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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lane County School District 76 (U351C140065)

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

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		5	5
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		10	7
Quality of Project Services			
1. Project Services		15	10
Quality of Project Personnel			
1. Project Personnel		15	14
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		30	28
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		25	19
	Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions			
CPP-Technology			
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology			
1. CPP-Technology		20	20
	Sub Total	20	20
	Total	120	103

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Lane County School District 76 (U351C140065)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

    General:

    Strengths-The applicant presents a comprehensive program which will support the implementation of Arts education instruction for teachers. The applicant provides detailed information regarding the proposed activities and presents a wealth of partners who will support the project. Weaknesses-There were no weaknesses noted for this criterion.

Reader's Score: **5**

   Sub Question

   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.**

      Strengths:

      The applicant presents reasonable information to show the project will meet the needs of the targeted population. The information offered by the applicant indicates that the service areas are in rural school districts that offer little or no Arts education instruction for teachers or students. The applicant presents a plan to build capacity as the project proposes to serve 160, K-12 teachers. The plan is to train teachers through a series of visual arts programs and then offer support through facilitation and mentoring to help with classroom instruction is a logical approach to address the problem presented (pgs. 2-4).

      Weaknesses:

      This criterion was thoroughly discussed and there were no weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score:

   2. **(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:

      There is information provided by the applicant to show that there is a feasible plan in place by which program results will be disseminated to others. The plan is to make program information available online; and through written reports and annual conferences. Additionally, the applicant proposes to create an implementation guideline videos to also ensure resources are made available (pgs. 7-8).

      Weaknesses:

      No weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

   General:

   Strengths-The applicant describes in detail information to show the program model is theory-based and will support the goals of the project. The research model was designed to allow students to gain support based upon their skills and advance progressively, aesthetically and visually through Art and enhanced critical thinking. Weaknesses-The applicant's logic model is confusing and does not provide specific information that effectively supports the projects activities. There is also limited information regarding the partners who will support the project.

Reader's Score: 7

   Sub Question

   1. **(A) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is supported by strong theory.**

      Strengths:

      The applicant describes in detail information that shows that the program model is theory-based and will support the goals of the project. The research model is designed to allow students to gain support where they are and advance progressively, aesthetically and visually through Art and enhance critical thinking. It is further noted that the research information is also rooted in core academic standards in writing, and the use of digital tools and online resources which clearly support the activities and outcomes for the project (pgs. 9-11).

      Weaknesses:

      The logic model the applicant presents is confusing as to its correlation to the project's activities. For example, it is not clear how the reflection and response process will lead to proficiency in technology standards or how mentoring and modeling will lead to proficiency in writing as no specifics was provided.

      Reader's Score:

   2. **(B) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.**

      Strengths:

      There is evidence that presents a brief description of the sustainability plan to support the project. The goal of the project is to provide opportunities for new teachers to be mentored through online instruction and to allow teachers to gain the knowledge needed to implement Arts programs through increased professional development opportunities. Additionally, the applicant proposes to seek resources from community partners and Arts organizations which will further support the project (pg. 13).

      Weaknesses:

      The applicant does not provide any specific detailed information as to how partners will support the project in detail. For example, it is not clear if they will provide technical support, program supplies or other resources. Furthermore, it is not clear as to how the county district will commit to the project after the project ends as there is no evidence provided by the applicant.

      Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

   General:

   Strengths-The applicant proposes to improve Arts education in high poverty schools located in the rural areas of Oregon. All training programs presented by the applicant are comprehensive, detailed and are designed to provide participants the skills needed to support student achievement. The applicant's overall plan to provide professional development opportunities for teachers is detailed for the most part and will support the goals and objectives of the project. Weaknesses-The applicant does not provide information to show that follow-up procedures are in place to ensure that the professional development activities are successful and implemented properly.

Reader's Score: 10

   Sub Question

   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.**

      Strengths:

      The applicant proposes to improve Arts education in high poverty schools located in the rural areas of Oregon. The applicant indicates that program participation will be voluntary with preference given to teachers who serve students with special need and English Language Learner students (pg. 22).

