

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2023 10:18 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Tulare County Office of Education (S374A230032)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	24
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	30	30
Sub Total	100	94
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	5
Sub Total	10	10
Total	110	104

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - TSL Panel - 4: 84.374A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Tulare County Office of Education (S374A230032)

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 need for the project in adequate ways. It adequately describes their gaps and weakness which are low student achievement, a lack of diversity in the workforce lack of a systemic HCMS framework, a structured PBCS and educator evaluations not being utilized for effective feedback. The project will target six schools, 4 elementary, 1 middle and 1 high school in Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) (e16-19).

Strengths:

- (i) The schools identified in the project have a significant population of economically disadvantaged students ranging from 68.9%-93.2%. Most of the students in the school are Hispanic (79% average) and 41.9% of those are classified as English Learners (EL). All schools have scored below average on both ELA and Math Assessments. An analysis completed in 2021 highlighted that there was disproportion in gender and ethnicity between VUSD teachers and students. The district does not have a proactive plan for intentional recruitment, nor does it have a comprehensive HCMS to focus on recruiting top teachers and principals. The HCMS framework has no interconnection between HR & the Finance Dept, and no centralized database for informed data-driven decision making. Performance based compensation is limited in scope and application. Although student performance data is included in teacher evaluations, it lacks in providing feedback for improving educator effectiveness and outcomes for students (e16-19)
- (ii) The proposed project would work with existing funding sources from other programs or policies backed by community, State and Federal resources to improve relevant results. It will expand on these efforts, for instance, schools in the district have taken part in a Dept. of Ed. Grant to support mental health professionals and Teacher Quality Partnership grants to create pipelines of diverse and highly qualified educators through a residency program (e.20-21)
- (iii) Teachers will participate in professional learning, training, and coaching through the University of Virginia. VUSD created an Aspiring Principal Cohort and 2 of 8 were hired from the first cohort. Staff members who want to become teachers received \$3,000 in funding to complete their Bachelor' degree and/or preliminary credential (e21-22).
- (iv) The proposed project's design is in line with the needs of the targeted population, and it should effectively meet those needs. As evidenced by their letters of commitment, stakeholders from the target schools were involved from the beginning of the program. There seems to be a strong commitment from teachers, students, family members and the

community, which suggests a commitment to its success.

Weaknesses:

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iv) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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 quality of design for the proposed project is adequate. It presents a rationale that looks at its prior success, through literature review, and support from its key stakeholders. The applicant presented an organized plan with the use of appropriate methodological tools, to ensure that the goals of the project are met. The evaluation methods used are reliable and should result in the desired outcome. (e24-41)

Strengths:

- (i) The applicant provided an adequate rationale for the project. That rationale includes developing an integrated HCMS, learning opportunities that are differentiated based on the needs of the learner, career advancement and a performance-based compensation system that is aligned with the educator evaluation system. The logic model is used to support this rationale.
- (ii) The applicant has included a high-quality literature review along with a plan for the project's implementation. Within the project design are plans for how the five key elements will be implemented. The evaluation tools are appropriate, performance measures are specific and timely.
- (iii) The methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. Data collection will concentrate on strategy implantation and program effectiveness. The feedback will be in the form of monthly meetings, assessment of social media platforms and annual reports (e37-41).

Weaknesses:

- (i) Numerous references are not current and older than 10 years. The relevancy of the project would be enhanced by providing more current resources (e33-36).

Reader's Score: 20

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:

This applicant proposes that the project will lead to significant improvements in teaching, leading, and learning, building capacity of the district to manage school change and ensure that all students have effective teachers, and all schools have effective leaders (e41).

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a thorough management plan. The project will be managed by a team that will collaborate with the evaluator. The professionals chosen to oversee the project have a variety of backgrounds. Their resumes and credentials were listed. The applicant provided a timeline with tasks and the people who are accountable for each task. The project should be finished on time and within budget e42-49)

Weaknesses:

he project does not include specific milestones within the timeline (e48-50, 107).

Reader's Score: 24

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 is likely to result in improvement to the HCMS of the applicant. The project is likely to build capacity within the local community and address the needs of the targeted population. The steps taken to improve recruitment and retention are crucial to the success of meeting the projects goals. The applicant has demonstrated the resources necessary to

operate this project beyond the length of the grant and has demonstrated a commitment from key stakeholders.

