Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies (84.305E)

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Agenda

• Background on the Institute of Education Sciences and its grant programs
• Description of the Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies grant program (84.305E)
IES Organizational Structure

Office of the Director

National Board for Education Sciences

National Center for Education Statistics
National Center for Education Evaluation
National Center for Education Research
National Center for Special Ed Research
NCER Research Objectives

• Develop or identify programs, practices, policies, & approaches that enhance academic achievement

• Identify what does not work and thereby encourage innovation and further research

• Explain variations in effectiveness of education programs, practices, policies, & approaches
Final Outcomes of Interest are for Students

Preschool
- School readiness
- Developmental outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities

Kindergarten through Grade 12
- Academic outcomes in reading, writing, math and science
- Behaviors, interactions, and social skills that support learning in school and successful transitions to post-school opportunities
- High school graduation
- Functional skills for independent living of students with disabilities

Postsecondary: enrollment, persistence, and completion

Adult Education: basic reading, writing, and math
What to Evaluate
(Independent Variables)

- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Quality of the education workforce
- Systems-level programs and policies
FY2011 Research and Research Training Grant Programs

• Education Research and Special Education Research Grant Programs (84.305A & 84.324A)
• Postdoctoral Research Training Grant Programs (84.305B & 84.324B)
• National Research and Development Centers (84.305C & 84.324C)
• Statistical and Research Methodology in Education (84.305D)
• Evaluation of State and Local Education Programs and Policies (84.305E)
Purpose of 84.305E

- Evaluate programs/policies selected by states and districts and implemented by SEAs and LEAs
- Foster rigorous evaluation by states and districts and use of the results in decision-making
- Promote research community’s interest in state and district actions
- Foster partnerships between states/districts and research community in support of these rigorous evaluations
- Provide useful information to other states and districts
Purpose: Evaluate Race to the Top

- ~$4 billion for grants directly to the States
- Phase 1 grantees announced in April and Phase 2 grantees announced in September
  - http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop
  - racetothetop@ed.gov
- State/Local applications for interventions funded by Race to the Top grants
  - State must receive Race to the Top Grant
  - State must support evaluation (letter of support)
  - State implementation support evaluation design
State and Local Programs and Policies

• Selected and implemented by SEA or LEA
  – Not by other agencies that may work in schools or with school-age populations
  – Not by researchers

• To improve student achievement
  – Directly: Outcomes of Interest discussed earlier
  – Indirectly: Intermediate outcomes that are expected or known to affect Outcomes of Interest

• Address pre-K through high school.
• For post-secondary must address access for traditionally underserved
State and Local Programs and Policies

• Fully developed
  – All supports in place
  – All materials available for distribution
  – Evidence that it is already developed or that it will be fully developed by start date of grant

• For Race to the Top projects
  – Program or policy must be almost ready for implementation using Race to the Top funds
  – Not appropriate if extensive development needed
State and Local Programs and Policies

• Widely implemented
  – State(s) or district(s)-wide
  – Evidence of current or assured future implementation
  – On a sufficient scale to make generalizations
  – On a sufficient scale and across a variety of conditions to allow subgroup and moderator analysis
  – Under typical implementation conditions
State and Local Programs and Policies

• Substantial modification of existing practice
  – Of state or district existing practice
  – Of practice by other states or districts
• Not yet rigorously evaluated
• Adoptable by other states or districts
Research Narrative

• 4 Sections
  – Significance
  – Research Plan
  – Personnel
  – Resources

• 25 pages, single spaced
Significance

• Describe the program/policy in detail
  – Assume peer reviewers know nothing about it
  – Detail all components and how they work together

• Provide theory of change (Rationale)
  – How is the program/policy expected to improve student achievement
  – What is it to directly and indirectly changed
  – What needs to be measured
  – Graphics (logic models, flow charts) often help
Significance

- Describe outcomes to be affected
  - Student achievement
  - Intervening outcomes

- Describe how the treatment is different from current program/policy
  - Describe what the comparison group will receive
  - Show that treatment is substantially different
  - Describe why treatment will lead to major improvements and increase student achievement versus current business as usual
Significance

• Describe implementation: current or expected
  – Who determined that the policy or program would be implemented and who will oversee it
  – How and when it will be implemented
  – Who will implement each component
  – Feasible to implement: developed, supports in place, and funding available
  – Widely implemented – sufficient scale
  – Under a variety of conditions
  – Typical implementation conditions
  – Evidence it will be implemented in near future
Significance

• Why this evaluation is important
  – Clear summary why this program or policy should be evaluated
Research Plan

- State research questions/hypotheses
- Describe sample
  - Define sampling universe
  - Selection procedures
  - Exclusion and inclusion rules and their justification
  - Strategies used to reduce attrition
Research Plan

• For Race to the Top projects
  – Show research design fits with project implementation plan

