

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/08/2011 11:08 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C110100)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	7
<b>Quality of Project Services</b>		
1. Project Services	20	16
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	13
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priorities</b>		
<b>Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making</b>		
1. Decision-Making	10	10
<b>Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness</b>		
1. Evidence of Effectiveness	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Invitational Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates</b>		
1. Graduation Rates	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>102</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.351C

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

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C110100)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Please enter any summary comments here.

#### Strengths:

The applicant presents a project that has potential to provide teachers the needed professional development that will allow them to appropriately use best practice techniques and well-prepared content materials, to teach students at a quicker, deeper rate of learning in the arts and core instruction

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not present sufficient data to support the project design in terms of student gains in achievement, nor is clear information presented on how the applicant will ensure equal access and treatment.

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. (a) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(b) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

#### Strengths:

(a) The applicant outlines a strategy that demonstrates the ability to build capacity to provide, improve, and expand services that address the needs of the target population. The proposed project will develop a model of fine arts professional development that is integrated into the curriculum so that it impacts core and arts teachers (page 1). The main focus will be to increase academic performance, improve student engagement, increase school attendance, and positively affect graduation rates by immersing mentor leaders and arts/core teachers in 100 hours of professional development, that is sustained and intensive (pages 1- 2). Professional arts instruction will be linked to state and national standards that will be readily accessible through technology that can be studied, replicated, and improved upon in subsequent years (page 2). Additionally, the demand for fine arts professional development will increase because of a decrease in state funding for public education and support for the arts in the state. The likely impact on district schools may result in less arts instruction. Many schools will turn to the core subject teachers to expose students and instruct them in the arts (page 5). Further, information presented indicates that the arts programs in the schools are certainly in need of considerable support at this time. With education cuts pending it is anticipated that many arts teachers will be affected with reductions due to pressures for core achievement, sometimes at the sacrifice of arts programming. The project will substantially revitalize the losses that will affect district schools (page 6).

(b) The applicant presents appropriate strategies to disseminate information on the project to enable others to use the information (pages 6-7). Dissemination of project products and information, and replication of the project model will be facilitated primarily through the participating schools' Web sites by devoting space to the project. The Project Director will

coordinate the Web sites between the schools and with the key partners. The Web sites' content will include information about the project; contact information for the program and the participating schools and key partners; hyperlinks to local, state, and national fine arts-related web sites and list serves; Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and Twitter feeds; an FAQ section encompassing information about the project, including replication of strategies; regularly updated media of fine arts activities, including staff development; and program documentation, including progress reports of project activities, sample lesson plans, and assessment tools, in PDF format with downloading capabilities.

**Weaknesses:**

(a) No weaknesses noted.

(b) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design**

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant presents information on how the project design will increase capacity and yield results beyond the period of federal assistance (pages 8-9). The intent of the project is to build a community of Mentor Leaders who have informed content and methodology approaches to help improve learning; improve student achievement and promote a college-bound culture by providing teachers with the content and skills they need to help students be successful at studying, analyzing, understanding, and critiquing significant works of art in both middle school and high school over a period of time; and creating strong vertical teaming and mentoring models by providing each vertical team with support/alignment of core/arts content, planning, and production resources. Efforts will yield high-quality professional arts instruction linked to state and national standards that will be readily accessible, and can be improved upon in subsequent years (page 2).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not present detailed information on project components to support the project design.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

- 1. (a) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

**(b) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**

**(c) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.**

**Strengths:**

(a) The applicant presents a strategy to help to encourage participation in the project from individuals of underrepresented groups (GEPA Statement and page 10). All participants in the program will be accepted based solely on the qualifying requirements (i.e., race, language, creed, color, religious affiliations, gender, age, or disabling conditions, and equitable access will be ensured by the disallowance of any school that segregates based on the above-mentioned criteria.

(b) The applicant describes a professional development effort that is of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration. The proposed professional development program will incorporate state-of-the-art technologies into regular school education programs through six phases: training of arts/core mentor leaders; training of arts/core teachers on select campuses in an experimental group; training of students on arts/core content; production of an in-school evaluation performance; attendance at professional performance events; participation in a culminating assessment; and touring of an arts museum (page 11). In each year of the grant, the project teachers will participate in a comprehensive year-round core and arts professional development program that includes an intensive two-week arts/core program that features research-based arts/core instruction content materials as well as best practice pedagogy systems that can be employed within local sites of the project. Professional artists, university researchers and educators, and arts historians, as well as visual and performing artists within the Houston community will host presentations (pages 8-9).