      Weaknesses:

      The recruitment plan presented is vague as there are no specifics given regarding how teachers will be recruited to volunteer as participants, nor is there a tracking process for teachers who want to enter the program. The applicant proposes to provide services to over 150 teachers. Based upon the lack of specificity of the plan, it is not clear if the project will successfully serve the number of participants projected.

      Reader's Score:

   2. **(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.**

      Strengths:

      All training programs presented by the applicant are comprehensive, detailed and are designed to provide participants the skills needed to support student achievement. Specifically, the applicant proposes to implement evidenced-based curriculum activities whereby teachers will gain instruction in visual thinking strategies, writing, instruction and practice. It is noted that support will be provided by the local university to further enhance the professional development opportunities for teachers (pgs. 14-16).

      Weaknesses:

      The applicant does not provide information to show that follow-up procedures are in place to ensure that the professional development activities are successful and implemented properly.

Reader's Score:

3. **(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 likelihood of the project leading to improvements in student achievement is evident based upon the information provided by the applicant. For example, the applicant proposes to include the project as a state-wide initiative whereby all schools will be included. The plan to initiate a professional learning community through shared networking and online experiences is innovative, as it will allow teachers to support one another in other rural communities thereby increasing the probability of success in the classroom. Additionally, teachers are required to commit one year to the project and the district is committed to two years of implementation and involvement with the project which further supports student achievement efforts (pgs. 17-21).

Weaknesses:

This section of the criterion was thoroughly discussed and no weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

General:

Strengths-The applicant states there is a policy in place to encourage applications from underrepresented populations. The key personnel qualifications, experiences and training are presented by the applicant in detail and shows they are qualified to implement and oversee the project. Weaknesses-While, the applicant states there is a plan in place, there are no specific details provided to ensure the plan is effective when it comes to hiring diverse populations to work with the organization.

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

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.**

Strengths:

The applicant states that the project will encourage applications from underrepresented populations is clearly outlined and presented by the applicant. The overall strategies provided are reasonable and include making sure that job announcements are distributed and currently there is a non-discriminatory hiring policy in place which will also support employment opportunities for all within the targeted areas (pg. 31).

Weaknesses:

The plan the applicant presents is limited.The applicant does not describe in detail the process by which they will use to specifically recruit diverse applicants who will support the project.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The key personnel qualifications, experiences and training is presented by the applicant in detail to show they are qualified to implement and oversee the project. The educational experience is also defined and indicates that staff are capable of providing the support needed to assist the target population. For example, the Principle Investigator/Project Director has over fifteen years of experience in the areas of Advanced Technology and is an expert in utilizing technology to improve core standard courses. Additionally, the Arts Education Coordinator, is highly qualified with over seventeen years of experience in the field of visual arts, which will further support project activities (pgs. 24-26).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and no weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The qualifications and training of the project consultants are clearly defined by the applicant and show they are qualified to support the projects goals and objectives. For project support, the applicant has enlisted the support of a Visual Thinking Strategies Trainer who is an experienced educator and professional development trainer. Additionally, a representative from the regional arts council will oversee placement of teaching artist who will work with teachers throughout the project (pgs. 29-31).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and no weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

General:

Strengths-Overall, the information provided regarding the timeline, milestones presented are appropriate and aligned with the activities the applicant proposes to provide. The time commitment for the key personnel is sufficient and will support the project. Weaknesses-The applicant does not provide milestones for all of the activities presented.

Reader's Score: 28

Sub Question

1. **(A) 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 timeline; and milestones presented by the applicant are appropriate and aligned with the activities the applicant proposes to provide. The applicant provides projected outcomes for each program objective which will be used to monitor program progress and gauge program success (pgs. 37-38).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not offer milestones for all of the activities presented and some of the information provided is not presented in measurable terms. For example, there are no milestones associated with programmatic changes recommended by the evaluation team, assessment of student writing with the analytical guide, data collection of teacher knowledge and a few other activities associated with the project (Appendices pgs.e67-e68).

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The Principle Investigator/Project Director will commit .30 FTE of time to the project during the first year of project implementation and will decrease the time to .25 FTE% during years 2-4. The time commitment is appropriate to support the project in addition to the roles and responsibilities identified and the activities proposed. For example, the Principle Investigator/Project Director will be responsible for supervising university personnel, fiscal management and other administrative duties (pgs. 37-38). Additionally, the Project Coordinator will commit .50 FTE% of time to the project which is also appropriate as his/her responsibilities include coordinating project activities and serve as the project liaison (pg. 38).

