

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2017 01:05 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Insight Education Group, Inc. (U374A170085)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Evidence of Support		
1. Evidence of Support	30	30
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	25	25
Selection Criterion		
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	17
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	5	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority #1		
Improve Equitable Access to Effective Educators		
1. CPP 1	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority #2		
Diverse and Effective Workforce		
1. CPP 2	5	4
Total	115	109

Technical Review Form

Panel #19 - TSL - 19: 84.374A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Insight Education Group, Inc. (U374A170085)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Evidence of Support

1. In determining evidence of support of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 30

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

General:

Overall Comments:

Using an appropriate and impressive collaborative network, the applicant proposes a plan that is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. Three project objectives are described and detailed in a graphic illustrating how the objectives work together to improve student achievement. Numerous letters of support are provided. Research is cited to support the applicant's position.

Strengths (if applicable):

The project proposal clearly states three project objectives. The applicant states the objectives, "are purposefully transparent and aligned to the theory of action." The objectives are to: 1. improve student achievement; 2. increase teacher and principal effectiveness; and 3. evaluate the return on investment of every project activity versus student achievement. The applicant's approach is based on research and experience as well as systemic approaches from the macro to the micro level of instruction (e21). A graphic found on the following page (e22) details the 3 objectives and illustrates how the work together to improve student academic success.

It is noted, "The "cross-school collaboration" or Networked Improvement Community (NIC) is a distinct group that arranges human and technical resources so that the community is capable of getting better at getting better. The school leadership teams and teachers will learn from one another by sharing resources as well as leveraging human capital inside and among districts." (p. e22)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of the project services.

General:

Overall Comments:

Two types of collaborations are described within the project proposal. One level of collaboration is a partnership

Sub Question

between 6 school districts located in 4 states throughout the nation. The collaboration provides 47 schools the opportunity to work together in a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) context with a focus on critical levers impacting student achievement. This collaboration expands resources for the collaborating districts with students in smaller, close-knit environments.

A second level of collaboration prioritizes stakeholder engagement and local control. Through the local collaborations specific policy decisions and granular metrics will be made at the local level, for the local level.

The appropriate collaborations noted in this application are impressive and are expected to greatly maximize the effectiveness of the project's services.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant advises, "This application is submitted on behalf of a partnership between Colonial School District (New Castle, DE), Gainesville Independent School District (Gainesville, TX), Marion County School District (Marion, SC), Marlboro County School District (Marlboro, SC), Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township (Decatur, IN), and Insight Education Group. Educators, schools, districts and even states value opportunities to collaborate with peers and leverage the learning of other organizations. Empowering Educators to Excel (E3), a private public partnership, provides 47 schools across four states the opportunity to work together in a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) context with a focus on critical levers impacting student achievement" (p. e18).

As stated by the applicant, "Collaboration is embedded at every level for the E3 as evidence by the letters of support. Based on our research into successful and sustainable past TIF grant recipients, E3 prioritizes stakeholder engagement and local control. Through this public-private partnership, district leaders as well as their principals and teachers agree to the basic tenets of participation as outlined in the memoranda of understanding, including the matching requirement. (Appendix E) However, we believe the specific policy decisions and granular metrics should be made at the local level, for the local level" (p. e33).

Letters of support are provided in Appendix E.

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)), using community, State, and Federal resources.

General:

Overall Comments:

Through impressive collaborations, each partner district plans to utilize the project as a means for integrating funding streams, dissimilar district priorities, and local priorities to improve relevant outcomes from their individual programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources. As stated by the applicant, "The systemic, macro-micro processes put in place will utilize current local, state, and federal dollars to support ALL participating districts." In addition, the project partners will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes such as Literacy Coaches. The proposed project is highly likely to be successful while serving a large number of students nationally.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant advises, "Each partner district approaches the project as a method for integrating funding streams, disparate district priorities, and local priorities. Additionally each district has components of HCMS and PBCS; however, their current systems are unique to those districts and are not aligned. The systemic, macro-micro processes put in place will utilize current local, state, and federal dollars to support ALL participating districts. For example, two of the partner districts have PBCS for all educators as part of state initiatives. One partner currently has Literacy Coaches at each elementary school funded by the SEA to transition to the proposed project." (p. e33)

Sub Question

Weaknesses (if applicable):
N/A

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

1. **(1) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.**

General:

Overall Comments:

The proposed project is expected to provide services and address the needs of students at risk of educational failure. Servicing a combined student enrollment of 28,196, the proposed project provides each of the smaller districts the advantages of larger districts. A table is provided offering demographic statistics and clearly illustrates high-need/at-risk status. This is supported by a 2017 article in US News & World Report. Additionally, it is considered the project would impact a large number of at-risk students throughout the United States.

Strengths (if applicable):

With a total student enrollment 28,196, the proposed project provides districts the advantages of larger districts (p. e35).

A table offering statistics for each school is provided on pages e36 – e39. The statistics clearly show high-need/at-risk status.

According to a 2017 US News & World Report article, the proposed project's districts are ranked in the lower 50% of states nationwide—with a wide spread across this lower half—including Delaware (26), Indiana (27), Texas (41), and South Carolina (50). The average free and reduced lunch rate across the E3 districts is 78%, with almost half (48%) of E3 schools being over 80% (p. e40). The article supports the applicant's claims.

