

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

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 09/11/2024 12:23 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)  
Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	5
Total	76	75

# Technical Review Form

Panel #27 - Early Tier 1 - 27: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

#### Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (20 points)

#### Strengths:

The applicant provided more than sufficient evidence for three promising strategies intended to provide novice teachers with the pedagogy, skills, and experiences to effectively teach in high-need schools (e16). The proposed project described the significance of the project relative to the needs of economically disadvantaged students from underrepresented minority communities with schools that are considered unsatisfactory or below-average based on state reading and math test scores (e13). The applicant presented exceptional relevant and current research to support the needs for the project. That research included but was not limited to: 1) evidence that high-poverty schools with large populations of low-performing students are hard to staff (Garcia & Weiss, 2019a); 2) evidence that teachers prepared through alternative programs may be less effective than experienced and credentialed peers (Clotfelter et al., 2007; Kini & Podolsky, 2016); and 3) a strong link between a diverse teacher workforce and improved outcomes for underrepresented students (Gershman et al., 2017) (e12-e14). Table 1 on e17 displays the evidence-based strategies comprising the project innovations. Each of the strategies was described and supported by relevant research in the narrative on e17-e20. As an example, the promising strategy of having novice teachers participate in a year-long coteaching Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) was supported by the work of Jones and Winter (2022) that showed a causal relationship that coteaching led to test score improvements for both students with and without disabilities (e18).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

**Reader's Score:** 30

**Sub**

1. (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

**Strengths:**

The applicant described a strong project that is well-defined and evidence-based. The conceptual framework presented a strong theoretical foundation for the project. An overview of the project was displayed in Figure 1 on e21 demonstrating the steps from recruitment to degree completion and then to solo teaching for novice teachers who will participate in the essential components of the project—coteaching apprenticeships, meaningful graduate work, and intensive coaching and mentoring from experienced teachers (e20-e21). The applicant provided sufficient information demonstrating that each component of the project was evidence-based. An example on e17 is the strategy of coteaching that has demonstrated a high degree of collaboration around curriculum, instruction, and assessment, resulting in improved instructional quality (Papay et al., 2020).

The Logic Model on e109 clearly demonstrated a framework with inputs, goals, activities, and outputs hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes of the project. Logic Model inputs included contributions from each of the partners engaged in the project. As an example, the university provided graduate-level teacher-leader endorsement certification for novice teachers completing the program (e109). The Logic Model displayed the components of the project in relationship to each other, contributing an operational foundation for the successful implementation of the project (e109).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score:** 10

2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

**Strengths:**

The goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project are clearly specified and measurable. Table 2 on e26-e28 presented brief descriptions of five goals with clearly aligned objectives, outcomes, and performance measures. Greater detail about the project strategies/activities was shown in the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes table in Appendix J on page e134. As an example, Goal 1 to recruit diverse, underrepresented prospective novice teachers to teach in high-need schools was addressed in part by Objective 1.1 to broaden the pool of qualified, diverse teachers (e134). The corresponding strategy was to recruit and hire novice teachers to work in high-needs schools in coteaching classrooms (e134). The anticipated outcome was that 60 novice teachers were hired, 40% of whom are from underrepresented groups (e27, e134). This example was a clear representation of the type of responses provided by the applicant in developing the proposed project.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score:** 5

3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)

Sub

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided an appropriately-detailed twofold design to address the needs/barriers experienced by the target populations. The project was designed to improve student achievement for K-5th grade high-needs students in the partnering school district (e9). The applicant defined high-needs students as those who are economically disadvantaged and/or are from underrepresented communities and/or have low performing test scores on the state READY Math and Reading assessments (e9). The project also addressed the needs of teachers of color to attain full licensure and the needs of high-poverty hard-to-staff schools that experience challenges to recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers (e14). As presented by the applicant on e14, Black teachers are much more likely to have no teaching experience and experience high turnover rates. Turnover rates in high-poverty schools have been exacerbated by the side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that included student learning disruptions, student disengagement from school, and mental health issues, contributing to stress and lack of job satisfaction for teachers (e15). As described in the Logic Model (e109), the overarching goal for the project was to recruit, support, and retain highly-qualified diverse teachers with the ability to improve student achievement. The successful implementation of the project components leading to the project outcomes displayed on e109 are very likely to help ensure the needs of the target populations will be met.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factor:**

**Reader's Score: 10**

Sub

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a comprehensive description of practices to encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of underrepresented groups (e29). The university applicant and the school district to be served by the project are both identified as equal opportunity employers. The university's strategic plan provided guidance to increase the diversity of the hiring pool through expansion of the pool of underrepresented candidates (e29) and the school district was described as having a policy of equal opportunity in recruiting, hiring, transfer and promotions, terminations, layoffs and recalls (e207). The district was also described as working to ensure employment of diverse education professionals in order to provide students with equitable and quality educational opportunities (e29).