Weaknesses:

This criterion of the application was thoroughly discussed and no weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a reasonable plan to ensure programmatic feedback is made available to program staff, partners and stakeholders. The plan is feasible, as the applicant presents detailed information regarding the processes that include making available program documents, activities, and program outcomes electronically (pgs. 37-39).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and no weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

   General:

   Strengths-The applicant provides a logical plan to evaluate the project that will measure program activities with the goals and objectives outlined in the project proposal. An independent evaluator and evaluation team comprised of staff, collaborative partners and other stakeholder will be used to consistently monitor and evaluate the project. Additionally, the plan to ensure performance feedback is logical and is outlined by the applicant. Weaknesses-The applicant does not provide the specific measurement tools to be used, therefore it is unclear as to how the process will provide evidence of promise.

Reader's Score: 19

   Sub Question

   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.**

      Strengths:

      The applicant provides a plan to evaluate the project to measure program activities with the goals and objectives outlined in the project proposal. An independent evaluator and evaluation team comprised of staff, collaborative partners and other stakeholder will be used to consistently monitor and evaluate the project. For example, the applicant's plan to enlist the assistance of project partners and the evaluator in order to create measurement tools that will evaluate teacher knowledge and performance. The applicant will also utilize pre/posttest related to visual analysis and writing which are aligned with state and national core standards (pgs. 43-46).

      Weaknesses:

      The applicant does not present the goals and objectives in measurable terms therefore it is not clear if the goals and objectives of the project will be met.

      Reader's Score:

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

      Strengths:

      The plan to ensure performance feedback will include dissemination of program reports and program data which will be provided weekly during evaluation team meetings. More specifically, as noted by the applicant, it will be the responsibility of the evaluation team comprised of the principal investigator, project director, and program consultants to meet regularly to discuss program progress to ensure goals and objectives are being met (pgs. 43-46).

      Weaknesses:

      This criterion was thoroughly discussed and there were no weaknesses noted.

      Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of promise (as defined in the notice.)**

   Strengths:

   The applicant proposes to use various measurement tools that will measure the beginning, middle and end of the project to gauge its correlation to student academic achievement to evaluate the project's evidence of promise (pgs. 45-46).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant proposes to evaluate the levels of teacher knowledge and skills; however, no details are provided. The applicant does not provide the specific measurement tools to be used or specific data to show improvement. Additionally, the applicant does not provide in any information to show if the project will use comparative schools and evaluation data to show that there is evidence of promise.

   Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP-Technology - Competitive Preference Priority-Technology

1. **Projects that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in the notice) or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant clearly describes the use of digital tools and materials which will be used to implement and support the project. The use of the Second Life virtual meetings will help to provide professional development for teachers and will be easily accessible. This process will also allow opportunities for peer mentoring and support for teachers. The applicant also offers sufficient information to show that there will be opportunities for online arts education instruction, digital tool, videos and more (pgs. 5-6).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/06/2014 02:09 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lane County School District 76 (U351C140065)
Reader #1:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		5	3
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		10	7
Quality of Project Services			
1. Project Services		15	11
Quality of Project Personnel			
1. Project Personnel		15	14
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		30	28
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		25	19
	Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions			
CPP-Technology			
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology			
1. CPP-Technology		20	20
	Sub Total	20	20
	Total	120	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 6: 84.351C

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

Applicant: Lane County School District 76 (U351C140065)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

    General:

    Overall, a clear need was described for the proposed project in Lane County schools.

Reader's Score: 3

   Sub Question

   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.**

       Strengths:

       The five rural districts in Lane County have a demonstrated need for additional academic support. The profiles on pages e65-e66 indicate that approximately 55% of students are not meeting the grade-level standards in Writing and about 75% of students receive Free/Reduced lunch. On average, each district has one Art teacher in the high school.

       Weaknesses:

       It is unclear whether or not each school district, which each have a single high school, needs more than one art teacher. As described, most of the districts serve small populations of students and the communities appear to be supporting additional arts engagement (e.g., the Cottage Grove Art Guild p. e66).

