

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Equal Opportunity Schools (S422B230028)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	19
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	21
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	26
Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	6
Sub Total	7	6
Total	112	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - AHC-NA - 5: 84.422B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Equal Opportunity Schools (S422B230028)

Questions

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:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

The rationale of proposed project demonstrates a need to improve civics and history teaching and learning for low-income students and students of color in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Prince William counties. In partnering with the College Board, the Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) project focuses on improving enrollment of low income and students of color in Advanced Placement (AP) courses of U.S. History (APUSH) and U.S. Government and Politics (GOPO) with the result of expanding access and equity in the classroom. The proposed project represents an exceptional approach because it opens established college preparation courses to students who often do not take AP courses. By completing AP courses students are more likely to attend college, be successful, and become active citizens.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The project's goals and objectives are of high quality and specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound, as the program will "support at least 150 teachers over the three year grant offering an innovative professional learning program and Community of Practice national network of teacher engagement" and will improve learning for "40,000+ (20,000 per year in Years 1 & 2, expanding in Year 3) High-Priority K-12 students and provide students with opportunities to pursue American history and civics education at the highest level." (p. e13) The applicant's logic model shows clear output measures and includes short-term and long-term outcome measures. (p. e21) Supplementing the logic model are charts explaining the project in detail such as the timeline for years 1, 2, and 3 (p. e37), the 4 objectives (p. e43), and evaluation (p. e53). The project relies on qualified leaders such as Dr. Sasha Rabkin with over "20 years of experience in promoting racial equity in education, building high-quality relationships with school districts and educational leaders" (p. e38). The leadership of project has extensive experience: "In the 2022-2023 school year, EOS served over 500 schools and has implemented the Action For Equity framework and tools in over 800 schools over the history of the program. EOS staff are experienced in providing professional learning centered on equity in advanced academics." (p. e46) The project's proposed design meets the needs of the target population by "ensuring that low-income students and students of color have the ability to access the highest level of civics and history education available." (p. e13)

Weaknesses:

The proposal relies on two important positions that are not filled. Director of Community Practice will "manage and coach Community of Practice (COP) team members," "oversee "curriculum development and tracking of professional development impact" and "work closely with partnership organizations to build staff COP implementation capacity." A4EHC Partnerships Director will direct "professional learning district-level operations and partnerships" manage "relationships with district leaders, teachers" and work with district staff to implement curriculum, tools, data analysis and reporting." (p. e 40)

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)
 - ii. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)

Strengths:

The proposal addresses the severity of the problem by explain how students of low income and of color are underserved by AP courses and the long-term effects of not participating in high quality civics and history courses. The proposal shows the extent to currents gaps services in college preparation courses and how these gaps undermine the opportunities for underserved students. By examining current enrollment in both Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Prince William counties districts, the proposed project demonstrates how it focuses on those with greatest needs.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The proposal states that in national terms "more than 500,000 low-income students and students of color are 'missing' from AP and IB participation—students who would benefit from these advanced opportunities if they participated at the same rate as others." (p. e28) The proposal cites research that shows: "These inequities are largely due to schools that serve mostly Black and Latino students not enrolling as many students in advanced classes as schools that serve fewer Black and Latino students and schools—particularly racially diverse schools—denying Black and Latino students access to those courses." (p. e31) The proposal states that enrollment needs to be accompanied with teacher professional learning and modifying instruction to be culturally relevant: "A4EHC's professional learning program targets this gap in civic engagement and knowledge, training teachers to increase student involvement with advanced social studies coursework and diversifying AP history and government classrooms to reach a wider range of young people." (p. e30) More specifically, the proposal shows the discrepancy in enrollment: "In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, Black students make up 38.3% of the student body while only comprising 11% of AP History & Social Science students." (p. e32) For Prince William counties schools, the proposal notes that while Latinos make 37.1% of students, they are only 10% of the students in AP history and social science courses, and that Black students are 20.4% of the students but 17% in AP history and social science courses. (p. e16) The proposal cities research that states with effective instruction students "become informed and engage citizens" but without foundational knowledge and skills "underserved students are more likely to withdraw from future public engagement." (p. e31)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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 for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