(c) The applicant presents reasonable information that supports the likelihood that the services to be provided by the project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards. Research is cited to support the premise that student knowledge cannot measurably improve without significantly increasing teacher knowledge-base, and of support for the arts that are focused from the classrooms of core courses and experiences in the arts as a boost to academic achievement (pages 5-6 and pages 13-14). The applicant further indicates that district student performance data indicate a direct correlation between higher student achievement and teachers who have attended comprehensive content-specific professional development (page 13).

**Weaknesses:**

(a) While the applicant states that all participants in the program will be accepted based solely on the qualifying requirements (i.e., race, language, creed, color, religious affiliations, gender, age, or disabling conditions, and that equitable access will be ensured by the disallowance of any school that segregates based on the above-mentioned criteria, the applicant does not elaborate on the specific procedures it takes to ensure equal access and treatment, or expand opportunities for historically under-represented groups (GEPA State and page 10).

(b) No weaknesses noted.

(c) The applicant does not describe actual data from the research it cites to help demonstrate how arts integration via professional development increases student achievement, nor does the applicant describe data to support its claim of a direct correlation between higher student achievement and teachers who have attended comprehensive content-specific professional development from the district.

**Reader's Score: 16**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

- 1. (a) 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.**

**(b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**(c) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

**Strengths:**

(a) The applicant presents information to support efforts to encourage application for employment from persons from underrepresented groups (GEPA Statement and page 10). As a matter of board policy, the district is an equal opportunity employer. The district hires personnel without regard to race, language, creed, color, religious affiliations, gender, age, or disabling conditions. All candidates for employment are evaluated solely on qualifications for the job, for their areas of expertise, and interest in serving the school, the children, and the community. Similarly, all participants in this program will be accepted based solely on the qualifying requirements. Equitable access will be ensured by the disallowance of any school that segregates based on the above-mentioned criteria. Fifty per cent (50%) of the Superintendent's Cabinet, (50%) district and school administrators, and (50%) instructional staff is made up of minorities, reflecting the racial and linguistically rich tapestry of the school district student population.

(b) Staff identified to work on the project has sufficient experience and training to work on the project. The Secondary Fine Arts Curriculum Manager will be assigned a Project Director for the project (page 15-16 and Resume in the Appendix). She has adequate training and experiences in curriculum and instruction, and music education, piano performance, and visual arts. The Mathematics Manager, Secondary Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment will provide professional training services in cooperative learning, and the Secondary ELA Curriculum Manager Secondary ELA Curriculum Manager. Both have adequate training and experience (page 16 and Resumes in the Appendix). Additionally, other qualified instructional staff will oversee the integration of arts into science and social studies (page 16).

(c) Subcontractors assigned to work on the project have adequate training and sufficient experience to work on the project (pages 12-17). Subcontractors will include an experienced curriculum theorist and analyst of school structure and reform in teaching and learning in urban schools, on school organization, and on policy and standardization; a composer, educator, and non-profit leader; professors from local universities, a symphony orchestra director, and a project evaluator. All have adequate training and experience to work on the project as evidenced by the description of training and experience in the narrative and Resumes located in the Appendix.

**Weaknesses:**

(a) Specific procedures and strategies are not described on how the applicant encourages applicant from the individuals typically underrepresented.

(b) No weaknesses noted.

(c) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 8**

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

- 1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant describes a management plan that is sufficient to guide staff in achieving the objectives of the project on time and within budget. Overall responsibility to successfully manage and implement the project is the purview of the Project Director (page 18). A Project Planning Team will meet monthly to give consistent management to all grant initiatives. The Project CAPP Planning Team, led by the Project Director, consists of the district key staff assigned to the project, and project consultants, including the Independent Evaluator and mentor teachers. A brief timeline with major activities is provided to guide staff (pages 19-20).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not present a management plan that has a clear alignment of project goals and objectives, staff, staff responsibilities, major project activities, milestones or timelines to help guide staff assigned to work on the project, and ensure the project is on time and within budget.

