

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2023 10:22 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Winona Independent School District (S374A230041)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	24
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	22
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Resources	30	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	91
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	1
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	4
<b>Total</b>	110	95

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - TSL Panel - 4: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Winona Independent School District (S374A230041)

## 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 demonstrated a need for the project in exemplary ways identifying gaps and weaknesses. In partnering with NIET, the applicant plans to implement the POWERUP program that will help to create a clear vision for HCMS improvement and alignment and implement a valid and reliable evaluation to accurately measure teacher effectiveness. The project will be successful in improving teaching and learning by providing high-quality professional learning and career advancement opportunities.

##### Strengths:

- (i) The proposal has identified gaps or weaknesses, (1) approximately 86% of the students in the district are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, (2) the district has various racial and ethnic groups (43% White, 18% African American, 34% Hispanic), (3) 17% of students are English language learners, and (4) only 3% of the teachers in the district are Hispanic. The applicant proposes to address these gaps/weaknesses by enhancing the districts HCMS system. This will involve creating mentoring programs for new teachers, providing high-quality professional development with feedback, career advancement and leadership roles, and competitive compensation (e17-19)
- (ii) The proposal aligns with state level policy and funding priorities. There is a focus in the state on recruiting, supporting, and retaining educators, strengthening school success and closing equity gaps. This created funding through House Bill 3 for performance compensation and new teacher mentoring and created the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) to reward highly effective teachers who work with poor, minority, or rural students (e20-21).
- (iii) The project is designed to foster coherence and shared goals among educators by establishing an equitable, and objective process for evaluating educator effectiveness. The project includes the use of NIET's Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric to support teacher growth and the Principal Standards Rubric to support the improvement of school leaders. The applicant will also use NIET's Educator Effectiveness Preparation and Support System (e21-23).
- (iv) The project will offer on-site support for district leaders, school leaders and teacher leaders, and monitor the implementation of the TAP Systems. They will have quarterly coaching and support sessions, monthly school leader training and support sessions (NIET) (e21-23).

**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 applicant provides an adequate rationale for the project. The project proposes to create improvements within the system by having a valid and reliable evaluation process, create official position for teacher leaders, implement job-embedded professional development, and a performance-based compensation system. There is a high-quality literature review, plan, and evaluation system of the project. (e13, 25-42)

## Strengths:

- (i) The project has an adequate rationale. It proposes that the POWERUP establish support systems to support educator and their professional growth through four strategies that form the foundation of the TAP System (1) create a clear vision for HCMS improvement and alignment, (2) implement valid and reliable evaluation to accurately measure teacher and school leader effectiveness, (3) establish formal roles for teacher leaders, (4) implement job-embedded professional learning for teachers and school leaders and the fifth which is a district level strategy – to create and implement a performance-based compensation system for teachers and school leaders. (e31-32).
- (ii) The applicant provides high quality literature review that supports the projects goals and strategies. A high-quality project plan was presented outlining key strategies and the tasks associated with those strategies. For example, having weekly cluster meetings with teachers becomes a strategy for implementing job-embedded professional development (e31-32). Methodological tools used by NIET will ensure successful achievement of the project's goals and objectives. (e39).
- (iii) The project evaluation will be led by NIET's Research and Evaluation Department, a department with extensive experience supporting large-scale evaluations of education programs. The evaluator will work collaboratively to supply grant partners with timely data to improve the project for populations served and to assess program impacts (e39). The projects logic model will be used to communicate the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes expected from interventions. NIET's annual school review process, which consists of classroom, ILT, and PLC observations will serve as data sources for assessing fidelity of implementation of the project and provide feedback to the district and school leaders. (e39).

**Weaknesses:**

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) The project mentions early in the application that there is need for a diverse teaching population, specifically

Hispanic teachers, however, there is no clear plan as to how that will be accomplished (e-19).

(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 quality of the management plan is exemplary to achieve the objectives of the proposed project and remain within the desired budget. There is a clear timeline for when tasks will be completed and the roles and responsibilities of those who are expected to complete the tasks.

Strengths:

Winona ISD will serve as the fiscal agent for the proposed TSL grant. The district's leadership and budget teams are experienced in managing and executing large-scale projects on time and within budget (e42).

The project suggests clear milestones along with tasks that that the project wishes to accomplish during the grant. Some of those milestones include establishing a project advisory committee, hiring master teachers, delivering foundational training, and beginning TAP implementation for the 2023-24 school year (e42-46)

#### **Weaknesses:**

Only two key personnel are current with 22 positions left to be filled. The applicant provided no information regarding qualifications and job descriptions for these 22 positions. (e42-46)

**Reader's Score: 22**

## **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 system change based on the work that they have already started with the use of NIET's TAP system, having the support of teachers K-12 and higher education, school board and community leaders.