       Reader's Score:

   2. **(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 description of traditional dissemination approaches (e.g., peer reviewed publications, presentations at relevant conferences) provides a clear plan for broad dissemination (p. 6). The description of the project website as a place with videos and implementation guidelines also provides evidence of strategies for disseminating project components and results.

       Weaknesses:

       This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

       Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

   General:

   The proposal provides clear connection between project components and research, but the logic models is unclear as currently structured.

Reader's Score: 7

   Sub Question

   1. **(A) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is supported by strong theory.**

      Strengths:

      Overall, the complete description of theoretical foundations and research-links to the key program components on pages 8-13 are very clear, relevant, and adequately link the project to the strong theoretical and empirical bases. Of particular note was the description of professional development activities and their research support, including modeling and feedback. The proposal included a logic model on page 7 that described teacher and student outcomes.

      Weaknesses:

      Although the proposal included a logic model, the model did not link inputs and outputs clearly and the use of bi-directional arrows for all components made the influence of each component unclear. For example, it was unclear how the teacher outcomes influenced the availability of the resources.

      Reader's Score:

   2. **(B) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.**

      Strengths:

      The proposal provides a brief description related to sustainability of project activities, primarily through building teacher expertise and administrator involvement (p. 13).

      Weaknesses:

      Although the proposal includes a series of project features to increase the likelihood of sustained efforts, no clear plan is provide. For example, it is unclear if the county will have a commitment from the partner organizations, including the University of Oregon's Center for Advanced Technology in Education maintaining their commitment and resources beyond the grant period.

      Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

   General:

   The project includes an intensive one-year professional development, but evidence is not presented to support a single one-year professional development significantly increasing student scores on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skill

Reader's Score: **11**

    Sub Question

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.**

   Strengths:

   The proposal indicates on page 22 that all teachers in all participating districts will be included in the project and that preference will be given to teachers of students with disabilities and English language learners. Overall, the proposal appears to be designed in a manner that will sufficiently ensure equal access.

   Weaknesses:

   This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

   Reader's Score:

2. **(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.**

   Strengths:

   Overall, participating teachers will receive one year of intensive professional development. Specifically, the teachers will receive 80 hours of intensive support across the school year (p. 21)

   Weaknesses:

   To further ensure effective practice, the proposal could include additional quarterly follow-up with completed teachers for the duration of the project. It is unclear whether or not a single one-year professional development model will significantly increase students' academic achievement.

   Reader's Score:

3. **(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 proposal clearly links the core project components, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) and teaching argument writing, with student outcomes. Specifically, research supports a relationship between VTS and students' ability to analyze art and argument writing with improved writing skills (p. 21).

   Weaknesses:

   Although a clear connection between relevant content to each strategy is described, the evidence presented does not connect the interventions/approaches to rigorous academic standards as measured by Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skill.

   Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

General:

All project staff have extensive experience and expertise to complete the project.

Reader's Score: **14**

   Sub Question

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.**

   Strengths:

   On page 31, the proposal outlines both the non-discrimination policies of all project partners and a description related to non-discriminatory hiring practices.

   Weaknesses:

   No clear recruitment plan for encouraging diverse application was provided by the applicant.

   Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

   All key staff has the experience to successfully implement and complete the project on time and on budget. For example, the project director has successfully managed more than 30 federally funded projects (p. 24)

   Weaknesses:

   This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

   Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

   All project consultants have the relevant experience to meet or exceed their contracted services. The contracted evaluator stands out as significantly experienced to conduct the evaluation (p. 27).

   Weaknesses:

   This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

   Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

   General:

   The management plan is thorough and includes complete descriptions of activities and milestones. The FTE committed is ample, but the project may benefit from a full time coordinator to ensure timely completion across all sites and

stakeholders.

Reader's Score: 28

1. **(A) 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:

   Overall, the proposal provides a comprehensive management plan that links project goals (pp. 32-33) to project activities (pp. 34-37). The project timeline with persons responsible and milestones in the appendix also clearly demonstrates that the plan will be adequately managed.

   Weaknesses:

   The project objectives are not described in measurable terms to determine criteria for project success.

   Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

   Strengths:

   The project director is committing .30 FTE in year 1 (p. 37) and the project coordinator is committing .50 FTE in year 1 (p. 38). These commitments, along with all other key staff are appropriate for meeting the goals of the project.

   Weaknesses:

   Although the time commitments are large from key staff (i.e., project director and project coordinator), a fully commitment coordinator may be necessary to ensure completion of the project. The project will include a number of schools, each with their own staff, along with the two project organizations (the Oregon Writing Center and the Technology Center), and the coordination among the key stakeholders may require more than .50 FTE.

   Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

   Strengths:

   Overall, a clear and comprehensive plan is described on pages 40-41 to ensure performance feedback. The bi-weekly meetings and date from the Evaluation Team will ensure augmentations can be made when necessary.

   Weaknesses:

   On page 40, the proposal describes using Dropbox as a data sharing website. Dropbox is ideal for such a purpose, but is not a secure website. The proposal should be clear that no identifying information will be stored on Dropbox.

   Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

General:

The evaluation has the potential to produce evidence of promise, but the objective measures needed more detail and equivalence of comparison schools need to be further addressed.

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

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.**

    Strengths:

    The project evaluation includes a broad description of the key constructs to be assessed, including teachers' knowledge and performance related to Visual Thinking Strategies (p. 43) and students' informational writing (p. 44).

    Weaknesses:

    The proposal does not include enough information to adequately assess the extent to which all performance measures are objective and related to the intended outcomes. On page 44, the proposal states that students' will be assessed on states tests tied to national standards. Although the assumption is that the evaluation will use the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skill, this needs be clearly articulated. Further, on page 43 the authors indicate that the evaluation will assess change in teacher performance and knowledge, but no details are provided about how this process will occur. It is unclear if standard observation methods or assessments will be employed. Although the evaluation will be refined following the grant period (p. 43), more detail is necessary to assess if the measures were successful.

    Reader's Score:

2. **(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 complete plan for performance feedback is provided on pages 40-42. The quarterly meetings with the Evaluation Team (p. 41) and the commitment to use data to identify whether or not the project is on target demonstrates a commitment to ensuring performance feedback.

    Weaknesses:

    The specific types of data that will be used/reported during the quarterly meetings should be described. It is unclear how the project will ensure the use of performance feedback data by all project stakeholders.

    Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of promise (as defined in the notice.)**

    Strengths:

    The quasi-experimental design using teacher and student performance from years 2 and 3 has the potential to meet What Works Clearinghouse standards for evidence of promise. The project will included one-to-one matching of schools (p. 46) and plans for statistically controlling for equivalence concerns.

Weaknesses:

Although the project articulates how nonequivalence will be controlled, the proposal should be clearer about the selection of the comparison schools. Although controlling for equivalence is adequate in the analysis, What Works Clearinghouse requires key demographic and outcome variables to be no more than a .25 standard deviation difference between groups. The proposal should be clear about how they will ensure the comparison schools will be chosen to ensure equivalence.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP-Technology - Competitive Preference Priority-Technology

1. **Projects that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in the notice) or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.**

   Strengths:

   The proposal includes a comprehensive commitment to technology throughout the project and will leverage technology and technology expertise. The use of Second Life as a virtual training support program is a novel professional development model.

   Weaknesses:

   This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/14/2014 03:00 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lane County School District 76 (U351C140065)
Reader #3: **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Significance			
1. Significance		5	5
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		10	6
Quality of Project Services			
1. Project Services		15	12
Quality of Project Personnel			
1. Project Personnel		15	14
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		30	26
Quality of the Project Evaluation			
1. Project Evaluation		25	19
	Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions			
CPP-Technology			
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology			
1. CPP-Technology		20	18
	Sub Total	20	18
	Total	120	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 6: 84.351C

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

Applicant: Lane County School District 76 (U351C140065)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

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

   General:

   This 4 year project is requesting $1,369,778 for a professional development /technology/ core standards/arts integration project serving approximately 160 classroom teachers in 5 high poverty, rural school districts to improve student academic achievement and engagement. The application addresses this criterion fully. Please see the comments for details.

Reader's Score: 5

   Sub Question

   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.**

      Strengths:

      The applicant provides a clear description of the need for the project and its planned components as a comprehensive professional development plan in integrated arts instruction. For example, the applicant describes the needs of the school communities, the teachers and the students to be served demonstrating that this is a rural area with high risk and high poverty populations with a significant lack of funding for integrated arts professionals. (p 18) .