- i. 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. (13 points)**
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

The management plan explains how the project will achieve the objectives on time and within budget and includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

The procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project are provided but not fully explained.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The proposal provides charts that explain the actions over the three-year period. The project timeline fully explains what actions will be taken in each year and identifies specific time periods. (p. e37) Further explanation about the role of staff and position responsibilities is provided in narrative fashion (pp. e38-40) and in chart form (p. e40-41). In addition to Dr. Rabkin's 20 years experience in equity education, there is an experienced team of specialists in teacher training and professional learning, Dr. Jacqueline Greer, Dr. Savannah Mussington, and Brand Alfred. In addition, Dr. Alaina Boyle provides "data-driven research expertise" with a specific focus on students of color and low-income students. (p. e39) As for fiscal attributes, the organization's "financial team including the CFO, Comptroller, and Finance Manager, have an extensive set of checks and balances to ensure financial accuracy and extensive audit and reporting capabilities to support transparent and expedient financial management." (p. e35) In addition, the organization keeps a cash reserve of 9 months operating costs and has generated \$ 40 million income from providing services to school districts and raised \$25 million from philanthropic sources. (p. e35) The practices for evaluation and continuous improvement rely on quantitative and qualitative sources and how and when this data will be collected and analyzed is explained extensively in the provided chart. (p. e43)

Weaknesses:

Student quantitative data will be collected in terms of enrollment, surveys, and course grades, but it is not clear what qualitative data will be collected and how it will be used. In contrast, teachers will participate in focus groups but there will no focus groups for students. (p. e43)

The proposal does not fully explain how some milestones will be achieved. Most notably, the proposal discusses how it reach 40,000 students (pp. e13, e43, e299) but it does not demonstrate how this will occur. In the proposal's table of project objectives, performance measures, activities, responsible staff, measure of success, there is no mentioning of reaching 40,000 students. (p. e43)

Reader's Score: 21

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

- i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)
- ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)
- iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)
- iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)

Strengths:

The organization has the necessary supports and its costs are reasonable and effective in relation to the design, and significance of the project. The applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, as it has a multiyear financial and operating model, the demonstrated commitment of its partners, and has a record of broad support from teachers and school leaders who are critical to the project's long-term success. Its partnership with the school districts and the College Board will ensure implementation and success of the improving equity and access for students in AP US History and AP US Government and Politics.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The proposal states the extensive network that the organization has already built: "In the 2022-2023 school year, EOS served over 500 schools and has implemented the Action For Equity framework and tools in over 800 schools over the history of the program." (p. e46) The proposal notes that the school districts will provide program space, equipment and supplies and host locations for in-person meetings. In addition, districts are ready to provide substitute teachers so faculty can attend trainings. (p. e46) The proposal requests \$2,444,904 over three years with 150 teachers being trained at annual cost of \$5333 per teacher. In contrast, the national average is \$18,000 per teacher per year. This cost are 30% of the national average. (p. e47) The organization will establish a Community of Practice for teachers that will ensure scalability, as it will create "an additional center of gravity for AP teachers." By Fall 2025, the organization will offering an implementation toolbox and expects to serve 1000 schools across the country. (p. e48) The organization has an established fee for service model with 60-70% of its annual budget coming from fees and by Fall 2026 it projects that fees will cover the costs of further implementation of its program. (p. e49) Supporting this prediction is that currently the program has an 80% renewal rate. (p. e50) A key partner is the College Board as it strongly supports the grant proposal. (p. e281)

Weaknesses:

The proposal notes that it has two unfilled positions that are important to the success of the project. The Director of Community Practice will in part direct "all Action for Equity History and Civics professional learning network activities" and A4EHC Partnership Director will also direct "all Action for Equity History and Civics professional learning district-level operations and partnerships." (p. e40) If there is a delay in hiring these position, the project will miss important milestones. For example, under Measures 1.2, both of these positions are designated as the responsible staff. (p. e43) The proposal states that it is scalable as it "expects to serve 1000 schools across the country." The proposal relies on this goal to explain its sustainability but does not explain how this goal will be achieved. (p. e48) The letter of support from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, a partnering school district, does not come from the Superintendent (p. 283)

Reader's Score: 26

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

The project will educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The proposal relies on the established AP US History and AP US Government and Politics courses and then enhances these courses by "educating teachers on providing culturally relevant teaching and curriculum on issues and subject matters that are foundational to American civic awareness and readiness, including the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, and incorporating student voice and diverse perspectives within curriculum lessons." (p. e18) The goal is "student belonging" that "incorporates student voices, experiences and feedback to provide culturally relevant and engaging civics and government curriculum." (p. e18).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs (6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) 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 civics programs that

support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in high school by expanding opportunities in AP courses. The proposal enhances rigorous courses with culturally relevant curriculum and teacher professional learning that is targeted towards underserved students.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The organization and its partner, the College Board, are "committed to eliminating barriers that restrict AP access for students from racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underserved, ensuring that AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population, and providing all students with access to academically challenging coursework." (p. e19) The program's goal is for "the demographics of their AP history and government classes reflect the overall demographics of the school (i.e., the percentage of students taking an AP Exam would match the proportion of the population for each demographic group in the school)." (p. e20) In previous work with schools, there has been 20% in the number of students passing at least one AP class. (p. e20) The logic model shows that teacher development is important as it includes a community of practice, participation in writing new materials, and district-specific professional learning.

Weaknesses:

While the proposal is inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, and culture, it does not address the needs of students with a disability status.

Reader's Score: **6**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Equal Opportunity Schools (S422B230028)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	21
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	30
Sub Total	100	96
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	6
Sub Total	7	6
Total	112	107

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - AHC-NA - 5: 84.422B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Equal Opportunity Schools (S422B230028)

Questions

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:
 - (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)
 - (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

Overview: The application provides a well-supported high quality project design with an extensive support of the rationale and multiple examples of how the project will uniquely address the priorities of the competition. The use of Conditions of Belonging is an exceptional approach to addressing the priorities of the competition.

- i. The applicant provides a clearly demonstrated rationale by addressing the needs for professional development in American History and Conditions of Belonging for high school teachers. The rationale for the project's emphasis on AP US history government and politics curriculum to the target audience which are low-income students and high school students of color in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Prince William County school districts (e13-16). It also uses the Conditions of Belonging to help with engagement, meaningful relationships and interpersonal and institutional factors in shaping student's experiences of belonging (e13-16).
- ii. The applicant extensively details how the project provides an exceptional approach to the priorities by supplying five leading indicators of belonging: culturally relevant curriculum, culturally relevant teaching, classroom community, expectations, feedback & assessment and conversations about race to the target population(e14). Evidence provided by the applicant proves Conditions of Belonging is necessary for underserved students to thrive in advanced coursework and become active as well as informed citizens (e13). These innovative tools show the applicant's ability to reach success in their goal to reach their target audience with quality instruction in U.S. History.

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)
- ii. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)
- iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)

Strengths:

Overview: The application demonstrates a clear need for the project. The project thoroughly details the magnitude of the problem and the identified gaps. Across multiple examples, the application demonstrates how it is part of a comprehensive effort aimed at improving instruction and as well as student opportunities for growth in the present and future. The applicant's plan provides rigorous strategies aimed at successfully meeting the needs of the target population.