The applicant provided a robust description of key personnel with the qualifications to support the project to develop new, diverse elementary teachers to become effective in teaching diverse and high-need students in high-need schools (e12). Key personnel were briefly identified in Table 3 on e30 while full details of primary responsibilities were detailed in Appendix J on e126. Personnel educational backgrounds and experiences relevant to the implementation of the project were clearly described and were relevant to the project goal for providing apprenticeships through residency teams for novice educator retention and student achievement. As an example,

**Sub**

the Principal Investigator (PI) was identified as the Director of the Teacher Residency and Strategic Initiatives in the university's College of Education (e126). As noted in their resume on e52-e53, this person has teamed with colleagues and participated in peer-reviewed presentations on topics similar to those included in the proposed project (for example, teacher residency programs). The person identified to manage the partnership between the university and school district is a Project Director for the school district with over 30 years' experience as a teacher and administrator (e126). Project personnel also included three consultants, one from each of the Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) partnering with the applicant (e30). The backgrounds and expertise of all project personnel will contribute to the successful implementation of the proposed project.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score:**      **10**

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

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score:**      **10**

**Sub**

- 1. (1) 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.**

**Strengths:**

The management plan is more than sufficient to help the applicant to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. Table 4 on e31-e32 provided clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for implementation of project activities. The applicant described that high-fidelity completion of the project on time and within budget will be achieved by the Principal Investigator overseeing all activities related to the university components of the project, and the Project Director for the school district will be overseeing district components of the project (e31). In addition, as evidenced by the Milestones and Timetable table, a number of the key project personnel work collaboratively to implement the outcomes. For example, the university PI and district Project Director will both be responsible for submitting the paperwork necessary for the project to be identified as a Registered Apprenticeship Partner through the state Department of Labor (e31). The budget narrative on e184 included further information regarding each of the key personnel, their responsibilities, the amount of effort they contributed to the project, and the base salary. The totality of the information provided by the applicant relative to the management plan clearly demonstrated the potential for the project to be completed on time and within budget.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

Sub

Reader's Score: 10

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

##### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners**  
(up to 3 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
- (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

##### **Strengths:**

The applicant clearly demonstrated how the project will be implemented in partnership with Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). This partnership provided HBCU consultants to support the recruitment of diverse, underrepresented prospective and novice teachers to teach in high-need elementary schools in the partner school district (e109). Such a partnership will help to ensure the successful implementation of a project leading to highly-qualified teachers able to teach in high-needs schools.

##### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 3

#### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

##### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

**Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports** (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

- (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial

**courses.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant described a project clearly designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and teachers. The gaps in learning and lack of social interactions experienced by students in already high-need schools contributed to mental health issues and high absenteeism, seriously impacting the abilities of teachers to get students caught up while trying to keep up with current curricula (e15).

(b) The proposed project included the use of evidence-based approaches and supports to support the needs of teachers serving underrepresented students. Those strategies included both novice and mentor teachers receiving high-quality professional development through graduate coursework, novice teachers participating in an apprenticeship coteaching model for one year, and mentor teachers providing daily personalized coaching to novice teachers (e18).

**Weaknesses:**

(a) The applicant provided no evidence of conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments focused on students that have become disengaged from learning and on strategies specific to reengaging and supporting students and their families.

**Reader's Score:**      **2**

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**Status:**              Submitted

**Last Updated:**    09/11/2024 12:23 PM



Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 09/03/2024 04:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)  
Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	5
Total	76	75

# Technical Review Form

Panel #27 - Early Tier 1 - 27: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

#### Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (20 points)

#### Strengths:

The applicant's approach to developing a program that will focus on recruiting, supporting, and retaining high-quality diverse teachers to teach grades K-5 with a high percentage of high-need students (e12) is thorough.