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

2. **(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.**

General:

Overall Comments:

Applicant concerns focus on high teacher and principal turnover due to poor and ineffective professional development. A table is provided displaying statistics supporting the applicant's concerns over high teacher and principal turnover.

Sub Question

It is evident the applicant has researched the collaborative districts' professional development practices and determined numerous weaknesses. Several research-based corrective measures are offered for creating a strong, uniform, shared, and on-going professional development system. The applicant has thoroughly identified specific gaps and weaknesses and has proposed effective measures for addressing the gaps and weaknesses.

Strengths (if applicable):

A table offering statistics for each school is provided on pages e36 – e39. Aside from offering statistics confirming high percentages of at-risk students, the table also indicates high teacher and principal turnover.

A concern voiced by the applicant is, "While there are a variety of professional development initiatives in place in each of the... districts, the initiatives are siloed and often not job-embedded. They also lack the alignment and accountability to be effective" (p. e43).

The applicant advises, "There is lack of consistent school improvement models being used in each of the five districts creating for haphazard and unfocused results" (p. e44). To be effective, professional development must be aligned, focused and job imbedded.

To correct, strengthen and positively impact professional development for teachers, the project proposes Networked Improvement Communities, "cross-school collaboration" across all five project districts to help reduce instructional isolation. Additionally, school leadership teams will be trained to "implement and lead the TRACTION for School Improvement (TSI) model, an asset-based school improvement model specifically designed for high needs schools that cultivates focus, discipline, and accountability among leadership teams to successfully execute their short- and long-term goals for the school." The Supporting Teacher Effectiveness Project (STEP) framework, a systemic, data-driven PLC approach implemented in high needs schools around the country will also be implemented (p. e44).

To correct, strengthen and positively impact professional development for principals, the project proposes Insight Leadership Academy sessions in their districts. The sessions are designed with specific focus on overcoming barriers to improvement in high needs schools. Applicant districts currently have a variety of structures in place but lack rigor and the ability to create a pipeline of new leaders (p. e44).

It is noted all educators "will receive individual or small-group coaching; teachers will receive job-embedded, timely, and relevant coaching that is critical to improve classroom instruction while principals will receive executive coaching to reinforce content and skills acquired in the Insight Leadership Academy and support continuous growth and development" (p. e44).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

Selection Criterion - Quality of the Project Design

1. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.

General:

Overall Comments:

The rationale for the project is clearly stated. Three project components, Recruitment, Development, and Retention (of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals), will be strengthened and leveraged to improve student achievement. The "how" and "why" will focus on a system-level perspective. The applicant emphasizes, "schools and districts should not accept geographic isolation but instead leverage technology to forge partnerships." In addition, the applicant notes the three components of the project encompass the "human capital life-cycle." The process for addressing the 3 components is well described. The rationale is a sound and practical one.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant advises, "three overarching components of this project are Recruitment, Development, and Retention of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals - the strongest levers to improve student achievement" (p. e45).

As stated in the proposal, "the connective tissue among the schools and districts represented in this proposal focus on the how and why from a systems-level perspective. In 2017, schools and districts should not accept geographic isolation but instead leverage technology to forge partnerships with districts across states with a similar needs, goals, and philosophies" (p. e45).

It is noted the applicant has learned to, "keep the human capital management system and the performance-based compensation system transparent, meaningful, and supportive. These three inter-related concepts (recruitment, development, and retention) simplify but encompass the human capital life-cycle." (p.e45).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant states the rationale for the project focuses on 3 components (recruitment, development, and retention). It is noted the applicant plans to partner with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators. Additionally, the proposal describes a recruitment campaign which will include consistent and compelling messaging through websites, video testimonials from current staff, virtual school tours, social media, and in-person events. For the most part, the project design focuses on how the project will improve the quality of its current staff through improved and more effective professional development. The steps and procedures for attaining this are well developed. Research is provided demonstrating how the applicant will improve teacher retention through 4 broad research supported strategies. The design of the proposed project is expected to appropriately and successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

Strengths (if applicable):

As stated in the proposal, the applicant will partner with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators. Secondly, beginning in Year 2, the E3 Networked Improvement Community (NIC) will establish a cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Academy specifically for leaders of color (p. e14).

A recruitment campaign is described within the proposal. The applicant advises, "Districts will engage in a multi-channel, multi-year campaign to draw candidates, including strategic outreach to Historically Black Colleges and

Sub Question

Universities (HBCUs) and local IHEs. The campaign will include consistent and compelling messaging through websites, video testimonials from current staff, virtual school tours, social media, and in-person events” (p. e57).

Research is cited supporting the applicant’s statement, “Educator effectiveness is especially critical for economically disadvantaged and minority students who attend so-called “hard-to-staff schools” and are routinely taught by the least experienced, least effective teachers.” The applicant notes, “The project focuses very specifically on principal and teacher effectiveness as the levers to improve student outcomes (specifically economically disadvantaged students) through a systemic focus on principal and teacher recruitment, development, and retention.” (p. e49).

The applicant cites research supporting four broad teacher retention strategies, including feedback and development, recognition, responsibility and advancement, and access to additional resources. Additionally, the applicant notes, “research asserts that teachers who experience at least two retention strategies that align with those four areas plan to teach in their schools for twice as long. Given the negative impact of teacher turnover on student learning and the promise of retention strategies in getting great teachers to stay, there is a high-stakes imperative to improving the HCMS across the applicant’s schools so that they robustly address how teachers are provided feedback and professional development, recognized, provided with opportunities to lead and advance, and given resources to help them succeed (p. e41).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the grant activities will be evaluated, monitored, and reported to the public.