Strengths:

- (i) The likelihood that this project will result in improvement or success is strong. The key stakeholders have shown support by being involved during the planning stages. The plans and evaluation system are such that improvement should occur. (e50-51).
- (ii) This project will likely build capacity to improve the services that address the needs of the target population. The project has sound strategies, for example a strong management system that could result in change within six schools, who will pilot the program. Based on its success, the programs will expand to other schools within the district. (e50-51).
- (iii) The applicant has provided evidence of its ability to continue this project beyond the length of the grant. TCOE/Center and VUSD will contribute approximately \$1.4M to match funding annually (e51). The plan demonstrates a solid infrastructure (e75) The project has a multi-year operating model (e81) and support from partners that was evident even during the planning stages of the project. (e50-51).

Weaknesses:

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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:

This application has presented a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and

opportunity for underserved students by implementing evidenced based practices that differentiate instruction, services, and resource distribution (e13).

Strengths:

The project will increase the number and proportion of fully certified and experienced teachers, from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. The project looks to improve recruitment and retention of fully certified, experienced and effective teachers. (e13)

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:

This application has presented a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students by implementing evidenced based practices that differentiate instruction, services, and resource distribution (e13).

Strengths:

The project will increase the number and proportion of fully certified and experienced teachers, from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. The project looks to improve recruitment and retention of fully certified, experienced and effective teachers. (e13)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Tulare County Office of Education (S374A230032)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	24
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	24
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	30	30
Sub Total	100	98
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	5
Sub Total	10	10
Total	110	108

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - TSL Panel - 4: 84.374A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Tulare County Office of Education (S374A230032)

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:

i. The project proposal identifies and addresses specific gaps or weaknesses in services and infrastructure, specifically the high percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch, high percentage of special education students and English Learners, a low number of experience teachers, low teacher diversity and low gains in student achievement, particularly in mathematics and English. The project will address these gaps through targeting professional development, implementing a more rigorous Human Capital Model that supports recruiting, hiring, and placing a more diverse teaching workforce, within the district. (pg. e4, e17-19)

i. The project also highlights the lack of a structured performance-based compensation program, which often does not properly adequately compensate teachers based on performance. (pg. e18)

i. The project highlights the inadequacy of an educator evaluation process, that is not utilized to encourage/promote effective feedback. The lack of effective and timely feedback leads to teachers continued use of ineffective instructional strategies, which results in the lack of improvement in student achievement. (pg. 16-19)

i. The magnitude of the gaps and weaknesses is noted and is disaggregated by the percentage of socially disadvantaged students, and by EL designation. The disaggregation of the data allows for sustained focus on the area's most adversely impacted. (pg. e16)

ii. The project demonstrates that it will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts, such as the TCOE/Center and VUSD, which they have collaborated on several innovative projects. Building upon a prior project will enable participant to use and incorporate prior learning, into the new project. (pg. e20)

ii. The proposed project will and build upon existing funding streams. In particular, schools in the district have been involved in a Teacher Quality Partnership grant to build pipelines of diverse, a teacher residency program to increase the qualification of teachers and Department of Education grants to support Mental Health professionals. (pg. e20-21).

iii. The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. The district has initiated a future-focused strategic plan and a strong equity blueprint to advance improvement efforts at all levels. These processes will be aligned and strategically managed through the development of an integrated HCMS structure with a set of policies and practices that work together to attract, develop, motivate, and retain educators with the competencies to achieve the district goals and improve student achievement. (pg. e22)

iv. The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. The model is informed by multiple sources, including research on best practices in teaching and leading; a deep dive review and discussion of the district data, which demonstrates the level of analysis that the district is doing, to elucidate gaps and opportunities for improvement. (pg. e21-e23)

iv. The project emphasizes deep engagement with stakeholders including students, educators, families, and community. Special attention is given to voices (e.g., students and parents), that are often underrepresented. The inclusion of varied and diverse groups, not only bring new and different perspectives to the project, but do including numerous participants, capacity and buy-in are strengthened. (pg. e20, e85-90)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 20