What makes this application a promising new strategy is that this project will increase opportunities for novice teachers, specifically those of color, to learn more about the training and professional opportunities while serving the underserved population. The novel component is that the project proposes supplying employed novice teachers with a paid apprenticeship year to coteach in high-need schools for novice teacher induction and for addressing pandemic-related learning loss and current chronic student absenteeism (e18). The extensive mentoring strategy will assist with the teacher shortage, as well as the teacher quality gap found in elementary schools with high-need students (e13).

The project seeks to recruit 60 diverse educators from various teacher preparation programs (traditional education graduates, alternative certification, preservice) in partnership with three South Carolina minority-serving universities to teach in two high-need elementary schools in South Carolina by offering high retention pathways (e9).

The application provides a rationale for the present project, summarizing how teacher residencies, registered apprenticeships, and comprehensive induction support are examples of programs with innovative recruitment and retention strategies that have been implemented across the United States (e17). These examples provide the needed backing for this project's viability.

#### Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Sub**

1. (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

**Strengths:**

The logic model showcases the key components of the project while identifying the short and longer-term outcomes (e109). Teacher outcome examples include “improved teaching effectiveness scores” and “more diverse, highly qualified teachers retained in high need schools, reducing teacher turnover” (e109). Student outcome examples include “chronic absenteeism improves” and “closing opportunity gaps for high-need, underserved students” (e109).

The ability to replicate the program across the state of South Carolina as a long-term outcome is commendable (e109).

The key components of pre-service teacher recruitment and retention (e109) begin to assist the pre-service teachers with the opportunities that are available in this unique field of study.

The conceptual framework is considered high quality because all the components are interconnected and are well-aligned with the project narrative, which supports the underlying research.

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

**Strengths:**

The application’s five goals (e109) are clear and aligned with the major activities and outcomes that the applicant provided (e109).

The applicant’s 16 project objectives described on pages e134 are clearly stated with appropriate strategies and outcome measures (e134). All outcomes are measurable and realistic for the subject matter. For example, they will use the South Carolina Teaching Standards 4.0 Evaluation Rubric (e135) to evaluate novice teachers during their solo teaching time (e27).

All outcomes are measurable and realistic for the subject matter. Examples include “90% of novice and mentor teachers earn 18 hours of graduate credit” and “Up to 1500 students instructed by two teachers” (e109).

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

Sub

3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)

**Strengths:**

The target population is clearly identified as the K-5 students in two high-need schools in South Carolina (e9). A second target population is the novice teachers who will be mentored and provided with best practices needed to support the students in a classroom setting (e9).

The novice teachers will address the needs of the primary target population by serving as co-teachers to the teacher of record in the classroom. This distinction will allow for more individualized learning opportunities for students (e9).

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factor:

**Reader's Score: 10**

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)

**Strengths:**

Regarding employment, the applicant has a diversity hiring plan (e128-129) that lists the advertising, recruiting, and outreach plan. Additionally, all postings made through the applicant's Human Resource Department are automatically distributed to eight diversity hiring sites. These sites target veterans, disabled professionals, Black professionals, Hispanic professionals, and women professionals (e129). There will be a need to hire a Project Manager (e185) to support the day-to-day responsibilities of the project.

The applicant provided adequate justification for the personnel that would be employed by the project scope through the curriculum vitae and resumes provided (e52-88). Key personnel, specifically the PI, have advanced degrees in relevant areas of study while holding significant professional positions that will be helpful to the dissemination of the grant (e52-54). For example, the PI has extensive grant leadership (e53), to include federally funded projects where she has served as PI or Co-PI.

Additionally, the project's key personnel are listed with their credentials and responsibilities to the program (e126). They are well-qualified.

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 10**

Sub

- 1. (1) 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.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a comprehensive timeline (e31-32). Each key activity and the person responsible for leading the effort are broken down by year and month. For example, "hired novice teachers and mentors engage in two social and emotional learning micro credential courses" (e31). The timeline also includes a clearly defined list of responsibilities for each member of the primary team, over an appropriate period (e184-192), which provides stability to the project as well as accountability.

The application described a detailed budget narrative with a description of responsibilities for each key personnel member, to include the budgeted level of effort necessary for them to successfully manage the project (e184-192).