General:

Overall Comments:

The project intends to hire an external evaluator. This is a strength; as, external evaluators are experienced and unbiased. The intended external evaluator is named and a resume is available for inspection. A review of the external evaluator’s resume finds him to be capable of conducting the applicant’s program evaluation.

An actual evaluation plan for the project is not provided. Although the applicant indicates a copy of a project evaluation plan is available under Appendix F7, the plan cannot be found or studied. Other than intended uses for evaluation data, a plan has not been developed. The applicant mentions there is an evaluation design, but the design, instruments, data collection and analysis are not provided.

No provisions have been made for disseminating the project’s results to other national educators. There is no mention of journal articles, conference presentations, or websites.

Strengths (if applicable):

The project team will also engage [REDACTED] with Middle, LLC to create a robust, adaptive evaluation. The applicant proposes the, “project evaluation (Appendix F7) will produce data for use by project managers and school district personnel. This evaluation will help implementation stay on track, assess whether our efforts are having an immediate impact on leading indicators of student performance and intermediate outcomes in our logic model and, finally, to help us determine whether our theory of action is working to help increase student learning” (p. e50).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

The applicant advises, “This is not meant to be a controlled study, but intended to provide immediate data to help the project team and implementing district administrators determine whether implementation is going according to plan and whether each intervention is having its intended effect. Additionally, some of the data will help assess baseline conditions and, consequently, may cause us to reassess our initial budget assumptions and help us

Sub Question

allocate resources according to the greatest need” (p. e50). A controlled study would strengthen the proposal.

Although the applicant indicates a copy of a project evaluation plan is available under Appendix F7, the plan cannot be found or studied. The table of contents lists Appendix F7 on page e419, but it is not there.

No provisions have been made for disseminating the project’s results to other national educators. There is no mention of journal articles, conference presentations, or websites.

Reader's Score:**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan****1. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:**

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.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided an adequate management plan expected to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. A reasonable timeline describing activities and responsibilities for accomplishing project tasks is provided. Responsibilities are clearly defined. Descriptions of key project staff are provided along with resumes. Selected personnel are certainly qualified to manage the project. Provided in the Appendices, the Logic Model provides some additional information, including outcomes, and strengthens the management plan. A review of the budget finds it to be sufficient.

Strengths (if applicable):

Descriptions of key project staff are provided along with the primary tasks the staff will carry out during the course of the grant (p. e52 – e53).

A table is provided displaying a timeline with clearly defined activities (p. e54 – e56).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

The timeline is vague. Activity implementation and completion dates are “yearly.” More specific dates would strengthen this application.

Reader's Score: 18**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources****1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project based on the following factors:****Reader's Score: 5****Sub Question**

- (1) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

Sub Question

General:

Overall Comments:

There is great potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support. It is considered the systems that have been researched and will be implemented by the proposed project can be sustained by local districts in perpetuity at no additional cost. Teacher turnover does have a substantial budgetary impact. This would be offset by keeping the recruitment and retention incentives in place using a combination of local, state, and unrelated federal funds.

Strengths (if applicable):

As stated in the proposal, "Each district has committed to sustain the systemic aspects of the project following the grant. The systems (e.g. NIC, TSI, STEP, coaching) in the development section can be sustained by local districts in perpetuity at no additional cost. The project leadership team will utilize a Gradual Release Model with local districts to ensure effective knowledge transfer. Given the budgetary impact of reduced teacher turnover, districts have also committed to keep the recruitment and retention incentives in place using a combination of local, state, and federal funds (p. e56).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

2 (2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency of organization at the end of the Federal funding.

General:

Overall Comments:

There is high potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency of organization at the end of the Federal funding. At the completion of the project the applicant intends to create a cross-functional Advisory Council (AC) to codify the tenets of this proposal in order to create a set of project parameters around use of human capital, professional development, and performance-based compensation. It is then expected each district will create a similar cross-functional group to customize and codify the secondary and tertiary decisions regarding implementation in their specific districts and schools.

It is expected the districts will have already incorporated the project purposes and activities by the completion of the study. Adding a cross-functional Advisory Council (AC) and codifying the tenets of the project strengthens the expectation that the addition of project purposes, activities, and benefits will continue long after the grant period has ended.

Strengths (if applicable):

It is suggested the applicant, "will use a cross-functional Advisory Council (AC) to codify the tenets of this proposal in order to create a set of project parameters around use of human capital, professional development, performance-based compensation; however, each district will create a similar cross-functional group to customize and codify the secondary and tertiary decisions regarding implementation in their specific districts and schools" (p. e57).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority #1 - Improve Equitable Access to Effective Educators

1. **Projects that are designed to address the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both teachers and School Leaders, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA or LEAs the project will serve. At a minimum, applicants must:**

(1) Identify the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA(s) the project will serve;

(2) Identify relevant factors used in determining such gaps, such as data on availability of school resources, staffing patterns, school climate, and educator support; and

(3) Describe how the strategies proposed for closing the identified gaps are aligned to and are consistent with the strategies identified in the State's Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, approved by the Department in 2015.

General:

Overall Comments:

Throughout the proposal, the applicant has identified the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA(s) the project will serve. Statistics and current research are cited and described supporting the applicant's position.