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:

i. The proposed project demonstrates a strong rationale which is focused on understanding the need for a more talented educator force and the need to develop robust data systems. The project also highlights the importance of stakeholders and participants to agree and understand what factors impact student achievement. A collaborative understanding is essential, so that stakeholders agree on the proposed needs of the project. (pg. e24)

ii. The design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature with each goal of the project supported by a literature review, particularly around teacher development, instructional practices, and performance-based compensation. Strategies that are supported by research have been tried and tested, ensuring that their validity and reliability. (pg. e43)

ii. The plan includes a high-quality plan for project implementation, using the HCMS dashboard to make informed decisions on educator effectiveness, and support structures for continuous improvement (mentoring, coaching, professional learning, effective evaluation). (pg. e35)

ii. The project also includes the use of appropriate methodological tools, such as qualitative and quantitative methods (surveys, evaluations) to ensure successful achievement of project objectives. Data will be analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistics and more advanced statistical techniques as appropriate. Qualitative data collected to document the project's effectiveness will include annual stakeholder focus groups, interviews, and observation. (pg. e36)

iii. The methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment (monthly, quarterly, and yearly) of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. The use of a performance feed-back system is important to allow that the periodic feedback to teachers, results in actionable improvement. (pg. e37).

iii. The project specifies how "success" will be measured and what data will be used to evaluate increased academic progress for students. It is important that participants know and understand the criteria by which they will be measured, in order for them to have input and buy-in. (pg. e38)

Weaknesses:

ii. Numerous references to literature cited are not current and many are older than ten years or are not based on seminal research. Relevancy would be enhanced by providing more current research. (pg. e33-e36)

Reader's Score: 24

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:

The quality of the management plan is adequate for the plan to achieve its objectives. (pg. e43).

The plan clearly delineates the key participants' responsibilities, their strengths and prior knowledge regarding participation in similar projects. (pg. e43-e46)

The plan shows the salary structure in the proposed plan, which is within budget, which ensures that the project will not go over-budget and will be completed within the 3-year timeline. (pg. e48-50)

Weaknesses:

Specific milestones were not provided within the timeline. (pg. e48-50, e107).

Reader's Score: 24

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:

- i. The involvement of stakeholders in every facet of the project's design demonstrates that the project will result in system change or improvement and shows commitment to the plan. (pg. e50).
- iii. The plan 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 and annual \$1.4 million match from TCOE/Center and VUSD. (pg. e51)
- ii. The proposed project demonstrates that it is likely going to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population. A focus on capacity-building is evidenced by the proposal to build a strong support system that encourages leadership, by strengthening teacher and leader effectiveness, by providing teacher and administrative support and accountability, enhancing talent management and providing targeted professional development. The project proposes to integrate these structures into the existing E3 HCMSS framework. (pg e22; e51)
- iii. The proposed plan notes the resources that it will use and provides hard data to support whether they currently have sufficient support that will last throughout the project. (pg. e50)
- iii. The plan demonstrates a solid infrastructure that supports teacher training, compensation, and recruitment. (pg. e75)
- iii. There is evidence of wide support for the project, as evident by numerous support letters. (pg. e85-90)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 30

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:

1. The applicant demonstrates that the proposed project is designed to promote educational equity and adequacy of resources and opportunity in high needs schools. (pg e25)

The plan has a strong focus on Improving the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas. While all students deserve a qualified and diverse teacher workforce, students of color, who have been marginalized and have significant barriers already against them, will benefit from teachers who are highly qualified. (pg. e 25-26)

The plan effectively states how teachers of color will be recruited, supported, and retained. Research has shown that both students of color and all students, benefit from receiving instruction by a diverse workforce. (pg. e25)

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:

The proposed plan was 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. The plan proposes to accomplish this by developing data systems, timelines, and action plans – which also promote inclusive and bias-free human resources practices and support the development of educator diversity. (pg. e25-e33)

The plan uses evidence-based strategies to recruit, hire, train, support, and retain a diverse educator workforce representative of the school community served, with clear strategies to be used, where hiring will focus on. This is

important because strategies have been vetted and proven to be effective. (pg. e13)