The applicant lists milestones that are associated with this project as activities that are completed within a stated objective category (e31-32). The personnel that are responsible for the completion of the milestones is appropriate and includes multiple partners to ensure success (e31-32).

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 3 points)**

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:**

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)**

**(b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)**

**(c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)**

**(d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)**

**Strengths:**

The application adequately meets this criterion by partnering with Claflin University, Clinton College, and South Carolina State University, all Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) based in the state of South Carolina (e12).

Each partner HBCU will supply a consultant to serve as a campus-based leader for the project (e31), which will assist with fostering project success.

The partnership brings value to the project by providing access to the target student population and supporting monthly seminars held for novice teachers and mentors (e31).

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:        3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

**Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).**

**Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:**

**(a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and**

**(b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.**

**Strengths:**

The application meets criterion (b) by supplying instruction and mentorship to novice teachers in high-need schools that have been plagued by low achievement scores and chronic absenteeism post Covid-19. The additional educator in the classroom will decrease the student-teacher ratio (e22) and provide accelerated learning opportunities for the most vulnerable students (e28). Research indicates that teachers who engage in these higher levels of collaboration demonstrate improved instructional quality and are more effective at raising student achievement in reading (e17), a foundational skill needed by all students who have experienced pandemic-related learning loss.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not adequately address (a) how they will conduct community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families.

**Reader's Score:**      **2**

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**Status:**              Submitted  
**Last Updated:**      09/03/2024 04:32 PM

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 09/06/2024 04:44 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)  
Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Sub Total	70	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Impact of COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	5
Total	76	75



# Technical Review Form

Panel #27 - Early Tier 1 - 27: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance

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

Reader's Score: 20

#### Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (20 points)

#### Strengths:

The proposed project will develop outstanding innovative strategies in teacher recruitment, preparation, support, and instructional practices to enhance teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. It will address challenges in education by implementing research-based evidence-based practices, fostering diversity, promoting inclusive environments, and supporting teacher growth and retention. The initiative focuses on recruiting, supporting, and retaining high-quality diverse teachers in high-need elementary schools to enhance student achievement and address educational disparities. Key strategies include a yearlong co-teaching apprenticeship, high-dosage tutoring, and professional development aligned with National Board Professional Teacher Standards. These efforts are complemented by strategic planning for administrator staffing, developing local pathways to teaching, and offering Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) training. The project also emphasizes compliance with regulations, progress monitoring, and collaboration with partners to create inclusive learning environments and promote equity. A pilot in North Charleston demonstrated promising results, with 100% teacher retention and improved student performance, and the project aims to expand these strategies to more schools while conducting rigorous evaluations to ensure effectiveness. (e12-e15, e13-18, e18-20)

#### Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Sub**

- 1. (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant presents a robust conceptual framework for the proposed research, emphasizing innovative strategies and evidence-based practices to enhance teacher effectiveness, student outcomes, and educational equity in high-need schools. The framework incorporates a co-teaching model, comprehensive induction support, stakeholder collaboration, and professional development, with a focus on diversity in teacher recruitment and continuous improvement efforts. The Logic Model provides a structured roadmap linking project activities to desired outcomes, such as improved teacher quality and student achievement. It includes research-based strategies like Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) training and creating inclusive learning environments. The project aims to close academic opportunity gaps and improve teacher retention through initiatives like instructional coaching and scaffolding support for novice teachers. By aligning certain performance measures with project objectives, the framework demonstrates a commitment to equity and diversity, ensuring equitable access to quality education and fostering positive changes in educational settings. (p. e20-29, e109, e210)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 2. (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)**

**Strengths:**

The proposal sets forth clear and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes for the grant project, focusing on enhancing teacher quality, improving student outcomes, and promoting educational equity. It includes specific components such as implementing a co-teaching model, providing induction support for novice teachers, promoting diversity in recruitment, offering professional development, and improving project design through retention initiatives and evaluation measures. These goals are quantifiable through indicators like recruitment numbers, completion rates of teacher preparation programs, teacher retention rates, and student achievement data. Performance measures clearly aligns with the outcomes and will be used to determine the program's effectiveness and impact by evaluating student achievement, teacher retention, mentor engagement, co-teaching strategy implementation, and professional development completion, all directly aligned with the project's goals and objectives. (p.e26-28, e134-140, e193-199)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