Strengths (if applicable):

Districts have disproportionately high percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students of color. The current gaps across partner districts include aligned professional development for all current human capital exacerbated by the lack of formal processes to identify the most "highly effective" teachers and principals to place with schools and students with the greatest need. Currently, no partner district has a formal plan or policy to match teachers or leaders with specific schools based on need" (p. e57).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Overall Comments:

Each district has the evaluation systems needed to Identify relevant factors used in determining such gaps, such as data on availability of school resources, staffing patterns, school climate, and educator support.

Strengths (if applicable):

It is noted, "all district evaluation systems are nuanced enough to delineate between effective and highly effective educators, tie students to teachers for purposes of data analysis, collect and analyze teacher, student, and parent survey data" (p. e59).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Overall Comments:

The proposed project encompasses several districts within several states throughout the nation. A graphic is provided illustrating how the proposed project strategies are aligned to and consistent with the strategies identified in the various states' Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.

Strengths (if applicable):

A graphic is provided illustrating recruitment, development, and retention and how they are at the center of each states' Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators (p. e60).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority #2 - Diverse and Effective Workforce

- 1. Projects that are designed to attract, support, and retain a diverse and effective workforce, including effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, from historically underrepresented populations. At minimum, applicants must provide:**

A description detailing their commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicants have thoroughly described their commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce. Critical to the applicant's mission is to "ensure its work significantly results in diversifying teacher and leadership roles with educators who have shared experiences with the students that they serve." The project itself incorporates plans to work with each district participant to create a diversity plan.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant believes it is critical to its mission and long-term impact to ensure that its work significantly results in diversifying teacher and leadership roles with educators who have shared experiences with the students that they serve.

The project team plans work with each district to create a diversity plan. (p. e14)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

N/A

Overall Comments:

The project proposal includes a partnership with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators. This is a great beginning; however, diversity includes many additional minorities and ethnic groups. The plan does not offer any information with regard to attracting, supporting, and retaining educators from additional minority and ethnic groups.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant partners with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators. Secondly, beginning in Year 2, the E3 Networked Improvement Community (NIC) will establish a cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Academy specifically for leaders of color.

Weaknesses (if applicable):

The proposal does not include plans to specifically target diverse educators from more than one minority group.

Reader's Score: 4

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Technical Review

Applicant: Insight Education Group, Inc. (U374A170085)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Evidence of Support		
1. Evidence of Support	30	30
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	25	25
Selection Criterion		
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	17
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	5	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority #1		
Improve Equitable Access to Effective Educators		
1. CPP 1	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority #2		
Diverse and Effective Workforce		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Total	115	110

Technical Review Form

Panel #19 - TSL - 19: 84.374A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Insight Education Group, Inc. (U374A170085)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Evidence of Support

1. In determining evidence of support of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 30

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant provides an overall depiction of the academic and teaching needs of the target population. To improve teaching and learning, a comprehensive overview of their 3-pronged approach to improve teaching and learning has been described and includes aspects related to student achievement, teacher, and principal effectiveness, as well as evaluating the return on investment of every project activity versus student achievement.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has provided relevant details regarding the significance of their program and the need to improve teaching and learning for students. According to evidence provided, economically disadvantaged students are disproportionately served by higher percentages of ineffective or first year teachers (e21). They will seek to employ their E3 model which is an evidenced based initiative that utilizes strategies that will increase effectiveness among teachers and school leaders as well as foster collaborations for support. Initiatives include: Networked Improvement Community, TRACTION from School Improvement, Career Ladders, Leadership Academies, Teacher Leadership and Capacity Building, Job Embedded Instructional Coaching (e22-28)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of the project services.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant provides an extensive plan for collaboration. an Advisory Council comprised of district level leaders, principals, higher education partners, and teachers from E3 schools has been described. The Project Director will oversee activities as the Advisory Council will serve as the governing body for TSL implementation across all partner districts. Also noted is the inclusion of relevant stakeholders such as evaluators, IHE partners, and the Insight's Executive Team.

Sub Question

Strengths (if applicable):

To ensure effective collaboration, the applicant has provided evidence that each district will be well represented and a part of the program's Advisory Council. District leaders as well as principals, teachers and other stakeholders will provide input to programmatic activities. To ensure that the program meets the individual needs of their target area, each district will also have the opportunity to employ individualized services that are specific and relevant to their area (e33-34.)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)), using community, State, and Federal resources.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided a clear depiction of how components are built upon existing funding streams. Their design elements include a systems-level perspective with three overarching components: Recruitment, Development, and Retention. These initiatives will be incorporated into their current Human Capital Management system.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has demonstrated that their project and its activities are built upon existing programs that are supported by community funding. Their initiatives will be integrated with the existing career ladder and teacher and principal's evaluation systems that currently operate within all districts (e34). New methods for their career ladder initiatives have been described and will offer opportunities for inclusion and expansion. Their new plan will include a 3 rung system that will allow full participation from mentors, teachers as well as lead teachers (e31).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant provides a comprehensive overview of the unique challenges in recruiting, developing, and retaining human capital. Strong infrastructures that provide aligned resources and systems to support educators' professional

