

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2023 05:24 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Schools (S374A230002)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	20	17
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	21
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Resources	30	21
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	80
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	10
<b>Total</b>	110	90

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - TSL Panel - 1: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Montgomery County Schools (S374A230002)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

#### 1. Need for Project (20 points)

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

(i) 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.

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.

(iii) 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.

(iv) 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.

#### Strengths:

Overview: The application demonstrates a clear need for the project. The application links programs/strategies, grant activities, and the identified gaps and thoroughly describes how it will integrate with and build on similar efforts within the districts included in the consortium. Across multiple examples, the application demonstrates how it is part of a comprehensive effort aimed at improving teaching and learning and describes its plan for implementing robust strategies aimed at successfully meeting the needs of the target population. However, by addressing the concerned areas, the project can ensure that the design is appropriate and successfully addresses the needs of the target population.

#### Strengths:

(i) Montgomery County Schools (MCS) has conducted a thorough needs analysis, examining student academic and behavioral data, educator evaluations and surveys, and community data. This comprehensive analysis ensures a clear understanding of the gaps and weaknesses that need to be addressed. MCS has identified three significant gaps: low academic achievement and increased behavioral issues, high educator attrition and vacancies, and diversity and inequitable access to effective educators. By pinpointing these specific gaps, the project can target its interventions and strategies more effectively. MCS has provided detailed data regarding student achievement, disciplinary rates, educator effectiveness, and distribution across schools. This data-driven approach allows for evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions. (e13, e16)

(ii) The proposed project in Montgomery County Schools (MCS) will build upon and integrate with existing programs and initiatives, such as the School Climate Transformation Grant, Investing in Innovation grant, and Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant. This integration allows for a cohesive approach to addressing student academic and behavioral issues, promoting literacy, and improving school climate. (e13, e16)

MCS leverages various federal funding streams, such as Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title III; and Title IV, to support teacher professional development, teacher effectiveness, support for English learners, and student academic enrichment. This strategic use of existing federal resources enhances the sustainability and impact of the proposed project. (e13, e16) NCDPI's robust training portal provides valuable resources and support for mentorship, teacher training, and development

of school leaders. Access to these resources strengthens the capacity of MCS educators and aligns with the goals of the proposed project. (e13, e16)

MCS utilizes instructional facilitators and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to provide on-site coaching, professional development, and curriculum support to teachers. These existing support systems will be leveraged to implement collaborative teaming and inquiry-based solutions, enhancing teacher effectiveness, and promoting student achievement. (e17)

(iii) The proposed project in Montgomery County Schools (MCS) incorporates the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT), which provides a comprehensive structure for assessing and improving teacher effectiveness. The framework covers essential domains of planning, instruction, classroom environment, and professional responsibilities, ensuring a holistic approach to teaching and learning. (e18, e20)

The MCS project aligns the FFT with the NC Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES) and the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS). This alignment ensures that teacher evaluations and assessments are based on a combination of professional skills and knowledge (NCEES) and student growth measures (EVAAS), providing a more comprehensive view of educator effectiveness. (e13, e16)

The integration of NCEES, EVAAS, and the state's accountability model enables MCS to use data effectively for decision-making processes related to teacher recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, professional development, and school improvement. This data-driven approach supports targeted interventions and strategies to improve student learning outcomes. (e18, e20)

MCS utilizes the online PD portal provided by NCDPI, which is aligned with the teacher and school leader evaluation standards. This portal serves as a valuable resource for ongoing professional development and supports educators in their growth and improvement. (e18, e20)

(iv) The table clearly identifies three key gaps in the target population: low academic achievement and behavioral issues, high educator attrition and vacancies, and recruiting diverse, qualified educators. This demonstrates a thorough understanding of the needs and challenges faced by the target population. (e21, e27)

The strategies outlined in the table are directly aligned with the identified gaps. For example, collaborative teams, feedback, and coaching, and MTSS are targeted to address low academic achievement and behavioral issues, while comprehensive PBCS, recruitment efforts, and mentorship programs aim to address high educator attrition and vacancies. Each strategy addresses a specific need and provides a clear plan of action to address it. (e21, e27)

The strategies encompass various aspects of the educational system, including recruitment, onboarding, professional development, mentoring, and leadership development. This comprehensive approach ensures that multiple factors contributing to the identified gaps are addressed, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes. (e21, e27)

The proposed project leverages partnerships with HBCUs, paraprofessionals, community outreach, and teacher cadet programs to recruit a diverse pool of qualified educators. These partnerships strengthen the recruitment efforts and tap into different sources of potential candidates, promoting diversity and inclusivity. (e21-27)

#### **Weaknesses:**

(i) No weaknesses noted.

(ii) The narrative does not provide detailed information on how the proposed project will integrate with specific existing programs and initiatives. It would be beneficial to have a more explicit explanation of how the project will align and collaborate with these efforts to maximize impact and avoid duplication (e21, e27).