Sub

3. (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)

**Strengths:**

The applicant's project activities are designed to meet the needs of high-need schools and students, through evidence-based strategies and clear objectives. It addresses a diverse target population, including novice and mentor teachers, school principals, prospective teachers from various pathways, teachers from HBCUs, and students in high-need schools. Key components include professional development, personalized coaching, recruitment of diverse educators, and support for novice teachers. The project emphasizes continuous improvement and collaboration, featuring structured training, gradual responsibility release, varied assessments, and specific outcome measures to enhance educational quality and effectiveness. It focuses on retaining teachers to boost student achievement through co-teaching apprenticeships, graduate courses, and advisory board guidance. "High-need" refers to student challenges including declining math and reading scores, chronic absenteeism, and equitable access to quality teachers, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to support academic success in these schools. (p. e28-29)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factor:

**Reader's Score: 10**

Sub

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)

**Strengths:**

The applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to encouraging applications for employment from underrepresented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. They emphasize being an AA/EEO employer and actively fostering a culturally diverse workforce dedicated to working in a multicultural setting. Specific strategies include implementing Diversity Plans for each search committee, setting targets for diversity in applicant pools, utilizing inclusive language in job postings, actively recruiting diverse candidates through partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all students. They aim to remove barriers to entry, provide support and incentives for underrepresented teachers, and ensure equal opportunity in recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and other employment decisions without discrimination. (p. e29, e107-108, e128-129)

**Sub**

The key project personnel for the PARTNERS project have a diverse set of qualifications and experiences, including expertise in educational leadership, project management, instructional coaching, mentoring, program evaluation, recruitment, curriculum development, data analysis, and teacher training. They bring a wealth of knowledge in areas such as teacher residency programs, strategic initiatives, HR management, evaluation, diversity initiatives, and educational research. They also have experience in various educational roles and possess credentials such as teaching certificates and honors related to their field, and experiences working at and with HBCUs. (e29, e30, resumes, e60-68, e107-108, e128-129)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources and quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub**

- 1. (1) 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.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant presents a comprehensive and structured management plan to achieve the project's objectives on time and within budget. This plan meticulously outlines responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for all project tasks, assigning clear roles to key personnel and partners, and establishing detailed schedules for activities. Mechanisms for evaluation and monitoring ensure accountability, progress tracking, and timely adjustments. Collaboration with partners enhances efficiency and effectiveness, while the Milestones and Timeline table aligns key activities, objectives, and milestones with the Logic Model. Specific time commitments are outlined for various roles: novice teachers will spend 50-100% of their time on coteaching and professional development, mentor teachers 30-90% on coaching and coursework, and project managers are full-time for classroom visits and data collection. The Principal Investigator and Program Manager will each dedicate 1.2 months annually to the project, with additional efforts cost shared. This structured approach, with defined responsibilities and performance measures, showcases a comprehensive strategy for successful project implementation. (p. e30-39, e31-32, budget)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

#### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:

**Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners (up to 3 points)**

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:

- (a) Community colleges (as defined in the NIA)
- (b) Historically Black colleges and universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (c) Tribal Colleges and Universities (as defined in the NIA)
- (d) Minority-serving institutions (as defined in the NIA)

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant outlines the PARTNERS project, which aims to promote equity in student access to educational resources by recruiting, supporting, and retaining high-quality diverse teachers in high-need schools. Key strategies include recruiting diverse teachers, supporting novice teachers, offering professional development, fostering teacher collaboration, and ensuring equitable access for all students. A significant component of the project is its partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other educational institutions, which aids in achieving these goals. The project emphasizes continuous monitoring, improvement, and partnerships to create an inclusive and equitable educational environment, particularly benefiting students from underrepresented groups. This collaboration with HBCUs underscores the applicant's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equitable access to quality education. (p. e21-22, e69-108)

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 3**

### Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

#### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:

**Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty: Community Asset-Mapping and Needs Assessment and Evidence-Based Instructional Approaches and Supports (up to 3 points).**

Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them through the following priority areas:

- (a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families; and
- (b) Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional

development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and expanded learning time to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.