The plan identifies the methods for assessing highly qualified educators, by analyzing student data. It is important to understand the criterion by which teachers will be evaluated, to ensure an equitable evaluation system and to allow teachers adequate time to plan for success. (pg. e18)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Tulare County Office of Education (S374A230032)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	20	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	24
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	24
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	30	30
Sub Total	100	98
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Promoting Equity	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	5
Sub Total	10	10
Total	110	108

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - TSL Panel - 4: 84.374A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Tulare County Office of Education (S374A230032)

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 project will impact 2,129 students, 209 teachers and 18 administrators in one district that is home to 42 schools.(e10) The project reports four primary outcomes of enhanced educator growth, building leadership capacity, strengthening the strategic management system, and building system coherence. (e13) A needs assessment was completed and utilized to devise the goals and plan for the project. Additionally, the project builds upon the framework of policy and tools realized by the applicant in previous Teach Quality grants and a grant to promote mental health. (e20-21) It is likely that the project will close the gaps designated and serve the needs of the targeted populations.

Strengths:

- (i) Specific gaps or weaknesses in services and infrastructure have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project. The targeted schools are in a rural, farm area of the state with a high migrant population that does not speak English. 27.1% of the community is in poverty. The six schools included have significant populations of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Most are Hispanic and ELL. (e13-15) Additional gaps noted were significantly low student performances in ELA and Mathematics, lack of diversity and teaching experience in the educator workforce, lack of systematic human management and compensation system, and ineffective educator evaluation and feedback. Each of these gaps are addressed in the proposal. (e16-19) Two examples addressing the gap showing low student achievement gains, are exhibited with the use of training to heighten the effectiveness of every teacher and through increased retention efforts to build an experienced educator workforce. Research supports that the most effective way to increase student achievement is to increase the efficacy of the teachers. (e15-18)
- (ii) The proposed project will integrate with and 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. (e20-21) In particular, schools in the district have been involved in a Teacher Quality Partnership grant to build pipelines of diverse, highly qualified educators through a teacher residency program and involved in another Department of Education grant to support mental health professionals. (e20-21)
- (iii) The project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. A district strategic plan will form the framework for improvements. Current strategies underway

include teacher participation in professional learning, training, and coaching activities, a grow-your-own model, financial incentives to classified staff to get teaching credentials, and an aspiring principal cohort. (e21-22)

(iv) The design of the proposed project is appropriate to and should successfully address the needs of the target population or other identified needs. Stakeholders from the target schools were involved in designing the program as evidenced in their letters of commitment. (e20; e85-90) The project was designed with the engagement of students, educators, families, and community members. There appears to be substantial buy-in to the success of the model. (e22-23)

Weaknesses:

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iv) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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 proposal demonstrates a sound rationale for the project utilizing past experience, a strong research-base, and support from stakeholders. (e24-41) The proposed plan was well-structured with appropriate methodological tools utilized to ensure successful achievement of project objectives. Evaluation methods are sound with a definitive plan for ongoing, continuous improvement and feedback.

Strengths:

- (i) A rationale supports the five key elements of the proposal which include: development of an integrated human management system, differentiated professional learning opportunities, career advancement pathways, a refined and aligned educator evaluation system, and performance-based compensation. A detailed Logic Model that specifies gaps, inputs, activities, and outcomes supports the rationale. (e24-33; e54)
- (ii) The design of the proposed project includes a thorough review of the relevant literature. For instance, plans for implementation for each of the five elements are provided. (e24-36) Additionally, methodological tools are appropriate to the performance and/or evaluation tasks. Performance measures are specific, timely, and measurable. (e37-41)
- (iii) Methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. Data collection aligned to performance measures will focus on implementation of strategies and program effectiveness using a continuous improvement design. Feedback will be in the form of monthly meetings on progress in achieving outcomes, use of social media platforms, and an annual report by the evaluator. (e37-41) Student performance and additional outcomes such as attendance, graduations rates, etc. will be monitored. (e28)

Weaknesses:

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) Numerous references to literature cited and research completed are not current. They are often older than ten years and/or not based on seminal research. Relevancy would be enhanced by providing more current research. (e33-36)
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 24

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 management plan is consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. It is likely that the project will be successfully completed on time and on budget. The oversight of the core management team, the model for continuous improvement and evaluation with feedback, and the buy-in of the partners contribute to the probable success of the project. A detailed timeline aligned to the outcomes for the project was provided. (e41-50)