(iii) While the narrative highlights the comprehensive evaluation system and data-driven decision making, there is limited mention of specific instructional strategies and approaches that will be implemented to improve teaching and learning. It would be beneficial to provide more details on how the project will support effective instructional practices aligned with rigorous academic standards (e21, e27).

(iv) While the strategies are generally described, there is a lack of specific details regarding implementation, timelines, and resource allocation. Providing more specific information would enhance the clarity and feasibility of the proposed strategies (e21, e27).

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

### 1. Quality of the Project Design (25 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.
- (ii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.
- (iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

#### Strengths:

Overview: The proposed project Demonstrates a clear Rationale and includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation. It is clear how the methodological tools will ensure the achievement of project objectives. The method of evaluation to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes shows some limitations.

#### Strengths:

(i) The narrative presents a clear rationale by outlining the project's theory of action. It demonstrates a logical progression from the exposure of educators to high-quality experiences in recruitment, preparation, support, leadership, and reward, to the desired outcome of equitable access to effective, diverse educators impacting student academic achievement. This provides a strong foundation for the project's rationale.

The project's rationale incorporates multiple components and mediators, considering both short-term and long-term outcomes. By addressing various aspects such as HCMS, PBCS, recruitment, leadership roles, professional development, and mentoring, the project takes a comprehensive approach to improve educator quality and student achievement. (e53, e29).

The project's underlying theory of change, based on motivation theory, suggests that individuals are likely to change their behavior when motivated by the prospect of compensation. This integration of motivation theory aligns with the use of performance pay and incentives to drive improvements in educator effectiveness. (e53, e29).

(ii) The narrative indicates that the project design includes a thorough review of relevant literature. The planning committee studied resources from the US Department of Education's Effective Educator Development TA Center and incorporated research and case studies on HCMS, recruitment, retention, and sustainability. This demonstrates a strong foundation of knowledge and evidence-based practices informing the project design. (e53, e29).

The project design incorporates evidence-based strategies supported by research. The narrative references research findings that support the effectiveness of various project components, such as recruitment practices, mentoring and induction support, school leadership, professional development, and performance-based compensation. By grounding the project in evidence-based strategies, it increases the likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes. (e53, e29).

The narrative provides an overview of the project's implementation plan, highlighting key focus areas and strategies. It emphasizes building a sustainable human capital infrastructure, implementing a robust educator evaluation system, providing ongoing professional development, and ensuring equitable access to effective educators. The clear articulation of the implementation plan strengthens the project's design and demonstrates a thoughtful approach to project execution. (e30, e35)

(iii) The evaluation plan incorporates both formative and summative evaluation components. The formative evaluation will provide ongoing feedback to guide implementation and make mid-course corrections, ensuring that the project stays on track. The summative evaluation will assess progress in achieving outcomes and objectives, specifically focusing on the impact of the performance-based compensation system on student performance. This comprehensive approach allows for continuous improvement and assessment of the project's effectiveness. (e30, e35)

The evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This approach enhances the depth of information gathered and provides a more comprehensive understanding of stakeholder reactions, implementation fidelity, and outcomes. The use of interviews, focus groups, open-ended survey questions, and statistical analyses increases the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings. (e30, e35)

The evaluators will actively engage stakeholders by participating in monthly management team meetings and seeking consensus on evaluation questions, methods, and protocols. This participatory approach fosters stakeholder ownership and increases the likelihood that evaluation results will be used to improve the program. The sharing of evaluation findings through reports, briefings, conferences, and networking promotes transparency and encourages replication in other districts. (e35, e38)

#### **Weaknesses:**

- (i) The narrative does not explicitly mention the existing evidence base or research supporting the proposed theory of action. Including references to relevant studies, best practices, or successful examples from similar projects would strengthen the rationale and demonstrate the project's alignment with established knowledge. (e30, e35)
- (ii) While the narrative mentions methodological tools to ensure the achievement of project objectives, it does not provide detailed information about the specific tools and methodologies that will be used. It would be beneficial to outline the specific data collection methods, evaluation frameworks, and analytical techniques that will be employed to measure project outcomes and assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies. (e30, e35)
- (iii) There is no effective plan for how feedback will be decimated to teachers and principals. (e35, e38)

**Reader's Score: 21**

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

#### **1. Quality of the Management Plan (25 points)**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**

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

Overview: The quality of the management plan for the proposed project is adequately articulated. The management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget is clearly written. The plan includes clearly defined responsibilities, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. While The inclusion of milestones helps track the project's advancement and allows for necessary adjustments if needed, it is not clear how the ongoing timelines affect the project overall. Saying timelines are ongoing doesn't give a clear picture from beginning to end.