      The needs and commitments of district participants are supported with attached profiles for each district as well as letters of support. The district profiles provide a succinct yet comprehensive snapshot of the communities to be served, including student needs and performance levels as well as the relationship of artistic endeavors within the communities. (p 65-66).

      The applicant clearly demonstrates that this project will provide arts integration, professional development and educational services using technology through local teachers which will not be available without this project (p 19).

      The applicant clearly presents the project plan to build capacity (p19) by training all teachers to become ART teachers and to align art practices with educational approaches that include technology to enhance student thinking and academic standard based performances.

      Weaknesses:

      No weaknesses noted.

   Reader's Score:

   2. **(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 applicant clearly explains how it will use a variety of approaches to disseminate its professional development materials and project findings to targeted audiences. The application (p 23) supports this intention with specific examples such as written articles, journal submission, presentations at state and national conferences, publications and demonstrations for online sites, blogs, and the project website as a repository for professional development training videos materials and lessons developed by the project

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

   General:

   The application addresses this criterion adequately. Please see the comments for details.

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

1. **(A) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is supported by strong theory.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant includes a thorough discussion of the underlying research and proven strategies for each of the key project components. (p25-29)   For example, the application provides a research base for the identified curriculum model (Visual Thinking Strategies with15 years of effective practice and research), the Informational Writing as Core to Academic Success (p26), the use of Digital Tools and Online Resources (p 28) and the use of social networks and virtual world with Professional Development. (p 29)

   The research base is both relevant and current, as well as tightly aligned with the project design.

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

   Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant has incorporated a variety of features designed to promote continued involvement by teachers and to support long-term sustainability of the project activities and benefits. (p 30) . Examples of those features include the project's emphasis on teachers' capacity to mentor new teachers, building an online community for continued sharing and collaborative problem solving for continued growth. The project is also designed with sustainability factors taken into consideration such as the need for a high level of administrator support and involvement, thus ensuring continued resource allocations.

The project is designed as a school-wide and district-wide initiative to foster sustainable success. The application describes multiple sustainability and strengthening benefits such as the professional learning community to be developed and supported beyond the project through online project-developed resources. (p 33). The project is designed to maximize the sustainable value of long-term involvement among community and local arts organizations thus extending project activities and professional development to the other 11 districts in Lane County.   (p31)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a description of how the partners have worked together in the past. It does not have a plan for how they may support the continued project activities in the future.

The applicant states that (p35) "following each district's two years of intensive involvement in the project's professional development program that districts will have sufficient capacity to sustain the program using local resources and expertise" without explaining why it expects this result. For example, it does not explain how the districts to will be served, which can not support arts instruction currently will elect to use local resources to support the continued use of the project in the future. The applicant does not describe how the project partners can offer technical support to ensure the participant districts and teachers can continue with project activities.

The applicant lacks a detailed plan for how the project's plan (p 36) to will offer multiple options for follow-up training and practice such as mentoring, co-teaching, collaborative planning, and sharing will take place within each district. For example, the application does not describe the status of technology in the 5 districts, to ensure that all teachers will have the skills and local capacity to utilize all the options.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

General:

The application addresses this criterion well. Please see the comments for details.

Reader's Score: 12

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.**

   Strengths:

   The description of the project starts with offering equal access by opening project participation to all teachers in the participating districts. (p 39) It will offer equal access in employment by utilizing existing procedures for recruiting, hiring, promotion among the partners involved. (p 48).

   Weaknesses:

   The application lacks a thorough discussion of what equal access or treatment for eligible project participants means in the targeted communities. For example, there is no description or statistical profile for the demographics or social/culture make-up within the communities or schools to be served.