## Strengths:

- (i) It is highly likely that the project will result in systems changes. The project proposes that Power-Up will create change in classroom practice (ex. Individual instructional coaching to provide teachers with hands on guidance), school level change (ex. Using data sets to set goals, designing professional learning, and ensuring that coaching and feedback have an impact) and district level change (creating direct communication and collaboration among central office staff) (e. 47-48)
- (ii) It is highly likely that the project will build local capacity that address the needs of the target population. With the support of NIET there will be the establishment of district level structures for delivering professional learning and coaching for school leaders and teacher leaders (e48).
- (iii) The applicant has demonstrated that there will be resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, evidenced by support from the Superintendent who will use his expertise in creating long-term funding for the project and has convened with senior leaders in the district to create a multi-year financial sustainability and management plan. (e.47-48)

**Weaknesses:**

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) There is no mention of how POWER-UP is planning to attract or recruit Hispanic teachers to serve the needs of the Hispanic student population.
- (iii) No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

**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 proposes a project that will promote educational equality for students in a PK-12 setting. The project is looking to improve the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high need schools.

Strengths:

The project will address the needs of students in grades PK-12, in schools with high numbers of students who are economically disadvantaged. (e34-36).

To increase the retention of high-quality teachers and school leaders the applicant will use differentiated coaching and professional development (e34-36).

**Weaknesses:**

The project did not address how they would recruit or hire diverse staff, specifically Hispanic educators (e.19,25)

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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 project is designed to increase the proportion of well-prepared 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 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. (e13, 24-25, 130)

Strengths:

The applicant will use coaching and professional supports, school leader training and supports and an enhancement of the compensation system to support and retain an effective educator workforce (e24-25, 130).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not have a clear plan for how to recruit and hire teachers of diverse ethnic backgrounds (e19).

**Reader's Score:** 1

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/31/2023 10:22 PM

Status: Submitted

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

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Winona Independent School District (S374A230041)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	24
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	22
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Resources	30	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	91
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	1
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	4
<b>Total</b>	110	95

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - TSL Panel - 4: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Winona Independent School District (S374A230041)

## 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 highlights specific gaps or weaknesses in services, such as the need to address low student performance in math when compared to statewide assessments; the need to recruit a diverse workforce; the need for the implementation of job-embedded professional development and the proposed strategies which will be used, to mitigate these gaps. (pg. e20-23)

i. The proposed project clearly identifies the nature and magnitude of those gaps and weaknesses. For example: 89% of elementary students are economically disadvantaged; 90% of middle school students are economically disadvantaged; and 78% of high school students are economically disadvantaged. This data illustrates the large disparity between the district and other districts and highlights the need to support students facing economic challenges. (pg. e18)

i. The project demonstrates the need for a better teacher evaluation system, to provide and award adequate compensation for teachers, to order to retain quality and effective teachers. (pg. e24)

ii. The proposed project aligns with state policies, such as House Bill 3, which states that schools must provide students with accelerated instruction by an effective teacher with the proper training and professional development. The Bill is used to support new teacher mentoring. (pg. e20)

ii. The project demonstrates that the alignment with ESSA strategic priorities. (pg. e21)

iii. The proposed project demonstrates that it is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning, in that the design is aligned with NIET's Educator Effectiveness Preparation & Support System (EE PASS) to support online learning. (pg. e22)

iv. The proposed project demonstrates that it is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning by monthly teacher/leader training, coaching sessions, and the recognition of a need for teacher professional development.

(pg, e23-24)

iv. The Logic Model, includes a teacher evaluation system, as well as the TAP System Theory of Action, which is grounded in a theoretical framework – focusing on both teacher and student improvement and the measurable impact of strategies employed. (pg. e39, e54)

**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 project demonstrates a strong rationale, predicated on increasing teacher effectiveness, revamping teacher evaluation, job-embedded professional development and improving student achievement. (pg. e26)
- ii. The project provides a quality plan for project implementation, with key strategies, tied to specific key activities. (pg. e31)
- ii. The project includes the expected outcomes of key activities. (pg. e31)
- iii. The project provides evaluation methods for performance feedback and periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (pg. e48)

**Weaknesses:**

- iii. The project mentions that there is a need for a diverse teacher population. However, the plan does not discuss how this recruitment will be achieved. (pg. e19)