#### **Strengths:**

The management plan outlines specific roles and responsibilities for each team member, ensuring that there is a clear understanding of who is responsible for what tasks. This clarity helps facilitate efficient administration and implementation of the project. (e38, e42)

The management plan includes timelines and milestones for each activity, providing a roadmap for project implementation. This ensures that tasks are completed in a timely manner and helps monitor progress towards achieving

the objectives. The inclusion of milestones helps track the project's advancement and allows for necessary adjustments if needed. (e38, e42)

The management plan highlights the importance of stakeholder involvement and engagement. The plan includes activities such as soliciting stakeholder feedback, conducting focus groups and surveys, and incorporating input into the program design. This approach ensures that the program considers the perspectives and needs of key stakeholders, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation. (e38, e42)

#### **Weaknesses:**

While The inclusion of milestones helps track the project's advancement and allows for necessary adjustments if needed, it is not clear how the ongoing timelines affect the project overall. Saying timelines are ongoing doesn't give a clear picture from beginning to end. (e38, e42)

**Reader's Score: 21**

### **Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

#### **1. Adequacy of Resources (30 points)**

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

- (i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.**
- (ii) 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.**
- (iii) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.**

#### **Strengths:**

Overview: How the proposed project will result in system change or improvement is clearly stated. The proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population. The applicant clearly demonstrates that it has resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan.

#### **Strengths:**

(i) The project is aligned with the MCS 2025 strategic plan, which has a clear mission to ensure globally competitive graduates and focuses on student-centered improvement. This alignment demonstrates a strong commitment to system change and improvement. (e47, e52)

The project incorporates evidence-based strategies, such as HCMS, PBCS, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), career ladders, and school leader effectiveness. Drawing from research and literature, these strategies demonstrate promising results in improving teacher performance and student achievement. (e47, e52)

The project takes a multidimensional approach by addressing various aspects of educator effectiveness, including recruitment, preparation, support, leadership, and reward. This comprehensive approach demonstrates the interconnectedness of these elements in achieving systemic change. (e47, e52)

The project is rooted in a continuous improvement model, emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision-making and ongoing evaluation. This comprehensive approach allows for adjustments and refinements based on feedback and assessment results, enhancing the likelihood of positive outcomes. (e47, e52)

(ii) The project leverages various local resources, including Title I and II professional learning, the TEAM Leadership Academy, Instructional Facilitators, School Resource Officers (SROs), the Beginning Teacher Support Program, PLC Rubric, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Data-Based Systems (EVAAS and NCEES), and the NC DPI Beginning Teacher Facilitator. By tapping into these resources, the project effectively builds on existing initiatives and expertise, enhancing local capacity to provide and expand services. (e47, e52)

The project addresses multiple aspects of capacity building, including attracting effective educators, developing aspiring administrators, increasing educator effectiveness through mentoring and professional development, disseminating effective strategies, strengthening content knowledge, and providing leadership opportunities. This comprehensive approach ensures that various needs of the target population are addressed, leading to improved services. (e47, e52) The project aligns with and complements existing local initiatives, such as the NC DPI PL and Restart Model Schools, ensuring that efforts are coordinated, and resources are maximized. This alignment strengthens the project's potential to build local capacity and create synergy with ongoing initiatives. (e47, e52)

(iii) The applicant demonstrates a clear multi-year financial plan and operating model that outlines the district's commitment to sustaining the project beyond the grant period. The plan includes specific objectives, strategies, and timelines for implementation, indicating a comprehensive approach to long-term sustainability. (e47, e52)

The applicant has secured commitments from various partners, including Montgomery Community College, UNC-Pembroke, UNC-Greensboro, Montgomery Sheriff's Office, Star Police, Mount Gilead Police, Candor Police, Troy Police, Eury Consulting, and PowerSchool. These commitments range from sharing job listings, providing training and support, offering discounts on services, and contributing financial resources. The involvement of these partners demonstrates their commitment to the project's long-term success and strengthens the resources available for its operation.

The applicant provides clear evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success. This includes support from the School Board, Superintendent, Management Team, community members, principals, and educators. Stakeholder support is demonstrated through letters of commitment, MOUs, survey feedback, and participation in focus groups. This broad support indicates a strong foundation of collaboration and engagement, which is crucial for sustaining the project beyond the grant period. (e47, e52)

### **Weaknesses:**

(i) While the narrative provides an overview of the strategies and their evidence-base, it lacks specific details on how these strategies will be implemented. Further elaboration on the specific actions, resources, and timelines for each strategy would strengthen the project's likelihood of resulting in system change. (e47, e52)

(ii) The narrative does not provide a detailed implementation plan for utilizing the identified local resources. Clear steps, timelines, and responsibilities for incorporating and expanding these resources within the project would enhance the project's effectiveness in building local capacity. (e47, e52)

(iii) While the narrative mentions the involvement of stakeholders and their support, it does not provide extensive details on the strategies and mechanisms in place to ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement. Clear plans for continued communication, feedback collection, and collaboration with stakeholders would strengthen the project's long-term sustainability. (e47, e52)

**Reader's Score: 21**

### **Priority Questions**

#### **Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

##### **1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:**

##### **Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (Up to 5**



points).

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

a. In one or more of the following educational settings:

- (1) Elementary school.
- (2) Middle school.
- (3) High school.
- (4) Career and technical education programs.