**Reader's Score:** 13

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

1. (a) **The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.**

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

**Strengths:**

(a) The applicant outlines an evaluation plan to measure the success and impact of the project (pages 20-25). The evaluation plan will be comprised of an experimental study design that employs the random assignment of schools into treatment and control groups. The components of the evaluation plan include data from student performance indicators, program implementation indicators, including staff development, and program context indicators (page 21). The evaluation plan will include both formative and summative components to generate both quantitative and qualitative findings to assess the strength of the project. All data will be collected, analyzed, and reported by comparing baseline data between Project CAPP students within the experimental and control groups. Student performance data will be collected through the state assessments and other test score data. All students in the study, within the experimental and control sites will attend live performance production and participate in a culminating assessment of knowledge, skills, and understandings about the content, performance delivery, and effect of the learning and performance experiences (page 22). Subcontracted staff will design and administer pre- and post- assessments about content material and methodologies of best practice, which will be initially administered to mentor leaders and subsequently administered to the site arts/core teachers to demonstrate success of professional development, and it will determine where needs should be placed regarding content and instructional techniques (page 23). The overall responsibility for implementing the projects evaluation plan is the responsibility of the Project Evaluator.

(b) The products of the formative and summative evaluation will be used to provide timely, regular, and useful feedback to the district and the participating schools on the success and progress of implementation to ensure optimal project performance, as well as to identify areas for needed improvement (page 25). The products of the formative and summative evaluation will be used to provide timely, regular, and useful feedback to HISD and the participating schools on the success and progress of implementation to ensure optimal project performance, as well as to identify areas for needed improvement.

**Weaknesses:**

- (a) No weaknesses noted
  
- (b) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priorities - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making**

- 1. Projects that are designed to collect (or obtain), analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, including data on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in this notice), in the following priority area: Improving instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in elementary or secondary schools.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant meets Competitive Preference Priority #1 through the design of the project evaluation, which will enable the applicant to use data to make decisions. All data, via established, standardized protocols at HISD schools, will be collected, analyzed, and reported by comparing baseline data to demonstrated quantitative and qualitative performance and processes within the district for each year of the grant period and used to drive decision-making. Project CAPP is designed to demonstrate its overall success by implementing a rigorous double-blind study research design, with randomized treatment and control groups, to identify, document, and support best practices or strategies through strong or moderate evidence of effectiveness (page 2). The components of the evaluation plan include data from student performance indicators, program implementation indicators, including staff development, and program context indicators. Student performance data will include results from the assessment tests. All data will be collected, analyzed, and reported by comparing baseline data between Project CAPP students within the experimental and control groups. Student performance data will be collected through the state assessments and other test scores data.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.



Reader's Score: 10

### Competitive Preference Priorities - Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

#### 1. Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.

**Projects that are supported by strong or moderate evidence (as defined in this notice). A project that is supported by strong evidence (as defined in this notice) will receive more points than a project that is supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice).**

##### **Strengths:**

Moderate evidence is provided to indicate the project provides supporting practices and strategy for which there is strong evidence of effectiveness (pages 1-6). Reasonable research is cited that supports professional development linked with student achievement gains and arts instruction. The premise of the project is that teachers that receive professional development using best practice techniques and well-prepared content materials will be able to teach students at a quicker, deeper rate of learning than without professional development from highly prepared arts/core instruction teachers. Further the project is designed to demonstrate its overall success by implementing double-blind study research design, with randomized treatment and control groups, to identify, document, and support best practices or strategies through strong or moderate evidence of effectiveness (page 2).

##### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not describe actual data to from the cited research on student gains to support the arts based foundation and the arts oriented professional development foundation of the project.

Reader's Score: 8

### Invitational Priority - Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates

#### 1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates.

**Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:**

**(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies.**

**(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for high-need students.**

Yes

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/08/2011 11:08 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/08/2011 11:45 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C110100)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Services</b>		
1. Project Services	20	18
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	15
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	92
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priorities</b>		
<b>Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making</b>		
1. Decision-Making	10	
<b>Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness</b>		
1. Evidence of Effectiveness	10	
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	
<b>Invitational Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates</b>		
1. Graduation Rates	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	120	92

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.351C

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

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C110100)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Please enter any summary comments here.