Strengths:

The management plan appears to be detailed in scope. A core management team will oversee the project, work with WestEd, the outside evaluator, and ensure that MOUs with partners are formalized. The evaluator has high qualifications to perform the many tasks of the project and evaluation, and to provide ongoing and deliberate feedback. The salary for the evaluator is high but appears reasonable given the location of the project. Qualifications for key personnel were outlined. All currently employed personnel appear to be well-qualified for their positions and salaries are appropriate to FTE. (e41-47; e55-74; e92-104) A detailed timeline exists with specified activities linked to personnel responsible for the task. Times assigned for each strategy are very specific, thus increasing the project staff's accountability. (e48-50)

Weaknesses:

Specific milestones were not provided in the timeline. (e48-50; e107)

Reader's Score: 24

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:

It is likely that the project will result in improvements in the personnel management system of the applicant. The project is well-supported by stakeholders and is backed by a sound infrastructure. Resources are in place to successfully complete the project and meet the goals intended. (e50-51) A multi-year financial and operating model accompanied the plan. Match has been met. (e75; e81)

Strengths:

(i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement is strong. The likelihood that the improvements will continue to evolve is also substantiated by the commitment from all stakeholders to continue collaborations and utilize the processes and resources initiated in this project. (e50) The project appears to be well-supported by stakeholders and has detailed enough plan and evaluation system to successfully meet the goals envisioned; thus, providing for system improvements. (e50-51)

(ii) The proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population. Capacity building is heightened by a sustainable infrastructure that encompasses sound strategies such as a strong management system, fair and equitable treatment of the workforce, and matching the needs of the staff with those of the students. All are present in this proposal. (e50-51)

(iii) The applicant has demonstrated that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. A Match and Ability Letter (e75) showcases the financial commitments of the applicant and partners. Through grant funding, an infrastructure supporting future efforts in retention, recruitment, training, and compensation is in place. Lessons learned can be scaled to meet the needs of other districts. (e51) A multi-year financial and operating model accompanied the plan. (e81) There is a demonstrated commitment of partners. This support has been evident since the planning stage of the project. (e85-90) Sustainability of the system change is probable with implementation and evaluation of best practices, significant time and resources invested in a solid infrastructure, and strong partnerships forged. (e50-51)

Weaknesses:

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) No weaknesses noted.
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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 project will address CPP 1 through the implementation of evidence-based practices that differentiate instruction, services, and resource distribution to effectively respond to the diverse needs of students and narrow the achievement gap ensuring all students are able to learn. (e13; e25)

Strengths:

- a. Four elementary schools, one middle and one high school have been identified as high-need and will serve as the six pilot schools for the project. All have a significant population of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Most are Hispanic and ELL. (e15; e25)
- b. Sources of inequity and inadequacy were examined by a large array of stakeholders. The resulting project plans to increase the number and proportion of experienced, fully certified, and effective educators from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds to ensure that underserved students have educators who are qualified and more clearly match the demographics of the student population. Recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining a high-quality and diverse educator workforce supports academic achievement. High efficacy on the part of the teaching staff and educational experience both strengthen a teacher's ability to teach and a student's ability to achieve. (e27-32) Additionally, the proposal intends to improve the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools and shortage areas. (e20-25) Equity is addressed from the initial planning stages of the project. The stakeholder's vision clearly places equity in resources and opportunities as a high priority, which is evident in the applicant's Equity Action Plan and Strategic Plan for School Improvement. (e50) The District's Transformation Conditions Rubric also places equity in high regard. (e82)

Weaknesses:

- a. No weaknesses noted.
- b. 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:

Evidence-based strategies to recruit, hire, train, support, and retain a diverse educator workforce representative of the school community services is a primary goal for the project. Therefore, strategies supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth that strengthens student learning was evident. (e13)

Strengths:

The project is designed to increase the educator workforce of well-prepared, diverse, and effective educators serving students by expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce. Data systems, timelines, and action are included to promote and support development of educator diversity. (e25-33) A specific activity found in the project is the explicit multi-level marketing campaign to attract and encourage diverse populations to a teaching career. (e27) The Grow-your-own pathway is an additional venue for achieving the goal. (e30)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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