**Strengths:**

(b) The applicant clearly addresses the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty by acknowledging the challenges faced during and after the pandemic. They highlight disruptions experienced by students, gaps in knowledge and skills, struggles with mental health issues, increased student absenteeism, and negative consequences on student achievement. The proposal emphasizes the importance of providing support to educators, especially in high-need schools, to address these challenges effectively. Strategies such as intensive professional development, personalized instructional coaching, coteaching apprenticeships, social-emotional learning (SEL) support, and addressing chronic absenteeism and learning loss are proposed. The applicant clearly describes how they will recruit, train, and retain diverse educators, monitor and evaluate the impact of programs on student achievement, attendance, and teacher retention rates, and provide ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance teaching effectiveness and student outcomes in high-need schools. Additionally, initiatives like the Summer weeklong Coteaching Institute, SEL Microcredential coursework, and continuous improvement meetings for principals are implemented to support educators in adapting to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The applicant clearly describes how they are utilizing evidence-based instructional approaches and supports, such as professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high-quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K-12, and extended learning time. These strategies aim to accelerate learning for students, ensure equity, avoid tracking or remedial courses, and help all students successfully meet challenging academic content standards in an inclusive and supportive learning environment. (p.e18-20, e28-29, e210)

**Weaknesses:**

(a) The applicant does not discuss the use of conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments.

**Reader's Score:**      **2**

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**Status:**                Submitted  
**Last Updated:**      09/06/2024 04:44 PM

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

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 10/02/2024 03:08 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)  
Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	27
Sub Total	30	27
Total	30	27



# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Early Tier 2 - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 27

#### Sub

1. (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 standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)

#### Strengths:

The evaluation plan is well thought and meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations by implementing a rigorous quasi-experimental design (QED) that uses propensity score matching to ensure baseline equivalence between treatment and control groups for its three core research questions (p. e32). These research questions are designed to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the PARTNERS program by closely examining its impact on student achievement, attendance, and teacher retention. By employing a two-step matching method, the evaluation minimizes selection bias and ensures comparability between the groups. This matching approach follows WWC guidelines, as baseline equivalence will differ by no more than 0.25 standard deviations on key characteristics (p. e33).

The plan's power analysis further demonstrates its methodological rigor, showing that it has 80% power to detect minimum detectable effect sizes (MDES) of 0.313 for student outcomes and 0.283 for teacher outcomes (p. e34). The plan also ensures the validity of its findings by relying on objective data sources, including state standardized test scores (SC READY) for student achievement and daily attendance records, along with teacher retention data obtained from personnel records (p. e34).

Furthermore, the plan actively addresses potential threats to validity, such as attrition and bias. By continuously monitoring participant attrition and examining both overall and differential attrition, the evaluation mitigates the risk of bias introduced by participants leaving the study. It also leverages the PARTNERS program's supportive structures, such as frequent mentor interactions and financial retention incentives, to minimize attrition (p. e34). Together, these strategies enable the evaluation to meet WWC standards and provide a robust assessment of the program's effectiveness.

#### Weaknesses:

One noted weakness in the evaluation plan is the lack of clear criteria for selecting both the schools and teachers involved in the study. The plan doesn't provide details on how the 60 diverse educators, recruited from various teacher preparation programs in partnership with 3 South Carolina HBCUs, or the 2 high-need elementary schools will be selected. Clarifying these selection criteria would help ensure the study aligns more closely with What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards, which emphasize transparency in participant selection to ensure comparability, generalizability, and validity.

Sub

Reader's Score: 18

2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

**Strengths:**

The evaluation methods provide a comprehensive approach to delivering performance feedback and ensuring periodic assessment of progress toward the intended outcomes of the PARTNERS program. The combination of quarterly data collection and biannual Discover Days (p. e36) supports regular monitoring and stakeholder engagement. By incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, such as surveys, interviews, and programmatic data (pp. e36–e37), the evaluation captures a broad range of feedback. Additionally, the interim and summative reports (p. e37) offer a clear process for tracking progress and informing decisions, helping to guide the program effectively over time.

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

**Strengths:**

The evaluation plan describes the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, making sure that there is a clear link between each element. By aligning these components with the program objectives, the plan provides a useful basis for tracking progress and assessing results (p. e134). The inclusion of mediators and moderators adds value by considering external factors, such as participant characteristics and variations in program delivery, that could affect outcomes (p. e38). The plan also mentions methods, such as descriptive and regression analyses, to examine the relationships between these factors and the outcomes. This approach supports a more thorough evaluation and offers insights that can help improve the program.