**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 management plan is comprised of qualified individuals, with the requisite knowledge and experience, to achieve the proposed objectives. Key participants are identified, and their resumes indicate that they are capable of supporting and collaborate with the team, in order to achieve the project's stated goals and objectives. (pg. e44)

The plan defines timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as the personnel responsible for completing the task. (pg. e44-46)

The proposed project demonstrates that it will be on time and within budget, as evidenced by the %FTE of each member, for each phase of the project. (pg. e46)

**Weaknesses:**

The project plan does not define the responsibilities of all participants and omits the resume, responsibilities of several key players (pg. e46)

**Reader's Score: 22**

**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. There is a likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement, as current weaknesses have been identified, with strategies to address and key personnel have been put in place, to help implement and support the project plan. (pg. e47)

ii. There is evidence that it is likely that the proposed project will build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services. This is demonstrated by strategies that are currently in place, such as the TAP System, NIET's Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric, and the POWER-UP Project, which focuses on classroom practices. (pg. e47)

ii. The project plans to implement student learning strategies to improve learning, which focusing on school-level change (e.g., using data to set goals, designing professional learning, and ensuring that coaching and measurable feedback), to positively impact student achievement). (pg. e47, e48)

ii. District leadership teams will create lines of direct communication and collaboration among central office staff to

address the needs of the target population. This will streamline the process by which feedback is given, in a more timely fashion. (pg. e48)

iii. 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. (pg. e49)

iii. There is evidence that the project has support from partners and the community. This is evidenced by the letters of support and by the ability to exceed the 50% match requirement. (pg. e50)

**Weaknesses:**

There is limited evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success. Although the proposed plan highlights community and district support, (pg. 49)

iii. Currently, there is not a multi-year financial operating model. Although the applicant states that they plan on creating one, a multi-year financial plan should be completed and in place, as part of a comprehensive project proposal. (pg. 49-50)

**Reader's Score: 25**

**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:**

a. The applicant demonstrates that the project is designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources for high school students. This is demonstrated by the project's incorporation of the POWER-UP Project and its alignment to Texas state policy, which is specifically focused on closing equity gaps through strategies including increasing equitable access to effective classroom instruction. (pg. e89, e110)

b. The proposed project examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implements responses, to improve the retention of fully certified, experienced, and effective educators in high-need schools or shortage areas. (pg. e45)

**Weaknesses:**

The proposed project does not discuss in detail how the plan will address the hiring of fully certified, quality teachers. (pg. e45)

The proposed plan does not include how a diverse teaching force will be recruited, from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. (pg. e25)

**Reader's Score:** 3

**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 plan addresses the need to hire a qualified, well-prepared workforce, utilizing POWER-UP. (pg. e13)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address the recruitment and hiring of a diverse staff, which is a critical component. (pg. e25)

**Reader's Score:** 1

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2023 06:11 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Winona Independent School District (S374A230041)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	24
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	25	23
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Resources	30	24
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	91
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. Promoting Equity	5	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. Diverse Workforce	5	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	5
<b>Total</b>	110	96

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - TSL Panel - 4: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Winona Independent School District (S374A230041)

## 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 applicant is teaming with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to provide a comprehensive human capital management system and enhanced career advancement opportunities with performance-based compensations. (e13) Six school leaders, 93 teachers, and 1081 students will be impacted in three high-need schools. (e16-20) Gaps and weaknesses were addressed and correlated with improvements intended to remediate those gaps and weaknesses. (e20-21) The design of the project aligns with State policies and the strategic goals of the district. The plan is designed to train and compensate educators in a manner that supports effective teaching and learning.

##### Strengths:

- (i) Specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, and opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project. Areas of need in the three rural, high-need schools include a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, a high ethnic diversity with ELL designation, an educator workforce that does not match the demographics of students, and low achievement in mathematics. (e16-20) The applicant provided several strategies for remediating these weaknesses that center on creating a supportive and stable school workforce. Specific tasks include continued alignment of the human capital management and compensation systems and job-embedded professional development. While a concrete evaluation system for teachers existed, it did not for school system. A system of evaluation will be adopted for school leaders in this project (e21-25).
- (ii) The proposed project will integrate with and build on similar efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources. The project aligns to State standards and policy (e88) that support a strong human capital infrastructure and performance compensation. Developing these systems would allow the district to draw funds from the Teacher Incentive Allotment whereby effective teachers could access State funds. Additional compliances for the State found in this proposal are requirements for professional learning and coaching components. Each of these components will be included in the project. (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 is working with NIET to provide a management and compensation system

that complies with the needs of the State and the district's teacher workforce. The goals of these system upgrades is to foster academic achievement on the part of the students by building teacher efficacy. A fair and equitable evaluation process for teachers and leaders will be created using existing validated rubrics. These rubrics were previously developed and validated by NIET. Educators will be supported by professional development opportunities and resources. (e21-23; e90-132)