#### Strengths:

This is a strong proposal outlining a project that shows great signs of obtaining valuable data on the effectiveness of arts education professional development having an impact on student outcomes particularly students of low socio-economic status.

#### Weaknesses:

The proposal has several minor weaknesses involving attention to details and the management plan.

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. (a) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(b) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

#### Strengths:

The proposal shows clear evidence that the arts programs in Houston's schools are in need of considerable support at this time and that the proposed project can substantially revitalize the losses that will affect schools and improve student outcomes (p. 6).

The plans for dissemination are simple yet effective. Through program documentation, website content, and conference presentations, information about the results of this study and resources gained will be made readily available for others to use (p. 7).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

1. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend

**beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal clearly re-states the program objectives, which reinforces the applicant's commitment to meeting and exceeding goals. One main objective listed adequately satisfies the project design criterion. Objective 3.1 states (p. 8) By the end of the grant period, there will be an increase in the quality and quantity of arts projection professional development available to teachers on a minimum of 8 priority campuses in both middle and high schools.

By building a community of mentor leaders, the proposed project aims to train teachers to self-sustain the professional development beyond the grant period.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

- (a) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**
- (b) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**
- (c) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.**

**Strengths:**

The commitment to equal opportunity employment is very clear and communicated articulately in the proposal. The goes even further in emphasizing that, "HISD has always sought innovative ways for recruiting teachers who reflect the diverse characteristics of the student population," (p. 10).

The proposed program includes training of core arts mentor leaders, teachers, students, production evaluation, assessment and touring of an art museum. The professional development program will be 100 hours and will bring the mentor leader to train and layout essential professional development elements for the experimental sites and the arts/core teachers will receive professional development. Quality, duration and intensity are clear throughout the proposal.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal does not include specific steps the applicant plans to take to encourage participants from members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented based on color, race, age, national origin, or ability.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

- (a) 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.

**(b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**(c) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant stated the school board's policy as an equal opportunity employer.

The qualifications of key project personnel are certainly impressive and provide confidence that the project will be carried out efficiently and effectively. The diversity of job functions and specialties of the project personnel adds to this likelihood of successful execution, as does the inclusion of art content specialists in music, art, theatre and dance (p. 17).

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal does not include specific steps the applicant plans to take to encourage employment applications from members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

**1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal certainly outlines the project tasks and appropriately defines responsibilities for the tasks. It's clear the management team is a qualified one and that the team has a proven record of successful leadership and involvement in leading workshops, presenting at national conferences, and managing successful grants and projects within budget and on time (p. 18).

**Weaknesses:**

None found

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. (a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.**

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

**Strengths:**

Each professional development site will participate in interim assessments throughout the course, and produces a culminating performance evaluation following brief interim assessments with the assistance of trained artists from mentor teacher programs (p. 12).

The project evaluator will report on a quarterly and end-of-year basis, both formative and summative findings of the project in order to define and redefine the program goals and determine the overall effectiveness.

Through the formative and summative conducted to generate both qualitative and quantitative findings, the proposed project will contribute to the scholarly body of knowledge by providing insight and knowledge about what strategies work best with diverse, low-income students (p. 20).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priorities - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making**

1. **Projects that are designed to collect (or obtain), analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, including data on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in this notice), in the following priority area: Improving instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in elementary or secondary schools.**

**Strengths:****Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

**Competitive Preference Priorities - Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness**

1. **Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.**

**Projects that are supported by strong or moderate evidence (as defined in this notice). A project that is supported by strong evidence (as defined in this notice) will receive more points than a project that is supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

**Invitational Priority - Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates**

**1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates.**

**Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:**

**(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies.**

**(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for high-need students.**

Yes

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/08/2011 11:45 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/08/2011 02:47 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C110100)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Services</b>		
1. Project Services	20	17
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	20
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	95
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priorities</b>		
<b>Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making</b>		
1. Decision-Making	10	10
<b>Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness</b>		
1. Evidence of Effectiveness	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	20
<b>Invitational Priority</b>		
<b>Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates</b>		
1. Graduation Rates	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	120	115

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.351C

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

Applicant: Houston Independent School District (U351C110100)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Please enter any summary comments here.