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

- (1) Increasing the number and proportion of experienced, fully certified, in-field, and effective educators, and educators from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds or the communities they serve, to ensure that underserved students have educators from those backgrounds and communities and are not taught at disproportionately higher rates by uncertified, out-of-field, and novice teachers compared to their peers.
- (2) Improving the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas.

**Strengths:**

Overview:

To increase the number and percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators--which may include one or more of the following: teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or other School Leaders, the Applicant presents a well-documented proposal using Evidence-Based strategies as evidenced throughout the proposal.

Strengths: In supporting educators and their professional growth, the project will contribute to improved recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce. The strategies and new human capital practices adopted will be focused on goals related to building district leadership that mirrors the growing student population to support educators and their professional growth. Educators will receive real-time feedback to help them improve in key areas. The performance review system will also be redesigned with educators as partners to ensure evaluation metrics are transparent. By implementing these strategies and adopting new human capital practices, the project aims to build district leadership that mirrors the growing student population. Educators will receive real-time feedback, have a voice in the evaluation process, and access professional growth opportunities. This comprehensive approach will contribute to improved recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience and outcomes for students. (e10)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:**

**Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student**

**Learning (Up to 5 points).**

**Projects that are designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, by developing data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator diversity.**

**Strengths:**

Overview: Overview: To increase the number and percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators--which may include one or more of the following: teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or other School Leaders, the Applicant presents a well-documented proposal using Evidence-Based strategies throughout the proposal.

Strengths: By increasing educator diversity, the applicant proposed that the human capital practices implemented as part of the project will be focused on recruiting and supporting a more diverse educator workforce that mirrors the growing student population. A system of professional learning for leaders focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion will ensure TEAM implements professional development that fosters an inclusive and supportive school climate for diverse leaders. They want to make sure that educator diversity can closely resemble the student population. They will ensure that educators of color received individualized support, professional development, and mentorship. (e10)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 5**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/31/2023 05:24 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2023 05:28 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Schools (S374A230002)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	20	18
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	23
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	23
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Resources	30	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	87
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	10
<b>Total</b>	110	97

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - TSL Panel - 1: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Montgomery County Schools (S374A230002)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

#### 1. Need for Project (20 points)

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

- (i) 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.
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.

#### Strengths:

Overview: The application demonstrates an adequate need for the project by addressing some elements of the criteria, but not others. The application is clear in identifying and addressing specific gaps in services and links grant activities, to improve relevant outcomes. Across multiple examples, the application demonstrates how it is part of a comprehensive effort aimed at improving teaching and learning and describes its plan for implementing strategies aimed at successfully meeting the needs of the target population. The application is unclear in how programs/strategies are part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning through rigorous academic standards for students.

#### Strengths:

(i) Applicant demonstrates significant gaps in services with a majority of the schools being cited by the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) on the low-performing district list with a significant percentage of students scoring below proficiency in every tested subject and failure rates above state averages in all tested subjects (e.13-e.14) District disciplinary and behavioral incident rates exceed state averages with disparities in disciplinary rates across subgroups (e14). Applicant demonstrates a weakness in staffing high-need school, indicated by a high attrition and mobility rate, 17% of teachers with provisional licensure or teaching outside content area, and difficulties recruiting math, science, elementary, and Exceptional Children teachers (e.15). Student population is 64% minority and teacher population is 82% white demonstrating a lack of access to diversity as well as more teachers rates as in Needs Improvement and less teachers rated as Effective, compared to state averages (e.15-e.16) 60% of principles and AP's are inexperienced (e.17) and three Montgomery County Schools have been cited as lowest-performing in the state due to consistently underperforming subgroups (e.17). These gaps will be addressed through the plan which includes a redesign of the HCMS to attract, retain, and sustain diverse educators and expanding the PBCS with stakeholder input, expanding recruitment to increase teacher diversity, enhancing Grow Your own pathways, expanding Teacher Affinity Group, BT and MT programs, implementation of an Aspiring Leadership Academy, 1:1 principal/AP mentorship as well as creating a teacher leadership program and improved PD.

(ii) Applicant will build on related efforts to improve student outcomes and build a more effective instructional and school leadership staff which include a School Climate Transformation Federal Grant which implements a multi-tiered system of

supports to address academic and behavioral issues, 2015 Investing in Innovation Federal grant which embedded technology across rural schools, 2018 Innovative Approaches to Literacy Federal grant that targets PreK-6 students, and multiple federal block grant funding as a high-need district (e.17-e.18). NCDPI provides a training portal for mentors, beginning and experienced teachers, and school leaders (e18). Each school has an instructional facilitator providing coaching, PD, and curriculum support to teachers on-site as well as working with PLCs to create Collaborative Teaming (e.18). A school resource officer in each school will redirect their time and efforts to align with objectives of the TSL grant (e.18).

(iii) Applicant will use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to build teacher skillsets and impact learning, and includes creation of equitable learning environments and promotion of social-emotional development, to meet needs of all students (e.18-e.19) The NC Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES) supports professional growth of teachers through online modules, evaluation components, professional development, evaluation cycles for both teachers and school leaders (e. 19). Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) is used to assess impact of teachers, school leaders, schools, and districts on student learning growth in state-tested subjects (e.19) Educator effectiveness and accountability are calculated based on data from NCEES and EVAAS (e.20). Applicant provides a number of bonuses for retention and performance (e.21).

