provided on p. 13-15 as follows:

- 1) Curriculum – expand the course to grade 11 and address the full range of literacy standards
- 2) availability and quality of ERWC professional learning – explore ways to leverage existing state, county, school district structures and resources to support ongoing learning
- 3) ELs and student with disabilities – modify selected modules to incorporate integrated and designed English language development more effectively
- 4) other states’ policy contexts – further clarify Washington State’s existing systems and plan ERWC implementation accordingly
- 5) human resources and capacity – leverage university and other resources to consult with individuals with expertise in licensing, trademarks, permissions, communications, and strategic planning

Thus, the proposal fully details how each barrier will be addressed through this grant in an effective and meaningful way. Reducing these barriers will greatly increase the likelihood of success for this course.

The feasibility of successful replication of the ERWC was addressed beginning on p. 16. Since the ERWC is considered a transitional course and nearly all students take four years of English to graduate from high school, major restructuring will not be required for most high schools. This increases the feasibility of replication of this course.

Therefore, this is a strong proposal and meets the selection criteria of strategy to scale.

Weaknesses:

The proposal lacks information from the West Ed study showing how the different student sub populations performed with ERWC. This information would further verify that ERWC is truly replicable across settings and populations as stated in the sub criterion.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant’s multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

The logic model (figure 6) provides details on the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of this proposal. The professional learning plan is strong as it specifically targets different groups – new teachers, study teachers, site leaders, coaches, etc. The 1:1 coaching sessions five times per year will provide the necessary support for teachers to be successful.

The goals and objectives are clearly specified and measurable. (Chart on p. 20) They are aligned with the proposal. Key milestones were clearly explained on p. 22, 23 and will make it easier for staff to successfully follow the plan. The timeline detailing the project tasks was thorough and doable. Sufficient time is allowed to thoroughly develop curriculum and professional learning.

Appendix J provides a detailed list by project objective. The financial model (p. 24, 25) is clearly stated by detailing when each of the costs will be incurred. Also the budget narrative provided more information.

Weaknesses:

While the proposal explains how feedback and continuous improvement will occur, it is unclear how the central project leadership team and two state leadership teams will share information. It is crucial that all stakeholders be included in this cycle of feedback and continuous improvement. (p. 25-27)

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) 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. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	13
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	30	27
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	32
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Total	100	72

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Validation - 1: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

(1) The application makes an attempt to establish the need for the Expository Reading and Writing Course. The application has established how nationwide 74% or more students who go through remedial courses, are likely to drop out of college, and take longer time to graduate (page e18). The application has made a case that to achieve the national target of having the highest number of college graduates in the world, the students to begin college academically prepared (pages e21-e22). The application provides data to show how the remediation courses: their need and successful completion has an impact on retention and graduation of college students, and the college-readiness is a key issue (page e22). The magnitude of the project is established by providing data about the CA state university, CA community colleges and the WA community and technical colleges and the need for remediation. The proposed project seeks to address this problem as it has been found to have statistically significant positive impact on measures of college readiness (page e21).

(2) The application has made a case for the ERWC project as it integrates diverse literacy and pedagogies. The application demonstrates how the strategy combines rigor with support, and inculcates in students critical thinking (pages e23-e24). The application has effectively shown that the strategy will combine the three domains of reading rhetorically, connecting reading to writing, and writing rhetorically (page e25). The application has made described the arc model where the students get involved in developing writing while interacting with professional text (page e26). The hall mark of the strategy is the combination of several pedagogies and the proactive student interaction.

(3) The exceptional nature of this project lies in the critiques that have found the strategies successful. The application cites studies that have established positive impact of the ERWC methodologies on students, especially in the rate of adoption and the integration in various institutions (page e27). The application has also made a sound case for the exceptionality of the project in the context of how the strategy can align itself with the common core state standards, which also addresses the absolute priority (page e27). The application has provided a comprehensive relevance of the ERWC in the focus on higher levels of literacy, and suitability of students who are college and career ready. The application thus has provided a strong case for the exceptional nature of the strategy.