Sub Question

development will be established to target educational gaps and increase students' academic acumen.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has appropriately described their target area as well how services will address the needs of students who are at risk of educational failure. Their E3 cohort includes five districts across four states with each district enrolling less than 10,000 students. The districts have high student suspension rates and are ranked in the lower 50% of states nationwide. Also, student achievement for ELA and Mathematics is low (e40-42). They have provided credible data that notes that turnover rates have a harmful effect on students' achievement especially in Math and ELA (e40). Retention strategies have been duly noted and will include improving the HCMS to provide relevant support including efficient feedback and professional development (e41).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

- 2 (2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.**

General:

Overall Comments:

Overall, the applicant provides a strong case for need. Specific gaps have been addressed with an emphasis on the need for professional development initiatives in each of the E3 districts. In addressing the nature of the gaps, they have described a system that lacks alignment and accountability in order to be effective.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has described several gaps in services that include lack of professional development for teachers, evaluation systems that are not well aligned to tasks, and retention efforts that are minimal in most districts. They have provided relevant methods to address these gaps which include financial incentives for teachers through their career ladder, job embedded professional development that is aligned with each individual's career pathway and ongoing coaching and evaluation that is tied to student achievement and observation (e19-22) Noteworthy, are the efforts to promote leadership among staff through the implementation of an Instructional Leadership Team and Project Coaches who will be available in each district. The overall goal of establishing these leadership initiatives will be to provide ongoing, job embedded professional development and coaching as well as lead and mentor teachers. Efforts will address retention, improvement and will facilitate ongoing progress among their target institutions (e52, 197).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score:

Selection Criterion - Quality of the Project Design

- 1. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant provides relevant information regarding the rationale for their program. Their project emphasizes that current systems are too soiled and not well aligned. They emphasize that specific policy decisions and granular metrics should be made at the local level and local stakeholders should make institutional decisions including distribution metrics.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant presented a clear rationale for the design of their project activities. They have noted that the priorities of their program are the recruitment, development, and retention of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals. To facilitate this, they have provided a design that is evidence based and scalable and will meet and improve current human capital at the local level. Their human capital strategy is sufficient to meet the individual needs within participating LEA's, as their NIC model will allow smaller districts to benefit from professional development, support and resources from larger districts. This will build capacity among smaller LEA's and help facilitate the development of its staff (e40,41.43).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

General:

Overall Comments:

Aspects such as principal and teacher effectiveness will be the conduits to improve student outcomes (specifically economically disadvantaged students). The applicant will create a systemic focus on principal and teacher recruitment, development, and retention.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has addressed the appropriateness of their design. Several needs have been identified and include turnover among teachers and principals, a lack of consistency of utilizing improvement models as well as isolation among smaller districts. They have provided an evidence base that substantiates their methods for meeting these needs and have a plan to implement retention strategies, Networked Improvement Communities and their TRACTION model. A novel plan includes their Supporting Teacher Effectiveness Project (STEP) which is their approach to progressively and systematically share best practices among participating LEA's (e43-44).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Sub Question

Reader's Score:

3. (3) The extent to which the grant activities will be evaluated, monitored, and reported to the public.

General:

Overall Comments:

Evaluation initiatives will be an effort to improve teaching and learning as well as support rigorous academic standards for students. Information provided indicates that the measure of success will be the extent in which they are able to increase student performance and reduce variation in performance among classroom teachers within and between schools.

Strengths (if applicable): The applicant's plan includes clear plans to disseminate program components locally and nationally. Evaluation duties will be spearheaded by an external evaluator who will ensure that relevant stakeholders receive performance data and that the project managers and school district personnel will be able to adapt E3 as needed. Annual reports will provide a summative overview of programmatic activities and the applicant has described several effective methods to disseminate outcomes that include an annual symposium and the project micro site. (e50-51)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

The applicant has not provided a complete evaluation plan. There is no description or method to collect and analyze program data. There are no mentions of tools that will be used for collection. Also, data analysis has not been described.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided adequate information that demonstrates that they will have the mechanisms to ensure that the project will be managed efficiently, with the support and commitment of experienced personnel. A timeline is presented with key program activities and are delineated throughout the 5 year grant cycle.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has provided ample information that their program will have efficient oversight. The Project Director will be responsible for managing the majority of the projects' activities and will also facilitate effective communication between project sites. Other key staff includes Project Coaches who will facilitate professional development initiatives. Career development, evaluations and professional development activities have been incorporated within their timeline and depicts their intention to provide appropriate program components within the 5 year span (e54).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

The applicant has not provided a clear timeline with start and end dates. The timeline and its milestones are vaguely distinguished by year and do not provide a clear depiction of how activities will be implemented on time (e54-56).

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project based on the following factors:

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

1. (1) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a clear plan to continue support after grant funding has ended. They have provided ample evidence of resources needed to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including an appropriate operating model and accompanying sustainability plan.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has noted the commitment of each district to the project and to its ongoing efforts especially after funding has ended. Each district will contribute to the sustainability of the program and will match TSL funding at 50%. To ensure that there is a smooth transition of all program components, a Gradual Release Model will be employed for effective knowledge transfer. (e56)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

2 (2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency of organization at the end of the Federal funding.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided convincing evidence of their institution's commitment to incorporate project activities after funding has ended. They have noted a relevant plan to sustain project components by utilizing a cross functioning Advisory Council who will provide guidance on institutionalizing project activities.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has provided a clear plan to incorporate program components into future plans. They have noted that the Advisory Council will utilize proposal elements to set parameters for future use. These parameters will be customized and duplicated across all participating LEA,s. Collectively, the LEA's will create procedures that will be individualized and focus on human capital, professional development and performance-based compensation. (e58)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