(iv) Applicant successfully addresses the needs of the target population as well as other identified needs including low academic achievement and behavioral issues, working environment, high educator attrition and vacancies, difficulty with staffing schools, recruiting diverse, qualified educators and inequitable access to effective educators (Table 7, e.21).  
(iv) The applicant will implement TEAM to triangulate and streamline data from various platforms currently in use and empower district and school leaders to make data-informed HR, instructional, and district operational decisions at the classroom, school, and district level, which will facilitate recruitment, application, hiring, and onboarding new educators and use results from educator and school leader evaluations to ensure better alignment of PD (e.22).

Applicant will partner with historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) to recruit a diverse workforce, work with own pool of paraprofessionals and recruit into high need areas, community outreach, Grow Your Own, and Articulation Agreements with local colleges (e.22-23). Will include an implementation of a Beginning Teacher Support Program and New Teacher Support Program, as well as a New Leaders Mentoring and Coaching (e.24-e.25). Instructional facilitators will work with teacher collaborative teams to focus on raising achievement and closing existing gaps (e.25). Applicant will promote teacher retention of diverse educators through Teacher Affinity Group (TAG) a group of black and Hispanic teachers that meet monthly (e.26) Professional learning schedule with early release days for focused PD (e.26). Opportunities for taking on leadership roles and earning cash incentives, the establishment of a leadership academy, and a PBC Framework to reward teachers (e.27e.29).

#### **Weaknesses:**

(iv) The application has identified low academic achievement as a gap with a plan to utilize teacher collaborative teams, feedback, coaching, MTSS, and professional development to address. However, the proposed project is lacking in detail regarding the instructional strategies to be utilized which makes it challenging to understand how the proposed project will impact student learning. (e. 17-e.21).

**Reader's Score: 18**

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

#### **1. Quality of the Project Design (25 points)**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

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

(ii) **The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.**

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

**Strengths:**

Overview: The project's design adequately addresses most elements of each of the selection criteria but not others. It identifies a rationale and includes a high-quality review of the relevant literature, the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives and includes a high-quality plan for project implementation. The proposed project is unclear as to the extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

**Strengths:**

(i) The proposed project's use of Theory of Action is well-conceived and is likely to lead to sound project implementation due to the strong alignment between the proposed project activities and outcomes outlined in the logic model provided. (e. 29-e.30, e.54)

(ii) Applicant has included a high-quality literature review that utilizes research and resources that are recent, to support the strategies proposed by the applicant (e.30-e.32, e.106-e.113). The project plan provided in the applicant's proposal gives detailed implementation of the plan including itemizing project tasks, assigning task owners, and itemizing timelines (e.42-e.44). Applicant will utilize appropriate tools which include both quantitative and qualitative data sources to ensure successful implementation of the plan. (e.36)

(iii) The timeline for gathering and analyzing project data, which includes an evaluator participating in monthly meetings, sharing of results through interim and annual reports allows for meaningful assessment of project progress. (e.37)

**Weaknesses:**

The project lacks a plan for sharing information to the teachers and LEAs that are involved in the project, only addressing how information will be shared with outside agencies that are key stakeholder groups, which may impact the ability to the project to meet its goals and outcomes (e.37).

**Reader's Score: 23**

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

**1. Quality of the Management Plan (25 points)**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**

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

**Overview:**

The quality of the management plan adequately addresses some elements of each of the selection criterion, but not others. The management plan adequately achieves the objectives of the proposed project within budget, and includes clearly defined responsibilities, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The application is unclear in its timeline for accomplishing project tasks.

**Strengths:**

The project's timeline provides a clear roadmap for project implementation by including information on the project team members' job descriptions and bios, (e.76-e.83, Appendix B e.56-e.75).

Montgomery County Schools has a history of demonstrated successful implementation of grant programs including prior Department of Education grants such as School Climate Transformation, Investing in Innovation, and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (e.38).

The applicant includes a detailed timeline and responsibilities chart highlighting timelines for specific deliverables from all key partners and stakeholders involved in the project and clearly defined responsibilities (e.42-e.44), as well as within budget (e.138-e.174).

The applicant has assembled a management team of district staff who have in-kind contributions of .25 hours and will oversee the objectives as well as dive into the data, A project director, and accountability specialist (e.39-e.40).

A beginning Teacher Specialist will provide support to teachers in their first three years, train BT mentors, facilitate the Aspiring Leadership Academy, incorporate the evaluation data into PD, and implement a Teacher Affinity Group for minority educators, all activities which support reaching the intended outcomes. (e.40-e.41).

Annual focus groups will be held to support stakeholder involvement (e.41).

An outside group will conduct an impact study to gauge program effectiveness, inform fidelity of implementation, and disseminate finding for continuous improvement and replication (e.41).