The applicant does not address how the retention activities will adequately support the recruitment results of the project. It states that trained teachers will mentor others without providing a structured plan for how this will successfully be carried out. In addition, the application indicates that project staff will provide teachers with strategies for using their new expertise when mentoring colleagues in the subsequent cohorts without describing which project staff will be selected to do this or describing their expertise for carrying out the necessary training services. (p 37)

Reader's Score:

2. **(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.**

   Strengths:

   The project is designed with some flexibility so that teachers can fulfill their commitments in a reasonable manner. For example, (p 37), there will be regularly scheduled one-hour meetings in the virtual community, Second Life, approximately every two weeks (for a total of 50 sessions). However, participation at any given virtual meeting will be optional with teachers required to participate in at least 70% of the meetings, for a minimum total of 35 sessions.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant does not fully explain why the project's 1 year teacher commitment and 2 year district commitment is expected to produce sufficient teacher commitment to ensure the described sustainable success. (p35)

   The applicant does not fully explain how the planned 2-day training is designed to be sufficiently comprehensive to provide teachers with a the necessary understanding and competency in the VisualThinking Curriculum and strategies, while also learning how to teach informational and argument writing, and be competent and comfortable with the multiple digital tools and resources intended for the project, plus providing sufficient practice time in 2 days to integrate the new practices and understandings into different classroom settings. Furthermore, the application does not describe how the training and the implementation may be adapted for different grade levels or for different types of learners. (p 36)

   Reader's Score:

3. **(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 applicant is anticipating an strong impact on students because of a high level of teacher involvement that will replicate results from previous research showing students improved significantly in their critical thinking and writing abilities to analyze works of art, think critical , share evidence etc.(p 38) which lead to improved student achievement.

   The project is also expected to be successful as well as innovative because the two powerful approaches to improving student thinking, learning, and achievement (Visual Thinking Strategies and argument writing) have never before been systematically combined into one professional development package. (p 39)

Weaknesses:

The project is built on an innovative approach that looks promising without fully aligning it with an analysis of what is needed to fully implement it at each of the school communities to improve student achievement. The application lacks a discussion for how the project activities will be aligned with rigorous academic standards.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

   General:

   The application addresses this criterion very well. Please see the comments for details.

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

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.**

   Strengths:

   The program offers equal access, treatment and participation to all teachers and their students, within the participant districts.   The only exception to this equitable access is that preference will be given to teachers of students with special needs and teachers with classes of English Learners because the strategies and training to be used have been shown to have a powerful effect on the scholastic engagement and classroom communication skills of students who normally perform on the margins. (p 39).

   The applications states that the applicant's procedures for recruiting, hiring and promoting project personnel will be non-discriminatory with respect to race, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability. (p 48).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant does not describe the specific equity practices for hiring, promoting and recruiting practices with examples or details. The application does not indicate that the applicant has identified solutions to potential barriers to effective recruiting and hiring for the project which may be expected in the communities to be served.

   Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant clearly explains and supports the relevant training and experience of the project partners and key personnel. (p40). The project is supported by a strong partnership among higher education, museum, and literacy project partners, each with proven success and strong backgrounds in their areas of expertise.

   The application provides a detailed description of each school district and identifies a key decision maker who is committed to ensuring the successful implementation of the project within that district. Furthermore, the commitment of each partner is supported with letters of support and resumes.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly explains and supports the qualification of the project partners and key personnel. Key personnel as well as consultants are described by name, and their relevant background supported with attached Vitas. This is further supported with detailed attachments with descriptions of each of the five partnering schools districts. (p40-44)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

General:

The application addresses this criterion well. Please see the comments for details.

Reader's Score: 26

Sub Question

1. **(A) 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 clearly describes the project objectives and aligns them with the desired outcomes. (P 49)

A clear timeline is attached to the application linking the schedule for major activities with the key personnel responsible and milestones. (p 54)

Weaknesses:

The project goals and objectives are not expressed in measurable terms. Because of this, it is uncertain how the project will establish how and when it has met its goals, objectives or benchmarks. (p 49-54)

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The application includes detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the key personnel. (p 54)

Weaknesses:

The various time commitments as presented in different parts of the application (e.g. the narrative (p54), the subcontract budgets and the project budget) are not clearly coordinated. Some details, such as percentage of FTE seem to differ among the various budgets and the position titles are not consistent.). For example, it is unclear whether the Implementation Coordinator at .10 FTE in Years 1- 4, (p. 55) is the same as the School Coordinator at 15% FTE described on p 121.

Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The applicant has integrated a variety of features within the project to ensure that teachers can benefit for feedback for continuous improvement in their instructional practices. For example, the project has adopted a "Teachers Teaching Teachers" model that celebrates expertise rooted in classroom practice and advocates peer-to-peer approaches to learning new instructional strategies. (p33)

Weaknesses:

The application lacks strong discussions for how all participants and partners involved in the project will be able to implement feedback in a timely manner to ensure continuous improvements in the operation of the project.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

General:

The application addresses this criterion adequately. Please see the comments for details.

Reader's Score: 19

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.**

Strengths:

The applicant has adopted an Evaluation Plan that is designed to support the development and refinement of this integrated professional development package by gathering evidence of its use across school levels, across districts, and across disciplines, and then refining the program to reflect the data collected. This design-based research approach to the project evaluation will be followed by a more formal investigation using a quasi-experimental comparison group design that is powerful enough to detect impact on student achievement. (p 39).

The applicant provides specific examples of how the project will ensure effective communication and collaboration among the project partners, based on previous experience. The application describes the members of the project evaluation team and describes specifically when the different teams will meet. (p 58). For example, (p 58) the

application describes the frequency of regularly scheduled meetings (face-to-face and virtual) as well as record keeping, and sharing of program information for continuous improvement decisions.

Weaknesses:

The project objectives are not presented in measurable terms. For example, (p31)" the project intends to Increase teacher knowledge and instructional skills", but failed to describe how those increases will be assessed or what level of increase is expected.

Reader's Score:

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

   Strengths:

   The applicant describes specific tools and mechanisms used by identified partners to ensure performance feedback. For example, the Center for Advanced Technology in Education ensures that evaluative information on both project outputs and outcomes is used to improve movement toward achieving project objectives. (p 57)

   The applicant uses specific details to communicate the level of commitment and planning for the success of the project. For example, it describes the specific meeting times among program participants. To ensure a timely assessment of project progress, the PI and Co-PI meet bi-weekly. To assess project outcomes on an ongoing basis, the Evaluation Team will meet quarterly. (p 58)

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant does not provide sufficient information to ensure that performance feedback is utilized by all program partners and participants in a timely manner. For example, the project does not address how the project is prepared to support teachers who may change grade level or school teaching assignments during their participation time.

   Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of promise (as defined in the notice.)**

   Strengths:

   The project's Logic Model clearly illustrates the relationships among the project's resources, professional development model, outcomes (student and teacher), evaluation and context for implementation. (p 24)

   The application provides a succinct description of the project's multi-level evaluation plan (p60) for years 1-2, with a pilot test in Year 2 (p62) with 3 districts, and an intended quasi experimental comparison group design in years 3 & 4 .

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant states that if the project's evaluation plan is well-designed and implemented, it will provide extensive data on both teacher and student outcomes, leading to accurate assessments of promise; however, it does not provide evidence to connect the evaluation design with relevant and current research ensuring its effectiveness.

   The proposal does not clearly outline how the project will successfully complete a study that will provide empirical evidence to support the theoretical linkages between at least one critical components and at least one relevant outcome as presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy or practice.

Sub Question

The application does not describe how comparison schools, appropriate to the required level of rigor, will be selected.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP-Technology - Competitive Preference Priority-Technology

1. **Projects that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in the notice) or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.**

   Strengths:

   The applicant describes the project's plans for participant teachers to use digital tools and online resources to strengthen their professional community and thus enhance their professional practices. For example, the applicant states that partners have a history of successful use of digital tools and online resources to support teacher professional development. (P 22)

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant lacks a description of how teacher's use of virtual world and training in digital tools will be implemented at the school sites to improve student performance. It also lacks a description of the current status of technology usage, equipment or skill levels among the participants and sites at each of the 5 districts to be served to support the use of technology as required by this project.

   The applicant does not provide a detailed explanation for how the identified technology will be utilized by participants. For example, the application does not explain how the identified visual arts curriculum (Visual Thinking Strategies) is adapted for different grade levels or types of learners. (p20) The applicant identifies the use of Second Life, a three-dimensional immersive world as a venue for teacher meetings, workshops, presentations, and collaboration as an innovative feature of the project without an explicit description of how it compares to other social media options for community building.

Reader's Score: 18

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