- i. The applicant provided substantial data of African-American and Hispanic students denied access to gifted and talented programs in elementary school, and later in middle and high schools (e28). The applicant clearly grasps the magnitude to their undertaking having conducted research which reveal the target audience has a lack of opportunity to participate in Advance Placement, International Baccalaureate and dual enrollment programs(e28).
- ii. The applicant also provides substantial evidence of the magnitude of need within the infrastructure. The project notes how the school system has placed the target population at a severe academic disadvantage(e16). The systemic issue detailed as supporting evidence by the applicant is the school system having students of color who are eligible for the AP courses, but they are never enrolled by the schools (e31-32).
- iii. The proposed project provides substantial services in the form of an innovative program (Conditions of Belonging) for the target audience to build up their confidence and participation to thrive in AP history and civic courses (e31). The applicant is assured success through this method because creating an environment where students are supported and know they are a part of a group where they feel valued is essential to students' academic and social emotional growth.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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 for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. 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. (13 points)
 - ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)

Strengths:

Overview: The management plan described by the applicant is adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project. There is potential for success with the reasonable budget and team members whose roles are clearly defined and sufficient.

Support Statements**Strengths:**

i. The goals and objectives for the project are clearly detailed and achievable. The applicant has clearly defined the responsibilities of their management team which are sufficient for completing each activity of the project and fulfilling the potential performance measures and their overarching goals of increasing participation of students of color and low-income students in AP history and civics as well as the quality of innovative instruction(e42,e55). The applicant has also provided a budget which addresses and supports the foundation, expansion and sustainability of this project. (e42, e55, e258 -289 Budget Narrative,e299) .

ii. The applicant has provided substantially adequate procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. This was established through providing teacher and student surveys, progress reporting from program staff and enrollment and AP test data analysis (e42,e53).

Weaknesses:

i. The applicant failed to provide sufficient data of the milestones for the project. The milestones help determine if the applicant has allotted enough time to execute their goals and whether they have sufficient measurables of those goals (e 41-42).

Reader's Score: 21

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)
 - ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)
 - iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)

Strengths:**Overview:**

The application has provided evidence of substantial adequacy of resources ranging from facilities, costs, support of stakeholders, ability for long-term sustainability, and partner commitment.

Support Statements

Strengths:

- i. The applicant is providing experienced staff on site with support in data analysis, student identification, teacher training and support. Through their partnerships they offer program space, equipment, supplies and host locations for annual in person teacher convenings (e46-47).
- ii. The applicant has provided significant evidence of the reasonable costs in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of their proposed project. They propose to spend \$16,000 per year on their model which they state is comparatively more affordable than the national average \$18,000 spent on professional development for teachers. Their proposed model provides continuous training and access to support in comparison to one-time development sessions (e47-48).
- iii. The applicants fee for service model along with their established plan for the projects scalability provides sufficient evidence they will be able to operate the proposed project beyond the length of the grant. 60-70% of their annual budget is based on a comprehensive pricing model in which districts pay a per school fee for all services provided (e49 -50).
- iv. Along with the two school districts of Prince William County and Charlotte - Mecklenburg, the applicant has also received confirmation of their importance to student achievement from the Institute for Citizens and Scholars as well as the College Board who are also partners in their academic endeavor.(e50 -52, e280-e283).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **30**

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

Overview:

The application has provided substantial evidence to support their ability to provide evidence based strategies to encourage innovation in civics and government for all academic stakeholders. The program educates students from low income and underserved populations with innovative hands-on strategies and lessons.

The applicant plans to utilize professional development as well as classroom application of

the evidence based Conditions of Belonging within APUSH AND GOPRO courses that encourage students of color and low-income student enrollment and success. The applicant's project emphasizes a project based learning method which uplifts student belonging as a key indicator of student success and engagement. The project also ensures the students will learn about U.S. History including the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights (e17-19).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs (6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) 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 civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

Overview:

Upon examining the sources of inequity and inadequacy, the applicant has developed a rigorous and engaging approach to learning which is inclusive and innovative.

Support Statements

The applicant provided substantial evidence of promoting educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students particularly in high school settings in Prince William County, Virginia as well as Charlotte, North Carolina. The professional development and classroom application of project based learning to be utilized for the civic program is a rigorous

and engaging form of instruction which is inclusive to all underserved students (e15-14, e19-20).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide sufficient evidence of the engagement of the underserved community members, to the point where their voices are elevated and they have provision of access to opportunities of leadership.