Weaknesses:

(1) While the project has established the overall need for proper and effective remedial courses, the application has not made a connection between remedial courses and the college readiness through literacy. The magnitude of the need does not contextualize the need for reading and writing. The project has not made a connection between the magnitude of

the need and the solution of the literacy program.

(2) While the application has described the strength of the ERWC strategy, it does not contextualize the strategy for the target area and students. The application has not fully explored the strategy of how it is suitable to the students who will benefit from the strategy.

(3) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

(1) The application cites a need for the project by citing the state results from spring 2015 that shows that 44% of students in CA and 73.7% of students in WA did not meet the college ready levels in literacy (page e28). The application has also indicated how the need for ERWC is unmet, since presentations and publications of these strategies have generated inquiries from individuals and states and a readiness to use the curriculum informally. In CA, it was recommended to support students who score below level 3, and in WA a modified course called "Bridge to College English" uses strategies similar to ERWC. The need and use for ERWC is thus explored.

(2) The application has appropriately highlighted the barriers that will affect the implementation of the program in three main areas: breadth of curriculum, range of professional learning, and strategies for ELs and students with disabilities (page e30). The application has successfully shown that while the ERWC curriculum is specific to grade 12, while there is a need to modify it for using at grade 11. Also, limited funding is a barrier to high quality professional learning (page e31). Finally, the ERWC strategy is not modified for limited English proficiency and students with disabilities (page e31). The application has provided a successful discussion of how the project will address these barriers, and will be made more pliable for the target institutions and populations. The application also discusses implementation barriers such as policy contexts, and human resources capacities (page e32). Several strategies are listed such as involving policy makers and negotiating print and electronic copyright permissions for students to address human resources, capacity and cost factor (page e32). The application has thus successfully listed and addressed barriers to the project strategies.

(3) The application has attempted to establish the replicability of the model. The application stipulates an assessment of college readiness and has found that the course could be modified to be implemented at grade 11 (page e33). The application has made a case for the project as a transitional course for students who seek to qualify for college. The application shows how the various levels of achievements between the two states of CA and WA can have an impact on college readiness (pages e33-e34). As the curriculum is internationally benchmarked, the application has made a case for supporting ERWC replication in several schools. Other strong elements that make the replication possible is the "built-in" institutionalization and providing teachers with curriculum and materials for professional development.

Weaknesses:

(1) The application has not established a specific rationale for the ERWC strategy. The need for the strategy is anecdotal and no data is provide to support the unmet need for ERWC strategy (page e 29). The application has not provided a rationale why the Bridge to College English, which reflects nine ERWC modules should be replaced by the ERWC. Thus the unmet demand for the practice is not fully supported.

(2) No weaknesses noted.

(3) While the application has provided a rationale for replicability in the content of the ERWC, it has not fully explored the replicability at the organizational levels. The application has not provided sufficient evidence of how the program can be implemented with a buy in from the leadership from other institutions.

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

(1) The applicant has discussed three main project goals of equipping students with strong critical literacy skills, improving students' ability to be successful in college-level English coursework, and scale the implementation of the ERWC. Each of the project goals are operationalized into specific project outcomes (page e37). For instance, the project seeks to teach the course in 40 study schools in CA and WA and validate the success of the ERWC by evaluating the student results (page e37).

(2) The application has provided for a working management plan by citing various project targets and the staff involved (pages e37-e41). The project administrative team is well established to serve both the states (page e37). The application lists appropriate project staff such as developers, coaches and evaluators (page e38). The application has listed appropriately the roles of the project staff. For instance the coaches observe teachers and work with them one-on-one to improve their adoption of the strategies (page e38). The application has provided a clear timeline with project tasks, and persons responsible (pages e40-e41). The application has also indicated a strong focus on project milestones (page e39-e40). The project management plan is thus well established.