**Weaknesses:**

The proposed project includes milestones but is unclear on how the ongoing timeline will support the project (e.42-e.44).

**Reader's Score: 23**

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**1. Adequacy of Resources (30 points)**

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

- (i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.**
- (ii) 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.**
- (iii) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.**

**Strengths:**

**Overview:**

The project resources adequately address some elements of the selection criteria, but do not adequately address others. The proposed project will likely result in system change or improvement, build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population, and demonstrate commitment of partners and broad

stakeholders. However, while there is intention to operate the program beyond the length of the grant, this plan is based on the renewal of the TSL grant funding and a sustainability plan that has not yet been drafted.

**Strengths:**

The project design is based on the educator human capital framework and rooted in the continuous improvement model and empowers educators to make data driven decisions that impact student learning. (e.45)

The project's use of the Theory of Action, as depicted in their logic model, demonstrates the likelihood of improvement and systematic change through the use of data driven decisions being made that impact teacher effectiveness, retention, recruitment, and student learning. (e.54)

(i) Project has relevant and recent research to support the key strategies implemented in TEAM including evidence of HCMS practices increasing educator engagement and job satisfaction, and PD which impact student achievement. PBCS improves teacher and school leader performance. Student achievement was significantly higher in districts utilizing career ladders, PLCs has shown to be the most beneficial form of PD delivery (e.46).

(ii) The project addresses the retaining, recruitment, and training of a diverse workforce and positions that are difficult to staff with a number of strategies such as including needs-based PD, providing opportunities for leadership positions, and building on existing initiatives to expand services. (e.47)

(iii) The project has the commitment of the district as evidenced by the 50% match and Match Intent and Ability Letter from Montgomery County school District. (e.99-e.100)

The project includes letters which demonstrates support for the project from a variety of partners and stakeholders including local police departments for SRO's, and Sheriff of Montgomery Count lending libraries, in-kind contributions for micro-credentialing software, local community colleges, as well as in-kind donations from local businesses to support teacher professional development. (e.87-e.100)

**Weaknesses:**

(i) The proposed project has detailed the strategies that will be used in the project but does not explain how they will be implemented throughout the program (e.48).

(iii) The applicant plans to collaborate with stakeholders to draft a sustainability plan that will describe a financial operating model after the grant period ends, however this plan has not yet been drafted. (e.49)

**Reader's Score: 23**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:  
Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (Up to 5 points).**

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

**a. In one or more of the following educational settings:**



- (1) Elementary school.
- (2) Middle school.
- (3) High school.
- (4) Career and technical education programs.

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

(1) Increasing the number and proportion of experienced, fully certified, in-field, and effective educators, and educators from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds or the communities they serve, to ensure that underserved students have educators from those backgrounds and communities and are not taught at disproportionately higher rates by uncertified, out-of-field, and novice teachers compared to their peers.

(2) Improving the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas.

**Strengths:**

Overview:

The application clearly demonstrates promoting equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities. The proposed is designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in elementary, middle, and high school settings. The project examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implements responses that include increasing the number and proportion of experienced, fully certified, in-field, and effective educators, and educators from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds or the communities they serve as well as improve the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas.

Strengths:

The project proposes to implement the TEAM program in 11 of the highest need schools with a projection of reaching 320 educators, 22 leaders, 3,494 students (e.10, e.101).

The project will recruit diverse, experienced, certified educators from underrepresented backgrounds which allows for equal access to experienced and effective educators. (e.15-e.16)

Student population is 64% minority and teacher population are 82% white demonstrating a lack of access to diversity as well as more teachers' rates as in Needs Improvement and less teachers rated as Effective, compared to state averages which will be addressed through focused recruitment efforts (e.15-e.16).

Instructional facilitators will work with teacher collaborative teams to focus on raising achievement and closing existing gaps (e.25).

The project design is based on the educator human capital framework and rooted in the continuous improvement model and empowers educators to make data driven decision that impact student learning. (e.45)

Instructional facilitators will work with teacher collaborative teams to focus on raising achievement and closing existing gaps which supports the access of the students in high-need schools to effective educators (e.25).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

## Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2

### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning (Up to 5 points).

Projects that are designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, by developing data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator diversity.

#### Strengths:

##### Overview:

The application clearly demonstrates a project that supports a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning with a design to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, by developing data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator diversity.

##### Strengths:

The project will recruit diverse, experienced, certified educators from underrepresented backgrounds through Grow Your Own pathways (e.10)

A Teacher Cadet program, a year long class providing active career exploration for juniors and seniors to encourage careers in education (e.10).

The applicant will be expanding the Teacher Affinity Group program, implementing an Aspiring Leadership Academy, providing mentors, PD activities based on need, ensuring DEI practices in all project activities. (e.10)

Goals of the project include a redesign of the district's existing HCMS and PBCS in high-need schools and develop and increase teacher and school leader effectiveness with supporting objectives. (e.34-e.35)

The proposed project includes PD that will build teacher and school leader ability to support diverse students through equitable instructional and disciplinary practices. (e.26).