**Weaknesses:**

A noted weakness in the evaluation plan is that the measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation have not yet been clearly defined and will be determined later during the Discovery Days: “Basis will work with the project team during Discovery Days to define measures of adherence and exposure for key components of the PARTNERS model outlined in the logic model and set levels for unacceptable, acceptable, and ideal implementation” (p. e38). The current lack of specific criteria introduces some uncertainty about how the implementation will be evaluated. Without established criteria to measure fidelity to the intervention, there is a risk that the implementation may vary significantly across contexts, making it difficult to assess whether the outcomes observed are due to the intervention itself or other factors. This could also affect the replicability of the study, as future implementations would lack clear guidance on what constitutes fidelity to the PARTNERS model.

Reader's Score: 4

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Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 10/02/2024 03:08 PM

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 09/27/2024 03:56 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)  
Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	27
Sub Total	30	27
Total	30	27

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Early Tier 2 - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Clemson University (S411C240067)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Reader's Score: 27

#### Sub

1. (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 standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (20 points)

#### Strengths:

Basis Policy Research (Basis), an independent external evaluator, will conduct the evaluation of the PARTNERS program (page e33). This is a strength because Basis has experience with large-scale federal grants.

The PARTNERS program will use a quasi-experimental design (QED) to meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards with reservations (page e33).

Propensity score matching (PSM) techniques are utilized to form matched analytical samples and establish baseline equivalence, ensuring that the comparison groups are appropriately aligned and reducing potential bias in the sample selection (page e34).

Basis will monitor overall and differential attrition rates across groups, demonstrating a proactive approach to identifying potential risks, therefore enhancing the reliability of the evaluation (page e34).

Basis employs a rigorous power analysis to determine the minimum detectable effect size (MDES), considering nesting effects to ensure that the evaluation is sensitive enough to detect meaningful impacts (page e35).

Proper analytical procedures are provided for the three impact research questions (page e35). Multi-level analysis is adopted analyze student outcomes, which adjusts the nesting effect of students cluster within the a classroom.

#### Weaknesses:

The power analysis does not include attrition rates at the student and teacher levels, causing potential threat on producing evidence. Without accounting for attrition in the power analysis, the study may overestimate its statistical power, potentially leading to insufficiently post hoc power.

**Sub**

**Reader's Score: 18**

**2. (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)**

**Strengths:**

Basis will provide feedback on the project's progress and the fidelity of its implementation (page e33), which is a strength of the proposed project because it ensures continuous monitoring, allowing for timely adjustments to improve implementation outcomes.

Basis will use both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data and provide feedback, demonstrating a comprehensive approach that enhances the robustness and reliability of the evaluation.

Bimonthly meetings will be held with project partner staff, along with biannual meetings for co-interpreting the data, ensuring ongoing collaboration and evaluation on project progress.

Research questions and data sources are provided on page e36, reflecting a well-structured and transparent evaluation framework.

A detailed plan outlining what to report, when to report, and the types of reports is provided on page e37, with additional details in Appendix J on page e133, which shows thorough preparation and clarity in reporting. Such plan is beneficial for maintaining consistency and meeting project goals.

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**3. (3) The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)**

**Strengths:**

Mediator and moderator analyses will include student and teacher characteristics in the impact analyses, which is a strength of the evaluation because it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how individual characteristics influence outcomes.

The regression analysis, detailed on page e38, is necessary to provide more precise estimates of the program's effects.

The measurable threshold for acceptable implementation is presented under outputs on page e109, such as "90% of PARTNERS mentors earn a teacher leader endorsement on the SC teaching certificate," which is a strength because it provides a clear and quantifiable benchmark for success, enabling the project to track and demonstrate progress toward meaningful outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

Although standardized tests (Math and ELA student achievement data) will be used, measures such as the Mentor Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey, Program Staff Survey, and Novice and Mentor Teacher Survey, as specified on page e36 under quantitative data, do not have psychometric properties or references to support the previous validation of these instruments.

Sub

Reader's Score: 4

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/27/2024 03:56 PM