Reader's Score: **6**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Equal Opportunity Schools (S422B230028)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	16
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	21
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	17
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	26
Sub Total	100	80
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - AHC-NA - 5: 84.422B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Equal Opportunity Schools (S422B230028)

Questions

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:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

Overview: The rationale for the project is that with professional development provided by EOS there can be a significant increase in the percentage of students of color who take the Advanced Placement US History exam (APUSH) and the AP Government exam (GOPO). This is a clear inequity in that students of color who pursue a college education start at a disadvantage in earning college credit even before they set foot on campus. The proposal has identified partners in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Prince William County Schools. The proposal seeks to build culturally relevant "communities of belonging" so that students are motivated to take APUSH and GOPO classes. The reliance upon online coaching and a single in-person workshop makes this proposal less than exceptional.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths: Charlotte-Mecklenburg is a district with a large population of underserved students. These students would benefit from an increased opportunity to take APUSH and GOPO classes while in high school, earning them advanced placement credit at almost any IHL in the country and at the same time saving them and their families money on college tuition costs. (Page E12). This is a clear inequity in that students of color who pursue a college education start at a disadvantage in earning college credit even before they set foot on campus. The proposal justifies the use of distance learning on the grounds that in Year 3, the Community of Practice will be nationwide.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: The proposal relies almost entirely on distance learning workshops for teachers. The proposing agency, Equal Opportunity Schools, is based neither in North Carolina nor Virginia, but instead its management staff is scattered from Seattle to Miami (Page E37). The proposal schedules just a single in-person workshop once a year as the basis for building the "communities of belonging." The proposal does not cite any research to show that distance learning workshops for teachers are as effective as in-person workshops.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

- 1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - ii. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (7 points)**
 - iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

Strengths:

Overview: The proposal identifies a severe problem in the form of an equity gap that separates well-served students from underserved students in access to APUSH and GOPO classes. The proposal further locates the problem is in the recruitment part of the offering of AP classes by both districts and that the Community of Practice approach will result in more students taken AP classes. The proposal also identifies students of color in both Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Prince William County as the target student group to register for more APUSH and GOPO classes.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths: The proposal cites an estimate that there is an equity gap of as many as 500,000 students of color who would be taking AP and International Baccalaureate classes if participation rates were comparable to majority students (Page E28).

The proposal further states that EOS has had success with other school districts in increasing enrollment in AP classes by students of color. Charlotte-Mecklenburg has a wide equity gap in the percentage of students of color in APUSH classes: only 11% when such students make up 38% of the district's student population (Page E32) In Prince William County, there is a comparable gap

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The proposal is confusing when it lists data on minority students in the pair of districts (CMS and PWCS) but then shifts to data on schools listed as "EOS-served." (Page E15 and Page E32) It is not possible for a reviewer to understand if the schools that EOS now serves are representative of the two districts or are in some way more in need (or less in need).

Reader's Score: 21

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 for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. 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. (13 points)**
 - ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

Overview: EOS cites its track record of successful management of past grants, both from federal funds and from private, philanthropic donors. This record is reflected in the strength of the management plan. The proposal states that EOS will maintain “strong networks of communication” with both Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Prince William County Schools. The proposal states that EOS has a proven model of gathering feedback.

Strengths: The proposal lays out a timeline for implementing teacher-training workshops and recruitment of students (Page E37). The training will happen during Year 1 of the grant and the first APUSH and GOPO classes will be held in Year 2 of the project.

Weaknesses:

The proposal is confused about the timing of when recruited students will begin taking APUSH classes—“September-December 2025”—which appears out of alignment with what is promised. That should probably have read 2024 rather than 2025 (Page E37).

