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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	6
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	57
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	2
Total	106	59

Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - EIR Early Phase - 15: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

    Sub

   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 notes a prior pilot of the proposed intervention in West Virginia with a good sample size (n=408) (p. e25, narrative p.3). This pilot provided Sesame Street in Schools resources to students and parents, providing them tools and strategies to address social-emotional needs. Providing family engagement is a critical tool as part of the wrap-around services offered by in-school support like Communities in Schools (CIS), as research shows any student intervention is more effective with parent/family buy-in and support. The applicant proposes expanding the pilot to include additional sites in two states (p. e26, narrative p. 4). This will build on prior/existing strategies that have shown promising outcomes. The applicant notes research suggesting increased SEL competency is linked to increased student outcomes in schools (p. e27, narrative p. 5). The applicant notes a gap in available resources for caregivers and educators to support this development, indicating the proposed project will help fill this gap. The applicant has noted a lack of resources and is seeking to use federal money to provide resources that can fill said gap, making it a potentially useful proposal in a wider setting, especially considering the national reach of CIS. The applicant articulates a systematic incorporation of a robust 12-week intervention (pp. e28-29, narrative p.6-7) that includes continuous improvement, assessment strategies, and in-school support. This is a textbook method of implementing an intervention with fidelity.

    Weaknesses:

    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: 22

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 project has had 7 years of protyping, continuous improvement, and implementation, which has established an implementation framework that can be replicated at other CIS sites (pp. e29-30, narrative pp. 7-8). This ensures the proposed intervention can be implemented with fidelity, especially as it will take place within nationally-affiliated CIS branches. The applicant notes resources using a variety of media (p. e31, narrative p. 9), including videos, digital resources, and print material. This will provide multiple access points for stakeholders to engage with the intervention, likely increasing the effectiveness of the intervention. The applicant uses a logic model that indicates SEL outcomes linked to increased student attendance and foundational literacy skills (p. e53). The logic model also articulates the intervention and links between educator and student outcomes (p. e53). For example, successful intervention with childcare givers over the 12-week intervention will likely lead to improved SEL outcomes with their students. The applicant is relying on previously implemented interventions that have shown promising results, indicating they have both successfully demonstrated the project activities and provided some evidence of the quality of their framework, as noted in previous study outcomes (pp. e70-72).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant notes a variety of media and prior implementation that could have provided additional context and information regarding the project's conceptual framework and work products. However, no exemplars of this prior work have been provided in the narrative nor in the appendices, so the quality of the cited pilot studies are not able to be evaluated.

   Reader's Score: 8

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 stated goal is to improve K-2 student SEL and reading outcomes through training CIS Site Coordinators and caregivers (p. e32, narrative p. 10). This goal aligns with the conceptual, evidence-based framework. Some of the stated objectives are specified and measurable. For example, it is important that the project establishes an expectation that "100% of project team meeting agendas and notes include implementation updates" in Measure 3.5 (p. e96) as it provides an easily accessible record for project accountability and continuous improvement.

   Weaknesses:

   Though the applicant notes K-2 reading improvement as an academic outcome and goal in the logic model, it is not noted at all in Exhibit A (Strategies, Outcomes and Measures Table) (pp. e95-97) or Exhibit B (Management Plan and Project Timeline) (pp. e98-104). Though reading outcomes are noted in Exhibit H (Efficacy Study Outcome Measure Details) (pp. e44,119-124), academic outcomes would make a more compelling argument as a central feature of the proposed project, instead of being a byproduct of it. In addition, of the 7 research questions indicated in Exhibit C (Project Goals, Research Questions, and Data Sources Crosswalk), only 1 question deals with student progress or achievement (pp. e105-106). The remaining questions deal with employee feedback and implementation rubrics. The application would be made stronger by equally emphasizing student data collection with fidelity of implementation by project staff, as the positive outcomes of the former indicate success of the latter. The "fidelity rubric" was mentioned a number of times (pp. e39, 42, 44, 105, 137), but the exemplars provided in Exhibit F (Sample Program Implementation Fidelity Key) do not indicate it will collect data that will reflect quality of programming (pp. e110-112). Quantitative measures only include attendance records, and qualitative measures only include a categorical "Excellent" "Fair" or "Poor" quality rating. A more robust strategy might ask site coordinators to evaluate materials based on alignment to Nevada and North Carolina's state SEL standards.