(3) The application has briefly indicated a financial and operating model. The project budget provides a detailed use of project funds for implementing project strategies. The application has listed project costs involved and how they will be used to implement the project (page e42). The application has made a case for how the scaling of the project at the regional level will be cost-effective, as it can be implemented as another regular course (page e42). The application has also explained effectively, the method of scaling through the use of existing professional learning structures at the schools

and regional levels. The core of project operating is maintaining partnerships and leveraging resources (page e42). The project thus has a comprehensive financial and operating model.

(4) The application has briefly indicated a sound system of feedback mechanism. The project curriculum is itself developed through consensus (page e43) and is a result of teacher feedback. The project seeks to develop and establish structures to gather input, provide feedback, and make continuous improvement. The project seeks continuous feedback from team-members. For instance, during full implementation, student outcomes are evaluated and study teachers provide classroom implementation feedback (page e43). The project also seeks feedback from state leadership teams (page e44). The project feedback system is multi-level.

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses noted.

(2) No weaknesses noted.

(3) No weaknesses noted.

(4) While the application discusses several levels of feedback, it does not describe the mechanisms of feedback. For instance, the application does not provide information of how the teachers and policy makers will provide feedback (pages e43-e44). Feedback from students is also not mentioned in the project. Thus the project feedback system is not operationalized.

Reader's Score: 32

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) 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. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/09/2016 08:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	30	0
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	14
Total	100	14

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Validation - 1: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

The Secretary considers the project quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) 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. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of

the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

Strengths:

1. The evaluation methods comply with WWC Evidence Standards without reservation especially in regard to the use of school-level randomization based on blocks at the district level. The evaluator is cognizant of conflicts to participation in the study including student selection of AP courses and/or non-active consents, and has designed the evaluation to exclude those students from the analysis (p. 29-30).
2. The key research questions are aligned to the goals and objectives of the project and address all areas of the project: impact on ELA/literacy assessment (grade 11 and 12), likelihood of passing credit-bearing English course in the first college semester, implementation fidelity, variance across subgroups, treatment group teacher practice vs. control group, and level of student engagement (p. 27-28). The methodology is further described in sections addressing each question (p. 28-35).
3. Part of the purpose of the grant is to address the scale up to an additional grade level, and additional schools in-state, and out of state through regular coaching, communities of practice, advanced professional learning for teachers and professional learning for administrators (p. 14). An additional need is for the modification of the ERWC for English Learners (p. 14). One of the barriers is securing licensing and leadership teams (p. 15). The evaluation plan addresses each of these scale-up issues by controlling factors such as selection (p. 28-29) based on demographic criteria to create sub-group from blocked schools within districts. Interviews will focus on identification of barriers (p. 29). The evaluation plan identifies minimum levels of professional development and involvement which will be used as criteria for successful teacher implementation (p. 33).
4. The plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan which includes the proposed sample size (9,600 students, p. 32) and minimum detectable effect size (0.14, p. 33). The use of “dummy variable adjustment” is an interesting addition to handle missing data, which is excluded from the analysis and leads to more realistic reporting of outcomes (p. 31). The plan also will not include data from students who join the program after random assignment. The plan also allows for attrition which is within acceptable levels per the WWC (p. 31).
5. Key components of the logic model are identified in the evaluation plan as partnerships, curriculum pedagogy and professional learning (p. 19, 33). The outcomes of the evaluation address Questions 1-8 on page 35 and these correlate to the goals and objectives on page 3 revolving around leadership teams, curriculum, professional development and student achievement. The evaluation will examine partnerships, the ERWC curriculum/pedagogy, and the ERWC professional learning. The methodology for measuring outcomes is further described in Section D.3 (p. 28-29) (baseline data, interviews) and in the appendix (p. 25) which describes more detailed measures (classroom observations, student surveys) and identifies the specific assessment tool (PLATO). The measurable threshold for implementation will be based on levels of participation in the summer institute, coaching, communities of practice meetings, and minimum logins to the ERWC Online Community (p. 33).
6. The lead investigators have previous experience, and were the lead investigators on the i3 Development Grant for the same program, and are familiar with the research design, methods and implementation. The budget has been increased to allow for this project, which is described as including over three times the number of schools in the study (p.35).