The applicant has included micro credentialing with a tract that addresses Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion which demonstrates commitment and focus on underserved students (e.26).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/31/2023 05:28 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2023 11:52 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Schools (S374A230002)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	20	16
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	23
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	20
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Resources	30	24
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	83
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	10
<b>Total</b>	110	93

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - TSL Panel - 1: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Montgomery County Schools (S374A230002)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

#### 1. Need for Project (20 points)

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

- (i) 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.
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.

#### Strengths:

##### Overview:

The application does an adequate of describing the needs of the district and its identified high needs schools. The needs assessment includes weaknesses in student achievement, especially among students from poverty. The proposal will also attempt to rectify some weaknesses in the district's human resources and staff incentives areas, including recruitment and retention of solid teachers and principals. (p. e 27)

##### Strengths:

- (i) The applicant provides strong evidence of widespread lack of student achievement in the eleven high needs schools. This lack of achievement is across the board in terms of subject areas, such as math, reading, and science. (p. e 25)
- (ii) The proposal notes some existing programs, from federal grants and state funding, that the project will build off to get at the existing problems. For example, some of the identified grants that are related to the aims of this one includes the School Climate Transformation grant and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy. (p. e 39)
- (iii) The application also notes that there is a perceived need to improve the climate of the schools in the project, in part related to behavioral issues among students, in addition to the willingness for high quality teachers to stay in the rural and isolated area of the state. (p. e 26)
- (iv) The applicant touches on some proposed strategies to deal with kinds of concerns. For example, the project will include trauma informed professional development and the inclusion of restorative justice in the discipline system. (p. e 17)

**Weaknesses:**

A weakness in the application is the lack of detail regarding community and family engagement to address some of the ills of the district. For example, the applicant mentions rewarding teachers for extra work along the lines of setting up and running student clubs and conducting parent outreach, but there is a lack of a district strategy to engage the community. (p. e 27)

Another weakness is the lack of detail surrounding the proposed repurposing of the school resource officers in terms of why that is deemed necessary and what the new roles will entail and the training to support that change. (p. e 21)

A final weakness of the application is the lack of detail regarding the role of the counselors in providing guidance for student success in career and college in their postsecondary trajectory. (p. e 40)

**Reader's Score:** 16

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design****1. Quality of the Project Design (25 points)**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

- (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale.**
- (ii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.**
- (iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

**Strengths:**

## Overview:

The applicant provides information that spells out a rationale for the work of the project. Its basic premise is that most people, including teachers and principals want to improve their schools in terms of student achievement, collegiality, and school climate. However, the proposal has one weakness in providing feedback to teachers.

## Strengths:

(i) The applicant notes that various monetary incentives will be the primary driver to contribute to excellence in teaching, student learning, and leadership. Many of the proposed strategies and activities are cited as being found in the project's thorough review of the relevant research findings. (p. e 30) In addition, the project has a set of methods of evaluation that will ensure formative assessment towards project goals. (p. e 33)

(ii) In addition to these aspects of the proposal, the application provides a thoughtful set of references to research that supports its strategies and methods. To ensure project activities align with the most effective practices for improving teacher performance and student success, the proposal cites several recent studies to back its planning. For example, one relevant research cited is titled, "Do high school students with a same-race teacher attend class more often?" Another relevant citation is "How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research." The use of these resources indicates a strong commitment to research-based practice for the project. (p. e 108) The application provides details on several proposals that it has in mind that will use stipends and other monetary rewards to reward and motivate teachers and leaders. For example, the proposal cites the need to empower experienced and high-quality teachers to aspire to and take on leadership roles. For master teacher leaders, those who will help with the grow your own program for example, will need to have a highly

effective teacher evaluation score and teacher certain classes. For this work teachers can be rewarded \$5,000 annually with up to two teachers per year. Teachers who will provide mentoring and support to meet the needs of beginning teachers will be eligible for \$1,250 per year for that leadership work. (p. e 29)

(iii) In addition to these kinds of incentives, the project will partner with HBCUs and other IHEs to identify, promote and retain beginning teachers who will be guided and mentored and will stay in the district. The project additionally will provide opportunities for teachers of color to participate in organized teacher affinity groups so that can get support from their peers. (p. e 40) The proposal has key components that will provide a plan for project implementation. One of these essential elements is the use of facilitators at each of the 11 high-need campuses. These staff members will be content or grade-level coaches, providing support and enhanced training identified through teacher evaluations. In addition, they will model effective instructional strategies, ensure alignment of teaching methods and assessments, co-teach and model lessons in classrooms, and make sure that the proper methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives are in place at the classroom or grade level. (p. e 41) The project provides details on a variety of appropriate methodological tools to ensure progress towards goals. For example, the applicant notes that they will use tools such as program evaluation and feedback methods such as annual focus groups and SWOT analysis, among many other tools. (p. e 45)

**Weaknesses:**

A weakness in the application is the lack of detail concerning how feedback will be given to teachers on their status and evaluation performance. (p. e 36)