Sub

> **Reader's Score:** 2

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 notes community needs assessments indicated "little or no access to reliable print or online resources" for supporting child development around 'topics' like trauma or grief (p. e30, narrative p. 8). The proposed intervention will provide materials to fill this gap. The applicant notes the project wil be implemented in Title I schools in the target areas, which by definition have a high proportion of low income students (p. e33, narrative p. 11). The intervention proposed indicates it is specifically designed to address ACEs, which are more likely to occur in low income areas, thus meeting the needs of the target populations. A 12-week intervention on needed topics is likely sufficient time to see positive outcomes (pp. e15, 28). The focus on resilience skills and community-specific topics (p. e28) will allow the applicant to create a foundational set of skills that can then be used to address more targeted needs (p. e31).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant does not provide district- or campus-level data in the target areas. As the applicant has already indicated CIS has site coordinators in the targeted campuses, this data would have made the application much stronger, especially to identify gaps in discipline, behavior, and early reading achievement.

   Reader's Score: 12

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:**

Reader's Score: 9

> **Sub**

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 noted Sesame Workshop and CIS embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion policy in their leadership and hiring practices (p. e34, narrative p. 12). Identified personnel from AIR, Sesame Workshop, and CIS have extensive experience working in underserved communities and with education research (pp. e21-48).

   Weaknesses:

   While all three organizations are stated to "strive" for diversity, equity, and inclusion (p. e34), the application would be made stronger by including the formal policies from the organizations.

   Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 6

  Sub

  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. (10 points)**

     Strengths:

     The workflow is articulated (narrative pp. 14-15) with Sesame Workshop acting as a financial overseer and providing content/supplies, etc., with AIR leading data collection, and CIS administering the intervention. With multiple large entities working collaboratively, it is important to clarify these roles to ensure the program is implemented efficiently.

     Weaknesses:

     The applicant does not note specific roles and responsibilities for individual project personnel (Appendix J, Exhibit B). As the applicant noted a large number of personnel, this delineation of tasks is needed to calibrate workload and accountability practices. Most project activities are not provided with enough detail to provide context for project deployment. For example, Strategy 2.1, Activity 2.1.c only notes site coordinators are to "implement modules and use resources with students." As CIS site coordinators operate during the school day, clarity is needed to determine how/when students are identified for support, how campus administrators and teachers are included in student intervention, and how student/family buy-in will be obtained. Dissemination strategies note only that they will "Share SSIC broadly" (Strategy 4.3). Additional clarity is needed as CIS operates in all 50 states and Sesame Street is internationally known and distributed.

       Reader's Score: 6

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: 0

  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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

   Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

   Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:
   (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
   (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
   (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
   (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
   (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not meet the criteria (underserved students in middle school or high school) for this CPP.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

   Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (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:
   (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 notes research suggesting COVID-19 increased parental stress and feelings of isolation, particularly in marginalized communities (narrative pp. 4-5). The proposed intervention will provide families tools to address the gaps resulting from the pandemic that will help build successful at-home strategies such as safer relationships and supporting care, both of which have been linked to increased student engagement and performance at school.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant does not provide district- or campus-level data in the target areas. As the applicant has already indicated CIS has site coordinators in the targeted campuses, this data would have made the application much stronger, especially to identify gaps as part of a needs assessment in discipline, behavior, and early reading achievement.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/02/2022 01:25 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)
Reader #2:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	23
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	8
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	59
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. COVID-19	3	2
Sub Total	6	2
Total	106	61

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)

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:**

Reader's Score: 20

    Sub

    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 will test the efficacy of combining Communities in Schools (CIS) and Sesame Street Workshop materials to impact childhood trauma and improve reading in K-2 students who are receiving case management. The applicant will be implementing the program in low-resourced, high-needs schools (Title 1 eligible). The applicant is building off of the initial project pilot that was implemented in West Virginia and taking the lessons learned to Nevada and North Carolina to further refine the project with a larger number of schools and students, CIS caseworkers, and parents. Both Communities in Schools and Sesame Street have longstanding positive outcomes and combining the two approaches has promising potential to build on existing strategies.