Sub Question

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority #1 - Improve Equitable Access to Effective Educators**

1. **Projects that are designed to address the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both teachers and School Leaders, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA or LEAs the project will serve. At a minimum, applicants must:**

(1) Identify the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA(s) the project will serve;

(2) Identify relevant factors used in determining such gaps, such as data on availability of school resources, staffing patterns, school climate, and educator support; and

(3) Describe how the strategies proposed for closing the identified gaps are aligned to and are consistent with the strategies identified in the State's Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, approved by the Department in 2015.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has adequately explained the magnitude of the need for services. A clear overview of significant gaps within their LEA's has been noted and includes relevant information regarding the disparities among their underserved students.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has appropriately noted that their most significant gap is that no partner district has a formal plan or policy to match teachers or leaders with specific schools based on their need(s). With a disproportionately high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, identifying the most highly effective teachers and principals is a priority (e58).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted

Overall Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated that they have a clear understanding of educational gaps and issues within their LEA. They have effectively explained how data systems will be used to address these issues.

Strengths (if applicable):

To identify relevant gaps, and to address how they will ensure the quality of their teachers, the applicant has noted that data from districts' evaluation systems are available and are capable of distinguishing between effective and highly effective educators. The Director of Research will be responsible for this initiative and will work with each district to analyze patterns of impact (e59).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided a clear plan that aligns with state initiatives. E3 will be used to identify the highest effective educators. Noteworthy, is the '25-25' metric that will ensure equal access and treatment for students who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant provides a clear plan of how they will align themselves to each partner's equity plan. The applicant has detailed appropriate plans that include the top 25% of the highest effective teachers and principals being matched to the 25% of students who are most disadvantaged. Increasing institutional capacity through Leadership Development is emphasized and within Delaware, a Leadership Design Fellowship will be created to improve and increase school leader pipelines. Initiatives correlate with their overall goal of increasing effectiveness of teachers and principals in high need schools (e32).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority #2 - Diverse and Effective Workforce

- 1. Projects that are designed to attract, support, and retain a diverse and effective workforce, including effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, from historically underrepresented populations. At minimum, applicants must provide:**

A description detailing their commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant's plan provides an emphatic commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce. They include numerous outreach activities that are appropriate for addressing the needs of their target schools.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has provided several initiatives that demonstrate their commitment to a diverse workforce. They have described the components of their diversity plan that will include rigorous efforts to provide an inclusive community of teachers and school leaders. Activities include online virtual career fairs, hosting minority teacher recruitment career fairs and partnering with HBCUs to recruit effective educators (e444-446).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

No weaknesses noted.

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided plans that demonstrate their commitment to diversity. Initiatives that include Leadership Development will likely facilitate improvement within educational environments as well as impact students with the greatest needs.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has presented a novel plan to attract and retain diverse educators. They will establish a cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Academy specifically for leaders of color to provide training, coaching, and support and act as a pipeline into E3 districts. Also, additional plans for ongoing outreach have been explained and will include marketing and outreach to cultural organizations and faith communities (e60, 444).

Weaknesses (if applicable):
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2017 01:07 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/13/2017 05:17 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Insight Education Group, Inc. (U374A170085)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Evidence of Support		
1. Evidence of Support	30	30
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	25	25
Selection Criterion		
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	17
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	5	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority #1		
Improve Equitable Access to Effective Educators		
1. CPP 1	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority #2		
Diverse and Effective Workforce		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Total	115	110

Technical Review Form

Panel #19 - TSL - 19: 84.374A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Insight Education Group, Inc. (U374A170085)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Evidence of Support

1. In determining evidence of support of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 30

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant proposes a plan that is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. Three major objectives are described and detailed in a graphic illustrating how the objectives work together to improve student achievement. Numerous letters of support are provided. Empirical research is cited to support the applicant's position.

Strengths (if applicable):

The project put forth three major objectives grounded in empirical research. The objectives include improved student achievement, increase teacher and principal effectiveness, and evaluating the return on investment of every project activity versus student achievement. The applicant's approach is based on research and experience as well as systemic approaches from the macro to the micro level of instruction (e21). A graphic depiction of the research plan is found on page (e22).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of the project services.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant describes in detail two collaborations posed in the project. The first collaboration is a partnership

Sub Question

between 6 school districts across four states in the U.S. The six districts will include a total of 47 schools in project. This collaboration will form a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) focusing on impacting student achievement across the six districts.

The second collaboration involves an Advisory Council comprised of district level leaders, principals, higher education partners, and teachers from E3 schools have been described. The Project Director will oversee activities as the Advisory Council will serve as the governing body for TSL implementation across all partner districts. Also noted is the inclusion of relevant stakeholders such as evaluators, IHE partners, and the Insight's Executive Team.

Strengths (if applicable):

To safeguard the effectiveness of the collaboration among all stakeholders, the project focused on equal representation of each district involved in the program's Advisory Board. Stakeholders in each district are defined as district leaders, principals and teachers, with each one providing input on activities associated with the project. This will ensure that the program will meet the individual needs of each of the participants in the grant. Furthermore, each district will also have the opportunity to employ individualized services that are specific and relevant to their area (e33-34.) Letters of support are provided in Appendix E.