**Reader's Score: 23**

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

**1. Quality of the Management Plan (25 points)**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**

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

Overview:

The applicant provides some helpful descriptions of its management plan that could lead to successful implementation. The project provides the key elements; the plan itself, with objectives that a laid out so it is possible to see that the project will be achieved on time and within budget. In addition, the proposal gives some defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for the tasks undertaken. However, the proposal is not clear on how the key players will work together in a cohesive way. (p. e 38-41)

Strengths:

The application provides a description of the role of the management team that will be overseeing the entire grant. For example, they will work on improving service quality and allocating resources. A large part of their duties and responsibilities is the upgrade and revision of the HCMS and PBCS through working with teachers, principals, and other staff. The next big responsibility is to recruit, train, and retain a diverse cohort of educators, while implementing evidence-based strategies. Finally, this leading body will seek answers through a school data analysis. The hope is this analysis will provide solid evidence of outcomes sought. (p. e 39)

**Weaknesses:**

A weakness in the application is the overabundance of personnel who will be involved in the project management. The management team has nine members who hold administrative roles in the district. In addition, the proposal calls for several full-time employees to be added to the project. These include the project director and data analyst, among others. There is a lack of detail of how this management structure will work efficiently and effectively to implement the planned work. For example, it is not clear on the reporting structure for the project manager and if that person largely has control of the direction of the project. (p. e 39-40)

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources****1. Adequacy of Resources (30 points)**

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

- (i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.**
- (ii) 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.**
- (iii) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.**

**Strengths:**

## Overview:

The proposal provides some evidence that the project will produce systemic change. The applicant provides a great deal of information regarding in-kind contributions and district commitments that will contribute to project success. Further, the applicant details a thorough and involved sustainability plan that illuminates the district's commitment to see this project to fruition, especially in terms of funding after the grant ends. It identifies some ways that the grant work will build local capacity to better serve the targeted population of students. One weakness in the proposal is the lack of detail regarding some of the crucial training needed for struggling teachers. (p. e 39-40)

## Strengths:

The application provides some information on how it will build on existing work, including previous grants that were designed to be in alignment with the goals of this project. For example, the applicant details that their commitment is solid and offers that the nine members of the management team, all district employees, will each contribute .25 FTE to see the project succeed. In addition, the proposal notes that by redesigning HCMS and increasing the capacity and reach of PBCS, the project builds local capacity by attracting capable, diverse educators into hard-to-staff positions; recruiting administrators into leadership roles in high needs schools; increasing teaching proficiency through mentoring and added training; finding effective strategies; strengthening content knowledge; and providing opportunities for leadership roles to grow capacity among existing staff. (p. e 47)

**Weaknesses:**

A weakness in the application lies in the lack of details surrounding strengthening content knowledge of teachers, especially beginning teachers, those teachers who come into teaching from business and industry careers, and teachers who struggle to be effective in transmitting knowledge to their students. (p. e 47) Without this detail, it is difficult to ascertain how successful this project will be. (p. e 39)



**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1:  
Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (Up to 5 points).**

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

- a. In one or more of the following educational settings:
  - (1) Elementary school.
  - (2) Middle school.
  - (3) High school.
  - (4) Career and technical education programs.
  
- b. That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or more of the following:
  - (1) Increasing the number and proportion of experienced, fully certified, in-field, and effective educators, and educators from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds or the communities they serve, to ensure that underserved students have educators from those backgrounds and communities and are not taught at disproportionately higher rates by uncertified, out-of-field, and novice teachers compared to their peers.
  - (2) Improving the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas.

**Strengths:**

Overview:

The applicant addresses some of the factors in this area. The proposal touches on promotion of educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students. The applicant describes a strategy relies on high-quality tools and processes, including our equity and diversity plan, which are embedded into its theory of action. (p. e 45)

Strengths:

The applicant goes to some lengths to note how it will promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in identified high needs schools. It also identifies students coming from poverty as a factor in the disparity of outcomes. The applicant also describes a strategy that relies on high-quality tools and processes that will aid in attaining equity. (p. e 45)

**Weaknesses:**

None observed.

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2:  
Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning (Up to 5 points).**

**Projects that are designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students, with a focus on underserved students, through building or expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, by developing data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator diversity.**

**Strengths:**

**Overview:**

The application touches on several aspects of this priority. First, it has a plan to increase both the number of diverse teachers and the number of effective teachers. Secondly, it will overhaul its existing data systems to streamline them and make them more efficient. One area lacking is details on the human resources department's implementation of an action plan to increase diversity. For example, the management plan shows some key milestones, responsibilities, a timeline for this priority.

**Strengths:**

The applicant meets some of this priority in that it will increase the number of well-prepared, diverse, and strong educators working with underserved students. This will be accomplished by expanding the school districts' capacity to have an effective and diverse educational staff.

In addition, the project will work on developing data systems and timelines to implement those revised data systems. (p. e 42)

**Weaknesses:**

None observed.

**Reader's Score:     5**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   07/31/2023 11:52 PM