      Weaknesses:

      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: 23

    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 conceptual framework links Communities in Schools and the Sesame Street learning tools that have extensive research to support their effectiveness with young children in addressing SEL and educational outcome improvements. The application includes a logic model that clearly shows the linkage between the project components and the expected outcomes (p. e53). Taken together these application components support a very good underlying framework of the project's design.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant states they are building off of the effectiveness of the study in West Virginia schools, but do not provide the findings of that implementation (narrative p. 8). The applicant also does not state the reason they chose North Carolina and Nevada to implement another pilot and refine the consortium project even further. Including the previous pilot findings and justification for another pilot and scale-up in the two states would strengthen the application.

   Reader's Score: 8

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 applicant includes the goals, objectives, and measurement indicators for each of the goals. The logic model is clear and offers sequential steps of getting to outcomes. The applicant presents the tools that will be used to measure each of the objectives and outcomes as well as the acceptable fidelity. The table in Appendix J, Exhibit A (Strategies, Outcomes and Measures Table) includes each of the strategies, outcomes, and measures associated with the project implementation.

   Weaknesses:

   Some of the table entries labeled as outcomes are actually tasks or milestones that do not lend themselves to measurement. For example, under objective 3, the outcome labeled 3.2 is actually a task and therefore does not need to be in the outcome table. Another weakness of the application is that although the applicant includes a sample fidelity rubric in Exhibit F (Sample Program Implementation Fidelity key) and a scale that ranges from 1-3 for each factor in the professional development and other implementation components (students/parent/caregiver), the applicant intends to use PD attendance as the measure. Although attendance may be a quantity factor, it is not necessarily a quality factor to support program outcomes. More detail around the assessment of quality would help anchor the scales and address the measurement component of this factor. The rubric would be improved by including measures on usefulness of the activity in the rubric for improving the professional development (or other activity) outcome focused on the overall goal of supporting educational achievement or other goals of the project.

   Reader's Score: 3

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 provides the criteria for project inclusion, which is students and families in Title 1 schools that are receiving case management. The case management is the gateway for project inclusion/recruitment. The target population is K-2 students who are in case management (CIS) and are in need of additional supports to help them adjust to classroom environments due to experiencing some type of trauma or adverse childhood experience. The parents/caregivers of these children are also the population of interest as they are in the same environments as the children and are likely to have experienced trauma from the pandemic or other environmental factors. The supports provided to the parents and students are adapted based on the specific needs of the family. The applicant also states that they will develop the parent/caregiver support tools/curriculum using various platforms and mechanisms that match the parent/caregiver accessibility needs. Taken together, these design components are likely to meet the needs of the project participants.

Weaknesses:

Other than children and parent/caregivers in Title 1 schools that are in K-2, the applicant does not include any specific information about the participant needs that require additional supports. Including more information about the specifics of the students/caregivers that receive case management through CIS would improve this application. For example, including the percentage of students who have experienced a traumatic event (ACE) that initiated their CIS or the number of students who are at risk of not being on age proficiency for reading would improve the application.

Reader's Score: 12

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:**

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

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 applicants include a diversity statement (p. 12). The key project personnel have experience in multi-state projects that include pilot and scale up. The educational backgrounds and credentials of the project personnel are relevant to the proposed project in that the key personnel have backgrounds in both education and SEL development. The AIR staff worked on the pilot in West Virginia and the data collection tools are already developed.

Weaknesses:

The budget includes some staff positions for which there are no resumes included in the application. For example, Director of Finance, Course Director, and Communications Director are listed in the budget but no resumes for these staff are included in the application (Part 5. Budget Narrative). The applicant does not include a recruitment strategy or information about their specific recruitment strategy related to employment of persons from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

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. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant includes a management plan in the appendix (Exhibit B. Management Plan and Project Timeline) that has a quarterly table presenting each task of the project implementation, milestones, and the partner responsible for the tasks. The sequencing and timing of the tasks are realistic and have the potential to support the project being accomplished on time and within budget. The applicant includes incentives for school staff and parents for completing the evaluation tools (Human Subjects Narrative, p. 2) and includes a CQI plan (narrative p. 25). The CQI plan is both quarterly meetings and semi-annual and annual reporting to stakeholders, which has the potential for making mid-course corrections and informing project improvement. The key personnel roles and responsibilities are listed in the narrative on p. 12-14, and they align with the project implementation tasks in Exhibit B. The support letters from Community in Schools state they will help the project team with school recruitment in Nevada and North Carolina (p. e50-52). This support should help the project achieve their recruitment goals.