More serious is the lacking of support for the claims about the number of students who will be served in relation to the size of the teacher cohort recruited. The proposal promises that in the first year 25 teachers will benefit from distance education coaching about encouraging students to take APUSH and GOPO classes, but it is unclear how Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) came up with the estimate that 20,000 students will benefit in the first year, 20,000 in the second year, and 40,000 students will benefit in the third year (Page E13). There is a serious mismatch between the proposal to help coach teachers in the two districts to increase low income and minority student enrollment in APUSH and GOPO courses and the claim that 40,000 students will benefit. EOS states that it has a proven model of surveying stakeholders for feedback (Page E42), but at times the proposal conflates feedback from students to teachers with feedback from teachers to EOS project administrators. It is also a concern that the feedback-gathering does not commence until Year 3 of the project (Page E37).

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)
 - ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)
 - iv. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)

Strengths:

Overview: The EOS proposal indicates an adequate level of support. The costs are reasonable given the scope of the proposed project in a pair of districts that combined enroll more than 70,000 students. EOS explains that it has sufficient resources to manage the plan over the next three years. There are letters of support from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Prince William County Schools, as well as from the College Board.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths: EOS explains that the two districts will supply meeting space, whiteboards, and substitutes to support the project (Pages E46-E47). EOS estimates that its cost per teacher per year will be \$5,333 and that this is less than the national average of \$18,000 per teacher for year for professional development. (Page E47). EOS plans to sustain its own finances by charging districts \$27,000 per year to make use of its "A4E" model (Page E50). Besides partnering with the two school districts, EOS proposes to make use of the College Board's equity initiative to make the project successful (Page E51 and Page E281).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: EOS does not have the Director of Community Practice identified nor the Partnership Director for each district. This (Page E40). This would be a stronger and more convincing application had EOS identified such key personnel at the time it made the partnerships with CWS and PWCS. The concern is that if the grant is successful and the project is scheduled to start on time, the absence of such key personnel in place will leave the management of the project behind and scrambling to catch up.

Nonetheless, EOS asks for \$1.324 million in personnel and fringe benefits costs to oversee the project. The EOS proposal appears to be top-heavy in allocating \$430 thousand to outside evaluators, including a curriculum designer, a videographer, and a focus group consultant. By contrast, the proposal only allocates \$150,000 over three years to support teachers with training stipends. The ratio of money going to EOS staff to that going to teachers in the two districts is on the order of 12 to 1 (Page E205). The concern is that so much is being asked of teachers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Prince William County Schools with so little in the way of a stipend reward that the teachers recruited will not have much motivation to fully engage with the project.

The letter of support from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools does not say much about what the district will do to make this initiative significant for teachers, other than the district will "identify civics teachers to engage with EOS." There is nothing in that letter of support about APUSH and GOPO courses (Page E283). The concern is that the larger of the two districts invited to participate shows only surface familiarity with what will be asked of it.

Reader's Score: 26

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the

United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

Overview: The proposal emphasizes APUSH and GOPO classes in both school districts. Those classes will directly address the history and principles of the Constitution.

Strengths: The proposal notes that students who take APUSH and GOPO classes are more likely to engage in civic participation, for example, voter registration, than students who do not take such classes. (Pages E17-18).

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students—

a) in one or more of the following educational settings: (1) Early learning programs (2) Elementary school (3) Middle school (4) High school (5) Career and technical education programs (6) Out-of-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) 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 civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

Overview: The proposal aims to increase minority students by establishing communities of belonging in APUSH and GOPO classes. APUSH and GOPO classes are, by definition, highly rigorous. Enrollment in an APUSH or GOPO class leads directly to college and future opportunities for leadership for CMS and PWCS students.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths: A strong part of the proposal is EOS's partnership with the College Board. The APUSH and GOPO tests for college credit are rigorous and demanding and CMS students those classes and the resulting exam will be challenged. Leadership opportunities should follow for those who take the classes. EOS claims that its previous efforts to improve minority student enrollment in AP classes resulted in a 20% increase in numbers enrolled (Page E20). This is persuasive.

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 7

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