#### Strengths:

The applicant presents an effective proposal that is purpose driven and designed to provide educational intervention services to 8 targeted district schools. Strengths of the proposal include an in-depth professional development component and clearly defined explanations supporting the significance of the program.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant could have improved the proposal by clearly addressing strategies that address equality of recruitment and treatment for its large minority populations. Over 90% of the district is populated with diverse ethnic groups, which the application does not cite clear inclusion strategies.

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Significance

1. (a) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(b) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

#### Strengths:

1a. The applicant presents an exemplary proposal which is quite likely to build local capacity by expanding and improving an arts-based curriculum designed to meet Texas academic standards. The purpose of the program is well defined and completely links the current gaps in infrastructure (such as budget cuts for arts and lack of funding in targeted poor

schools) to strengthen standards-based arts education programs in music, visual arts, and drama. The proposed plan is concrete and provides documented data detailing how the targeted schools were selected and the intended impact of the program. For example, the targeted district has a large ethnic population (61.7% Hispanic and 26.5% African American) with many of these students hailing from poor families. Data cites that these students typically are also low achievers academically. By infusing the proposed program into core curriculum classes, a significant impact should be evident that will cross-pollinate the flourishing of students in areas, such as better performance on state standards, achievement toward academic excellence, lower drop out rates, and higher attendance rates. (P. Abstract & 1-3)

1b. A sound dissemination plan is provided for the proposed project. The applicant will incorporate the use of a strong web presence as an effective dissemination strategy. Website updates will include replicable design specifications, curriculum advancements, recommendations based on successfully implemented strategies/activities, etc. Research findings will also be shared through presentations at state and national conferences allowing program outcomes to be accessible to promote advancements in a variety of other academic settings. (P. 6-7)

**Weaknesses:**

1a. No weaknesses cited.

1b. No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design**

**1. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**

**Strengths:**

2. The applicant cites an effective sustainability plan capable of successfully extending the program beyond the grant cycle. The approach to be utilized is 3-tiered. This includes: building a community of mentor leaders, improving student achievement and promoting a college bound culture, and creating strong vertical teaming and mentoring models. Each strategy is detailed in the narrative and will actively assist in embedding the program into the district curriculum, extended staff development and collaboration and student engagement, implementing systemic change that can be continuously maintained without additional funding. This will be essential as well since the district is facing increased budget cuts. (P. 8-10)

**Weaknesses:**

2. No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

1. (a) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(b) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(c) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.

**Strengths:**

3a. The applicant cites a continued confirmation for ensuring equal access for all project participants who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups. Because of the diverse ethnic population, which comprises the school district, the applicant has a historical presence of maintaining a similar staff compilation that reflects its student population. Participant recruitment will continue in this vein, without regard to race, religion, creed, etc. (P. 10-11)

3b. The applicant provides an in-depth and comprehensive professional development component capable of leading to tremendous improvements in practice among the teacher recipients. The intensity and duration of professional development are exemplary and include 100 hours of intensive collaboration activities and workshops. Professional development components will be implemented in stages for greater impact. Each sequence builds on the prior phase and is well laid, including the core instruction phase designed to improve teaching instruction based on best practice models. (P. 11-13)

3c. The applicant presents a proposed project that is very likely to lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards. The platform of the project is based on the theory that arts poor schools do not achieve the level of academic excellence as arts rich schools. Thus, by implementing an arts-infused program based on integration with state standards, the program intends to level the playing field with the targeted financially burdened and arts poor schools. To measure the effectiveness of program activities, the professional development component will include pre-post assessment tests that will be phased in cohorts. For instance, the experimental groups will receive professional development from mentor leaders in such core topics as science and math, which will be accessed via state standards and grade improvements compared with baseline data. The narrative fully details a plan to ascertain student and teacher growth measured against rigorous academic standards. (P. 13-15 & 19-25)

**Weaknesses:**

3a. The applicant only partially addresses the sub-criteria. While a continued commitment to recruiting traditionally underrepresented staff members is addressed, strategies for the equality of recruitment and fair treatment for students is not reflected. Citing specific recruitment and fair treatment strategies (such as those that cater to the majority minority population, particularly the 61% Hispanic group) would have improved this section.

3b. No weaknesses cited.