Weaknesses:

Exhibit B does not include when the pilot schools will be recruited. Including the pilot school recruitment in the timeline would improve the management plan. The applicant also does not include how parent engagement will occur to support the ongoing learning of the child. The applicant mentions sharing the Sesame Street in Communities resources with parents (Objective 1 in Appendix J, Exhibit A), but does not include how parents will be engaged other than completing surveys and sharing out results. More details about the parent engagement component are needed to clearly articulate the parent engagement component of the application.

Reader's Score: 8

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: **0**

    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:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

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:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

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:

    Weaknesses:

    Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

    Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:

    (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.

    (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.

    (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.

    (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.

    (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

Strengths:

Strengths: No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant will be working in K-2 and therefore is not eligible for this CPP which requires serving underserved students in middle school or high school.

Reader's Score: **0**

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

   Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (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:

       (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 states that CIS has a built-in needs assessment to ensure the project is reaching the highest needs schools and families/students. Both Communities in Schools and Sesame Street components of the project are evidence based for improving SEL and educational outcomes in young children.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include any asset-mapping for the project. Including both needs and assets of families and schools can build upon the strengths and help families/schools frame their dynamics in a healthier way and can support growth instead of fear and resistance to the intervention. Including a copy of the CIS form that is used to determine need would strengthen the proposal in addressing this competitive preference priority.

Reader's Score: **2**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/02/2022 06:14 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)
Reader #3:   **********

		Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		20	20
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		30	23
Quality of Project Personnel			
1. Project Personnel		10	8
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		10	6
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		30	0
	Sub Total	100	57
Priority Questions			
Competitive Preference Priority			
Competitive Preference Priority 1			
1. Promoting Equity		3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2			
1. COVID-19		3	2
	Sub Total	6	2
	Total	106	59

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)

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:

Reader's Score: 20

> **Sub**

> 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 provides research to support the notion that 25% of children in the US have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) by age four with increased prevalence in low-income families (p. 4). The applicant states that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased parental stress and isolation (Srivastav et al., 2021) (pp. 4-5). Research is provided to support the importance of resilience and social emotional competencies for children from low-income backgrounds, and demonstrates that such children, when provided with resilience-supporting resources, moderate the impact of ACEs (Logan-Greene et al., 2014), have better relationships with adults, have more academic success and develop more resilience than those who have not developed a set of strong social emotional skills (McCabe & Altamura, 2011; Campbell et al., 2016) (p. 4). The model is built upon a previous implementation in West Virginia (Sesame Workshop, 2021) (p. 6; p. 3). Taken together, the research provided by the applicant demonstrates promising new strategies for developing Social, Emotional Learning (SEL) to include resilience, mitigating ACEs, and increasing academic achievement, which may lead to better mental health outcomes for low-income students.

> **Weaknesses:**

> No weaknesses were 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: 23

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 conceptual framework for the project is based on a pilot study completed by the applicant (p. 3). A logic model is provided (p. e53). Advisory meetings were held, and the findings incorporated into the conceptual framework (p. 8). Five core components of the program were created through iteration and integration of feedback from advisors, providers, and families forming the applicant's conceptual framework (p. 9). Basing the framework on a previous pilot study and the five core component activities is a strength of the application.

   Weaknesses:

   While the applicant provides a framework based on a previous pilot study and integration of feedback from participants, data is not provided on the framework from the pilot study and more research is needed to determine the quality of the framework specific to the applicant's implementation. For example, providing quantitative data to support the proposed conceptual framework would have provided details on the quality of the framework. Additionally, providing the statistical significance on providers' self-efficacy with respect to their perceived resources to support caregivers would have provided the evidence needed to fully support the conceptual framework (p. e8).