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

3. **(3) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)), using community, State, and Federal resources.**

General:

Overall Comments:

The project describes a clear pathway for integrating funding streams from similar other programs supported by community, State, and Federal resources. As stated by the applicant, "The systemic, macro-micro processes put in place will utilize current local, state, and federal dollars to support ALL participating districts." Furthermore, this project will continue to build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes such as Literacy Coaches.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant gives the opinion that, "Each partner district approaches the project as a method for integrating funding streams, disparate district priorities, and local priorities. Additionally each district has components of HCMS and PBCS; however, their current systems are unique to those districts and are not aligned. The systemic, macro-micro processes put in place will utilize current local, state, and federal dollars to support ALL participating districts. Two of the partner districts for example, have PBCS for all educators as part of state initiatives. One partner currently has Literacy Coaches at each elementary school funded by the SEA to transition to the proposed project." (p. e33)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Sub Question

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

General:

Overall Comments:

The proposed project is being brought forth in an effort to provide services and address the needs of students at risk of educational failure. Servicing a combined student enrollment of 28,196, the proposed project provides each of the smaller districts the advantages of larger districts. A table is provided in the proposal offering demographic statistics and clearly defining the high-need/at-risk status of the students this project will serve.

Strengths (if applicable):

One of the strengths of the project is the sure size and the number of communities that will be affected by the grant. With a total student enrollment 28,196, the proposed project provides smaller districts with resources and access to the larger school districts (p. e35). A statistical table is provided for each school on pages e36 – e39. The statistics clearly show high-need/at-risk status. For example, The districts have high student suspension rates and data provided demonstrates that SEA's are ranked in the lower 50% of states nationwide. Academic need has also been demonstrated and data shows that student achievement for ELA and Mathematics is low (e40-42).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

2. (2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant provides a strong case for the need of the project. The primary focus of applicant is on high teacher and principal turnover due to poor and ineffective professional development. In addressing the nature of the achievement gaps, the applicant describes a system that lacks alignment and accountability in order to be effective. A table is provided supporting the need of this project.

Sub Question

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant provides a strong case for this grant. First, the lack of effective profession development opportunities of their teachers and school leaders will be addressed. The proposal will address this issue with both teachers and principals who will be enrolled in the Insight Leadership Academy. The purpose will be to strengthen and positively impact professional development for principals and teachers. The principals' sessions are specifically designed to focus on overcoming barriers to improvement in high needs schools. Applicant districts currently have a variety of structures in place but lack rigor and the ability to create a pipeline of new leaders (p. e44). Teachers on the other hand will receive job-embedded, timely, and relevant coaching that is critical to improve classroom instruction while principals will receive executive coaching to reinforce content and skills acquired in the Insight Leadership Academy and support continuous growth and development" (p. e44).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

Selection Criterion - Quality of the Project Design

1. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant provides a strong case regarding the rationale for their program. The project will attempt to revamp the current antiquated educational system and replace it with a more modern system that will address many of the failures of the current system. The project will address three components, recruitment, development and retention of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals. With the intervention of this new program the stakeholders hope this will lead to improved student achievement.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has presented a clear rationale for the design of their project activities. As noted the priorities of their program are the recruitment, development, and retention of teachers, teacher leaders, and principals. The posed project is based on empirical evidence that these three elements are the key to improving student performance. Their human capital strategy is sufficient to meet the individual needs within participating LEA's, as their NIC model will allow smaller districts to benefit from professional development, support and resources from larger districts. This will build capacity among smaller LEA's and help facilitate the development of its staff (e40,41.43).

Sub Question

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

- 2 (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

General:

Overall Comments:

Aspects such as principal and teacher effectiveness will be the outlet to improve student outcomes (specifically economically disadvantaged students). The applicant will create a systemic focus on principal and teacher recruitment, development, and retention. It is noted that this project plans to partner with several with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators to help diversify their workforce.

Strengths (if applicable):

As previously noted in the proposal, the applicant will partner with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators. Secondly, beginning in Year 2, the E3 Networked Improvement Community (NIC) will establish a cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Academy specifically for leaders of color (p. e14). The partnership will help the project diversity their workforce.

The applicant advises, "Districts will engage in a multi-channel, multi-year campaign to draw candidates, including strategic outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and local IHEs. The campaign will include consistent and compelling messaging through websites, video testimonials from current staff, virtual school tours, social media, and in-person events" (p. e57).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

- 3. (3) The extent to which the grant activities will be evaluated, monitored, and reported to the public.**

General:

Overall Comments:

The project intends to hire an external evaluator. This is a strength; as, external evaluators are experienced and unbiased. The intended external evaluator is named and a resume is available for inspection. A review of the external evaluator's resume finds him to be capable of conducting the applicant's program evaluation.

However, an evaluation plan is not provided in the proposal.

Sub Question

Strengths (if applicable):

The project poses using an independent evaluator for the grant. The use of an independent evaluator always strengthens a project. This generally means the evaluator has no stake in the outcome of the project and will not introduce any biases in the study. The evaluator will be responsible for data collection and providing reports to satisfy the grant requirements. Stakeholders will be updated on progress of the project through oral presentations and annual reports made by evaluator.

Weaknesses (if applicable):

Although the applicant indicates a copy of a project evaluation plan is available under Appendix F7, the plan cannot be found or studied.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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.