3c. No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 17**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. (a) 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.
- (b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.
- (c) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

**Strengths:**

4a. The applicant cites that it encourages recruitment for 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. (P. 15)

4b. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel are more than sufficient to helm a project of this size and scope. The designated project director, Dr. Susan Vaughan, holds several degrees, including a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction and an M.B. A. in quality assurance and marketing. She also has extensive teaching experience in public schools with art disciplines making her a great leader for this role. All project staff members are highly qualified and their experience and educational backgrounds are identified. This includes Monica Kendall, who will provide professional training services in teacher development, holds both an M. Ed. and Ed.D with over 20 years of teaching experience. The project has a great leadership team and is poised for success. (P. 15-17 & Appendix - Resume))

4c. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants and subcontractors are more than adequate to help implement and maintain program goals. The narrative fully details a plethora of experience for subcontractors demonstrating solid expertise in teaching and arts disciplines that will provide tremendous impact to the project. Examples include Jefferson Todd Frazier, a composer, educator and non-profit leader who will spearhead one of the essential partnership components dedicated to advancing program needs by infusing arts activities through various community entities that he spearheads. (P. 17-18 & Resumes Appendix)

**Weaknesses:**

4a. Strategies to be utilized to recruit various diverse populations are not addressed in the narrative. While the applicant mentions its continued commitment to employ diverse populations that reflect its varied student ethnicities, no recruitment strategies are actually mentioned to ascertain how this goal will be accomplished. (P. 15)

4b. No weaknesses cited.

4c. No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 8**

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

1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing

**project tasks.**

**Strengths:**

5. The applicant outlines an efficient plan to achieve the proposed goals and objectives of the proposal on time and within budget. Accordingly, a timeline is provided that is sufficiently detailed outlining dates, responsibilities and activities to be implemented by the applicant. Leadership of the program is keenly in place and poised to revamp the current infrastructure at targeted schools to include an effective standards-based art program with activities designed to impact target schools. (P. 18-20)

**Weaknesses:**

5. No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

1. (a) **The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.**

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

**Strengths:**

7a. The applicant presents a thorough and well-articulated evaluation plan comprised of objective performance measures clearly linked to intended project outcomes. The plan involves an experimental study design that employs random assignment of schools into treatment and control groups. Both formative and summative analysis reports will be generated by the program evaluator using ongoing quantitative and qualitative data. Collection of data will include pre/post assessments, standardized test scores, classroom observations, etc to measure professional development and student academic improvement as a direct result of program activities. (P. 22-25)

7b. The applicant ensures continuous feedback capable of guiding the achievement of program goals. Feedback strategies include quarterly formative reports and annual summative reports that will be shared with the district. Reports will be generated using baseline data, which is also a good strategy to measure the successfulness of program outcomes. (P. 25)

**Weaknesses:**

7a. No weaknesses cited.

7b. No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 30**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priorities - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. **Projects that are designed to collect (or obtain), analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, including data on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in this notice), in the following priority area: Improving instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in elementary or secondary schools.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant builds a great case for utilizing data-based decision-making to help achieve program goals. Data to be collected will include assessments of instructional practices upon implementing research-based arts instruction components to over 3,000 middle and high school teachers. Decision-making that includes district policies will also be comprehensive, as baseline data will be used comparatively with an experimental evaluation design to measure student academic growth. (P. Abstract & 21-25)

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 10**

### Competitive Preference Priorities - Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

1. **Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.**

**Projects that are supported by strong or moderate evidence (as defined in this notice). A project that is supported by strong evidence (as defined in this notice) will receive more points than a project that is supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice).**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant incorporates strong evidence that is supported throughout the narrative for implementing the proposed project. Because of budget cutbacks in an arts-poor district that is also suffering from high rates of poverty and academically struggling, a case is clearly made that the infusion of standards-based arts into core curriculum classes will provide vast needed improvements. The applicant will serve an ethnically diverse population with a program designed to also increase academic improvements in a variety of core classes, such as math. Additionally, by implementing a double blind study that identifies, documents, and supports best practice strategies, the applicant can seek to verify best possible strategies for revamping district schools in great need of redesign. (P. Abstract & 1-5)

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses cited.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Invitational Priority - Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates**

**1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates.**

Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

**(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies.**

**(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for high-need students.**

Yes

**Reader's Score: 0**

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