   Reader's Score: 8

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 applicant states that there are four measurable objectives for the programs (p. 10). A table of strategies, outcomes, and measures is provided in Exhibit A (Strategies, Outcomes, and Measures Table) (Appendix J: Other). Several of the objectives have percentages provided. For example, in measure 3.3, "80% of site coordinators demonstrate high fidelity on all metrics." The table in Appendix J: Other, coupled with the logic model (p. e53) further support an understanding of the proposed implementation.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant provides multiple measures that propose memos or reports (Exhibit A) as evidence. However, there is no explanation of the data to be provided in the memos or reports. Additionally, in Strategy 3.2, Outcome 3.2, "Samples of treatment and control schools have baseline equivalence in key student, teacher, and school characteristics," the measure is the number of schools in each group documented in a random assignment memorandum instead of the actual data collected. Additionally, Objective 3 states, "Rigorously test the impact of Sesame Street in Communities on student outcomes. Exhibit H of Appendix J. Efficacy Study Outcome Measure Details states that the mClass and NWEA MAP assessments will be used to determine reading achievement. However, there is not an academic achievement goal in the Exhibit A, Strategies, Outcomes and Measures table. While reading achievement was provided in Exhibit H, Efficacy Study Outcome Measure Details, it did not come across as a primary feature that would support Objective 3. Including an objective in Exhibit A would provide a focus on student achievement, support Objective 3 and improve the application.

   Reader's Score: 2

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 proposes a 12-week intervention that includes teaching resilience skills and an additional 4 weeks on specific topics selected by each community such as parental addiction, grief, and gun violence. Professional development will be provided to the site coordinators, and ongoing webinars to support the continued growth of the site coordinators will be provided (p. 6). With 25% of the children in the US having had at least one ACE by age 4 which increases in prevalence for children in low-income families (p. 4), the likelihood that the proposed project will successfully address the needs of the targeted Title I population is high.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide specific data on participant needs other than that all participating schools will be Title I schools. For example, providing free and reduced lunch statistics, rates of absence, and academic levels for the potential schools (at both the school and state level) to be included in the study would have been more convincing. Providing information on participant needs specific to the states being served would strengthen the application.

Reader's Score: 13

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:**

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

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 provides vitas for all key personnel which are strong (Appendix B: Resumes of Key Personnel). For example, Angelica Herrera, Project Investigator, has many years of experience designing and implementing successful evaluation studies while Jeanette Betancourt, experienced in trauma, health equity, and early childhood development, holds a doctorate in Special Education and has experience working with the Sesame Workshop since 1993. The applicant states that all three partnering organization strive for diversity and equity in hiring practices and staff decisions. They also seek to maintain a representative workforce (p. 12).

Weaknesses:

While all three organizations strive for diversity and equity in hiring practices and staffing decisions, the application would be strengthened if the three different organizations had included their equity hiring statements.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 6

Sub

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. (10 points)**

   Strengths:

   The applicant provides a broad management plan that includes strategy, project year, and the organization responsible for each task. Timelines and strategies are provided. Given the information, it is likely that the application will meet the objectives of the project on time and within budget.

   Weaknesses:

   Inclusion of a more detailed management chart with specific beginning and end dates of the project and dates of task completion on each of the identified strategies would improve the application. For example, including roles and specific responsibilities for individual personnel through inclusion of job descriptions would strengthen the application.

   Reader's Score: 6

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: 0

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:

   N/A

   Weaknesses:

   N/A

   Reader's Score: 0

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:

   N/A

Sub

    Weaknesses:

  N/A

    Reader's Score: **0**

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:

  N/A

    Weaknesses:

  N/A

    Reader's Score: **0**

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

   Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 3 points).

   Projects designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school that examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, including rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including one or more of the following:
      (a) Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability (e.g., universal design for learning (as defined in this notice), K–12 competency-based education (as defined in this notice), project-based learning, or hybrid/blended learning) and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
      (b) Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
      (c) Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
      (d) Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
      (e) High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

  Strengths:

No strengths identified.

  Weaknesses:

This is an early learning application and does not meet the required middle or high school implementation required for this priority.

Reader's Score: **0**

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

   Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (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:
   (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 includes a needs assessment to be conducted by site coordinators if the grant is funded. They also use evidence-based instructional approaches such as professional development and on-going support for teachers.