General:

Overall Comments:

The project provides an adequate timeline of events for the project. The timeline includes scheduled activities along with responsibilities for monitoring the activities and when they should occur. Descriptions of key project staff are provided along with resumes. Selected personnel are certainly qualified to manage the project. Provided in the Appendices, the Logic Model provides some additional information, including outcomes, and strengthens the management plan. A review of the budget finds it to be sufficient.

Strengths (if applicable):

This timeline will help the grant stay on track with their goals and objectives posed in the grant in a timely manner. The project will also hire an administrator for the sole purpose monitoring the progress of grant as it relates to the timeline. The budget is also presented in the proposal. The cost factors seem to be in line with the responsibilities. A table is provided displaying a timeline with clearly defined activities (p. e54 – e56).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

Dates are not specified on the timeline leaving it hard to judge its effectiveness. More specific dates would strengthen this application.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project based on the following factors:

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

- 1. (1) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a clear plan to continue support after grant funding has ended. They have provided ample evidence of resources needed to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including an appropriate operating model and accompanying sustainability plan.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has noted the commitment of each district to the project and to its ongoing efforts especially after funding has ended. Each district will contribute to the sustainability of the program and will match TSL funding at 50%. To ensure that there is a smooth transition of all program components, a Gradual Release Model will be employed for effective knowledge transfer. (e56)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score:

- 2. (2) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency of organization at the end of the Federal funding.**

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided overwhelming evidence of their organization and commitment to incorporate project activities after funding has ended. They have noted a relevant plan to sustain project components by utilizing a cross functioning Advisory Council who will provide guidance on institutionalizing project activities.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has noted that the Advisory Council will utilize proposal elements to set parameters for future use. These parameters will be customized and duplicated across all participating LEA,s. Collectively, the LEA's will create procedures that will be individualized and focus on human capital, professional development and performance-based compensation. (e58)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Sub Question

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority #1 - Improve Equitable Access to Effective Educators

- 1. Projects that are designed to address the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both teachers and School Leaders, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA or LEAs the project will serve. At a minimum, applicants must:**

(1) Identify the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA(s) the project will serve;

(2) Identify relevant factors used in determining such gaps, such as data on availability of school resources, staffing patterns, school climate, and educator support; and

(3) Describe how the strategies proposed for closing the identified gaps are aligned to and are consistent with the strategies identified in the State's Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators, approved by the Department in 2015.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicant has appropriately identified the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, are distributed across the LEA(s) the project will serve. Statistics and current research are cited and described supporting the applicant's position.

Strengths (if applicable):

The districts being served have disproportionately high percentages of economically disadvantaged students and students of color. The current gaps across partner districts include aligned professional development for all current human capital exacerbated by the lack of formal processes to identify the most "highly effective" teachers and principals to place with schools and students with the greatest need. Currently, no partner district has a formal plan or policy to match teachers or leaders with specific schools based on need" (p. e57).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Overall Comments:

Each district has the evaluation systems needed to Identify relevant factors used in determining such gaps, such as data on availability of school resources, staffing patterns, school climate, and educator support.

Strengths (if applicable):

To identify relevant gaps, and to address how they will ensure the quality of their teachers, the applicant has noted that data from districts' evaluation systems are available and are capable of distinguishing between effective and highly

effective educators. The Director of Research will be responsible for this initiative and will work with each district to analyze patterns of impact (e59).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Overall Comments:

The applicant has provided a clear plan that aligns with state outcomes. E3 will be used to identify the highest effective educators. Noteworthy, is the '25-25' metric that will ensure equal access and treatment for students who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant provides a clear plan of how they will align themselves to each partner's equity plan. The applicant has detailed appropriate plans that include the top 25% of the highest effective teachers and principals being matched to the 25% of students who are most disadvantaged. Increasing institutional capacity through Leadership Development is emphasized and within Delaware, a Leadership Design Fellowship will be created to improve and increase school leader pipelines. Outcomes correlate with their overall goal of increasing effectiveness of teachers and principals in high need schools (e32).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority #2 - Diverse and Effective Workforce

- 1. Projects that are designed to attract, support, and retain a diverse and effective workforce, including effective teachers, School Leaders, or both, from historically underrepresented populations. At minimum, applicants must provide:**

A description detailing their commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce.

General:

Overall Comments:

The applicants have thoroughly described their commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce. Critical to the applicant's mission is to "ensure its work significantly results in diversifying teacher and leadership roles with educators who have shared experiences with the students that they serve." The project itself incorporates plans to work with each district participant to create a diversity plan.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant suggests it is critical to its mission and long-term impact to ensure that its work significantly results in diversifying teacher and leadership roles with educators who have shared experiences with the students that they serve.

The project team plans work with each district to create a diversity plan. (p. e14)

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Overall Comments:

The project proposal includes a partnership with national and local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to recruit effective teachers and administrators. This is a great beginning; however, diversity includes many additional minorities and ethnic groups.

Strengths (if applicable):

The applicant has presented a novel plan to attract and retain diverse educators. They will establish a cohort of the Aspiring Leaders Academy specifically for leaders of color to provide training, coaching, and support and act as a pipeline into E3 districts. Also, additional plans for ongoing outreach have been explained and will include marketing and outreach to cultural organizations and faith communities (e60, 444).

Weaknesses (if applicable):

NA

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/13/2017 05:17 PM