Weaknesses:

1. The appendix (p.e102) cites only the proposed evaluator’s previous research on the program. While only two studies are required for the proposal, it would be helpful to include other studies to support the evaluation process. The applicant relies heavily on the appendix (p. 102-108) to support the study design.
2. No weaknesses.

3. Although the applicant cites research for not collecting data in year one of program implementation (p. 30), this seems counter-intuitive to creating a baseline database for comparison purposes. While the idea of allowing programs to pilot the initiatives without the added burden of data collection, this would seem to be a lost opportunity to collect valuable material. This also means that grade 12 students will not be evaluated until year four of the project, providing just two years of data.

4. No weaknesses.

5. How the measurable level will be obtained is described in this section but actual levels are not included (p. 33).

6. While this section remarks on the increase in budget, it does not include personnel in the added expenses. There is no full time investigator (appendix, p. e 173-175). While there are 80 schools in this study, it is unclear how many classroom observations and implementation check-ups will take place and at which sites these will occur, or how they will be sampled (Randomly? Duplicate visits per school or district? In-house data collections?) (p. e174-175).

Reader's Score: 14

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Last Updated: 08/09/2016 08:21 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2016 10:24 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	15	0
Strategy to Scale		
1. Strategy	30	0
Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan		
1. Project Design/Mgmt. Plan	35	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	14
Total	100	14

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - i3 Validation - 1: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Fresno County Office of Education (U411B160009)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance. In determining the significance, the Secretary considers the following factor:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Strategy to Scale

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

(1) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates there is unmet demand for the process, product, strategy or practice that will enable the applicant to reach the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) The extent to which the applicant will use grant funds to address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale proposed in the application. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The feasibility of successful replication of the proposed project, if favorable results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Management Plan

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

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (34 CFR 75.210)

(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. (34 CFR 75.210)

(3) The clarity and coherence of the applicant's multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan to operate the project at a national or regional level (as defined in this notice) during the project period. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210)

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (34 CFR 75.210)

(2) 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. (2013 i3 NFP)

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will study the project at the proposed level of scale, including, where appropriate, generating information about potential differential effectiveness of the project in diverse settings and for diverse student population groups. (2013 i3 NFP)

(4) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a clear and credible analysis plan, including a proposed sample size and minimum detectable effect size that aligns with the expected project impact, and an analytic approach for addressing the research questions. (2013 i3 NFP)

(5) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key components and outcomes of

the project, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (2013 i3 NFP)

(6) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively. (2013 i3 NFP)

Strengths:

The evaluation design will ensure that the evaluation, if well implemented, will meet the What Works Clearing House Standards without reservations. The evaluation employs a cluster randomized controlled trial (RCT) that will be conducted by evaluators who have experience with implementing this design.

Although it is not required, the proposal includes a logic model. Research questions include confirmatory, exploratory, and questions about moderating and mediating factors.

The project plan includes a clear timeline for each of the project tasks and milestones for the evaluation in Appendix J.

The design includes a clear and credible analysis plan and a plan to study the project at scale to generate information about differential effects across settings and student populations.

The evaluation plan includes assessment of program fidelity to determine the extent to which the program was fully implemented.

Weaknesses:

In the introduction the case is made that too many students are requiring remediation when they enter college and are not prepared to take college level English. The research questions and measurement plan do not include an assessment of how many students require remediation when they get to college. They are only tracking their performance in college English in their first year, which will limit their analyses to those students who take college English.

The follow-up outcome measures assessing whether the program does impact college achievement comes in the last year, leaving little time to gather much follow-up data on a couple of cohorts of students.

The proposal states that they will not start evaluation until second year based on literature. However, literature does not say "no" evaluation in the first year. In this case, implementation evaluation to provide feedback would be advisable.

Reader's Score: 14

Status: Submitted
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