   Weaknesses:

   While the applicant does discuss the implementation of a needs assessment, it is after the grant is funded. Conducting a needs assessment along with community asset-mapping beforehand for use in the grant application would strengthen the application.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/02/2022 02:17 PM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/05/2022 12:24 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	**Points Scored**
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Total	30	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - EIR Tier 2 - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)

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: 28

   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 applicant describes methods of evaluation that will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations. Examples include plans to conduct a school-level randomized experiment with blocked random assignment of schools that is expected to yield causal estimates of the impact of project resources on site coordinator, caregiver, and student outcomes. Details are provided that clearly describe the statistical models, such as an ordinary least-squares regression model, to be used for the outcome analyses. A strength of the proposal is a detailed description of a power analysis that describes the calculation for determining minimum detectable effect sizes for each sample. Another strength is a plan to limit attrition by using incentives, along with a plan to examine overall and differential attrition.

    Weaknesses:

    It is unclear how or if the applicant plans to account for confounding factors. It is also unclear how or if the applicant will control for contamination.

    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 applicant describes methods of evaluation that are likely to provide performance feedback that will permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. Examples include plans to collect data using surveys, interviews, assessments that have evidence of validity and reliability. A strength of the proposal is a plan to analyze and regularly share and discuss implementation feedback with partners.

Sub

    Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant clearly articulates key project components and outcomes in a logic model and in a table that includes strategies, outcomes, and measures. A strength of the proposal is a well specified fidelity rubric that includes thresholds for implementation. Plans to provide interim reports on implementation fidelity are another strength of this proposal, as is a plan to conduct a mediator analysis that will include the self-efficacy measures as mediators for student outcomes.

    Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

    Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/05/2022 12:24 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/05/2022 09:47 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)
Reader #2: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	28
Total	30	28

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - EIR Tier 2 - 7: 84.411C

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

Applicant: Sesame Workshop (S411C220181)

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: 28

   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 applicant's evaluation plan was exceptional and discussed all WWC factors. The RCT will be a blocking design at the school level and will meet WWC without reservations. Blocking at the school level is appropriate, given how the intervention will be implemented. The applicant sampling will be appropriately powered at .80, with minimum detectable effect sizes for all the investigated outcomes. These effect sizes were accurately calculated and all based on prior research. The applicant thoroughly addressed attrition which is another critical factor for meeting WWC. For instance, in mitigating attrition, there will be incentives to respondents for all of the primary data collection activities (pg. 23). The applicant provided appropriate implementation and impact evaluation questions directly aligned to the intervention. Finally, in addressing the most important WWC factor baseline equivalence, the independent evaluator will examine the representativeness of the student analytic sample with the original group of students identified as treatment/control (pg. 23).

   Weaknesses:

There were two issues worth noting related to information lacking. First, the applicant does not discuss how the study will be free of confounds and how they would be mitigated. Secondly, the applicant did not discuss how contamination would be mitigated, or if contamination is not an issue for this proposed intervention, the applicant should have provided an argument for this case.

   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 applicant sufficiently discussed a formative evaluation which will provide performance feedback for actionable changes (pg. 25). The independent evaluator will establish a feedback loop with all key stakeholders by scheduling quarterly meetings. The performance data will include training logs, attendance logs, survey responses, interviews, and focus group data. Utilizing these multiple data sources will provide more confidence in any themes emerging from the data. Finally, as part of a thorough formative evaluation, assessing implementation will examine the

success factors and obstacles that can impact implementation fidelity.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses 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 applicant, in the logic model, graphically illustrated the key project components. These project components align with the project components discussed in the narrative. In addition, the applicant provided thorough details about the measured outcomes. The information provided face validity and at least one of the WWC requirements for reliability. For instance, the applicant will utilize the MAP assessment to measure the student outcome associated with reading. The reliability is greater than .85, which is high reliability, as the reliability of 1 is perfect, and acceptable reliability is about .70.The applicant also addressed measurable thresholds for acceptable implementation. For example, (pg. 20), the applicant notes the fidelity levels defined in the grant are based on previous evidence-based effectiveness research. Finally, the applicant provided a thorough discussion (pg. 24) on mediator analyses. The applicant will examine whether the effects are mediated by site coordinator and caregiver self-efficacy using structural equation modeling to estimate the interrelationships among the intervention, intermediate, and student outcomes. This is an exceptional approach to conducting mediator analyses. The applicant clearly understands

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 10/05/2022 09:47 AM