• Randomized Control Trial Design Preferred
  – Note unit of randomization and reason for it
  – Describe process for random assignment
  – Staggered rollout or variation in treatment design may offset concerns of no intervention for the control group
Research Plan

• If cannot use RCT, justify why
• Alternatives to RCT to minimize or model selection bias
  – Regression discontinuity designs
  – Well designed quasi-experimental designs, e.g., comparative interrupted time series
Research Plan

• Power
  – Provide and justify details of power analysis and method used to calculate power
  – Power for main analyses and important subgroup analyses
  – Peer reviewers should be able to check power calculations
Research Plan

• Outcome measures (outcomes of interest)
  – Relevant to states, districts, and schools (often found in administrative data)
  – Can include researcher-developed outcomes but these are not the focus
  – Provide reliability, validity, and appropriateness
  – Link to theory of change
Research Plan

• Fidelity of implementation
  – Measures used (reliability and validity)
  – Describe design of fidelity study and how it will be implemented
  – Measure fidelity in both treatment and control groups
  – Discuss how data will be analyzed and will contribute to overall evaluation
  – For secondary data analyses using historical data, this requirement can be dropped if document lack of fidelity data
Research Plan

• Comparison group
  – Who makes up comparison group: how they are similar/different from treatment group
  – What do they receive in place of the treatment: determine if control group receives components similar to intervention and how much
  – To avoid contamination: school-level randomization not always required
Research Plan

• Mediating and moderating variables
  – May explain differential impacts of intervention
  – Identified in theory of change
  – Describe how they will be measured in both treatment and control
  – Discuss if doing exploratory or confirmatory analysis of each one examined (issue of power)
  – Describe analysis plan
Research Plan

• Detail data analysis procedures
  – Quantitative: describe statistical procedures, model, and software
  – Qualitative: describe methods to index, summarize, and interpret data
  – Show how analysis is linked to the design
  – Reminded to include analyses for mediators, moderators, and fidelity of implementation
  – Address clustering of students in classrooms in schools
Research Plan

• Cost-Feasibility Analysis
  – Document financial costs: detailed enough for another state or district to use
  – Not require a cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analysis
Personnel

• Show that have personnel with expertise in:
  – substantive area
  – intervention
  – research design
  – implementation of design including working with schools and districts
  – method of analysis

• Note each key person’s expertise, project responsibilities, and time commitment in the Personnel section (not only through their CV)
Personnel

- SEA/LEA personnel must be on team and play role in evaluation
  - SEA/LEA persons responsible for intervention should be on team (though not need large time commitment) but not have large role in evaluation
  - SEA/LEA evaluation experts can have large role in evaluation
  - SEA/LEAs can partner with outside researchers to do evaluation.
Resources

• Show the institutions involved have the capacity to carry out the evaluation

• Show that the key decision-makers in the state/district fully understand and support the evaluation

• Detailed letters of support from all actors
  – Letters include access to state/local data
  – Letter of support from State personnel who submitted the Race to the Top application

• Separation of implementers and evaluators
Grant Information

• Typical grant: $500,000 - $1.2 million a year (Direct + Indirect) for up to 5 years
• Can ask for less or more: key point is to justify budget
• Funds are only for evaluation (not for implementation)
# Reviewing Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
<th>Letter of Intent iesreview.ed.gov</th>
<th>Application Package www,grants.gov</th>
<th>Start Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>6/24/10</td>
<td>4/29/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/16/10</td>
<td>7/19/10</td>
<td>7/19/10</td>
<td>7/1/11 to 9/1/11</td>
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Preparing an Application

• Read Request for Applications (RFA)
  – http://ies.ed.gov/funding
• Contact Program Officer
• Other resources on IES website
  – Resources for Researchers
    • Webinars
    • Videos of methodology presentations
    • Description of peer review process
  – Abstracts
Submitting an Application

• Submit Letter of Intent: https://iesreview.ed.gov/index.cfm
• Register on http://www.grants.gov
• FY11 Grants.Gov Application Submission Guide
  – http://ies.ed.gov/funding
• Complete application package at www.grants.gov
  – 84.305E-2 for 6/24
  – 84.305E-3 for 9/16
  – Search first by 84.305
• Submit package by 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on day of deadline
  – June 24, 2010 & September 16, 2010
Peer Review of Application

- Application is reviewed for compliance.
- Compliant proposals are assigned to a review panel.
- Two or three panel members conduct primary review of each application.
- Competitive applications are reviewed by full panel at the panel meeting.
Notification

- All applicants will receive email notification of the status of their application by the earliest start date.
- All applicants receive copies of reviewer comments.
- If not receive an award the first time, consider resubmitting, and talk to program officer.
Institute of Education Sciences
http://ies.ed.gov

FY 2011 Request for Applications available at:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/funding

Application Package available at:
http://www.grants.gov

Program Officer
Allen.Ruby@ed.gov
202-219-1591