(iv) The design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population and other identified needs. A detailed table of gaps and weaknesses aligned to project strategies was provided and showcases a clear understanding of the identified needs and sound, research-based strategies to remediate those needs. For instance, professional development opportunities will be differentiated to individuals to alleviate specific weaknesses. Professional development will be ongoing and supported by regular meetings. (e23-24)

**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 rationale was clearly provided. Five human capital management system strategies will be implemented through this project. Goals are to create a clear vision for system improvement and alignment, implement valid and reliable evaluation processes, establish formal roles for teacher leaders, implement job-embedded professional learning, and create and implement a performance-based compensation system. (e13; e25-31) The project is supported by a quality review of literature, a high-quality plan as supported by the Logic Model (e54), and a detailed evaluation system. Dissemination at multiple levels is ongoing. (e33-39)

Strengths:

- (i) The proposed project demonstrates a rationale that increased educator effectiveness will result from improved human capital management and compensation systems. An additional benefit to improving teacher and school leader effectiveness is the positive impact it will have on the achievement of students. The applicant has created an organized and professional plan to achieve its goals that is supported by a research base. The Logic Model (e54) clearly links the rationale for the project and the overall project and evaluation design by showcasing inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes expected. It is clear how the inputs will lead to system change supporting teachers, leaders, and the student populations. (e25-31; e54)
- (ii) The design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature that

supports the overall goals and strategies utilized in the project. Most literature and research cited is both relevant and current. For example, character education is utilized in the professional development of educators to better assist students to develop positive learning and living traits to be lifelong learners and successful. (e25-31) A high-quality plan for project implementation was outlined aligning key strategies and activities. For instance, developing clear roles and responsibilities becomes a strategy to help create formal teacher and leadership positions. (e31-33) Appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives are inherent in the evaluation process conducted by NIET. (e33-39)

(iii) The methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. Evaluation methods are thorough and the NIET group is skilled in evaluating the programs found in this proposal. Instruments are reliable and validated. Additionally, training will be conducted in appropriate methods of providing immediate and focused feedback to educators. Key research questions will drive the qualitative and quantitative data collected in the evaluation. Formative and summative data will be collected, analyzed, and disseminated to stakeholders at multiple levels on an ongoing basis. (e33-42)

#### **Weaknesses:**

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) Though a need exists for a more diverse teacher population, especially Hispanic educators because of the large population of Hispanic students, the applicant failed to provide a plan to recruit or hire teachers who are Hispanic. (e19)
- (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:**

It is likely that the goals and outcomes of the project will be met. The applicant has experience working with large grants, however, not at the Federal level or with a project of this magnitude. (e42-47) Two key personnel are provided with FTE designation for the Project Director that is appropriate to their tasks. (e46-47; e57-64; e147) A detailed timeline with strategies, personnel, and milestones was presented. All are aligned to a Logic Model showcasing the processes utilized in the project. (e42-47) The budget supports the implementation of the management plan. (e144-169)

##### **Strengths:**

The applicant has provided a detailed timeline with milestones, personnel responsible, and quarterly time designations. The Table is well-organized and showcases a solid plan for meeting project goals and outcomes. (e42-46) Personnel appear to be well-qualified to carry out the workings of the project in a successful and timely manner. FTE for the PI and Project director are appropriate to ensure task completion. (e46-47; e57-64)

**Weaknesses:**

Only two key personnel are current hires. Twenty-two additional positions will be hired. It would be beneficial in determining the adequacy of personnel to have access to job descriptions for those positions and guarantees that the positions will exist post-funding. (e147-149) It would be beneficial to determine the likely success of the project to have additional qualifications and job descriptions for other personnel. (e46-47; e57-64)

**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:

It is likely that the proposed project will result in system changes and improvements. Change in educator effectiveness will occur at three levels: classroom, supportive learning teams, and differentiated coaching and feedback. District change will result in a fair and consistent human capital management system and school leader training. (e47-48) Indication of how the changes will impact the targeted populations was not found.

## Strengths:

- (i) The proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, and expand services that address the needs of the target population. Several factors help to assure successful fruition of the goals. First, the applicant is partnering with NIET who has a solid track record of offering quality methodological tools and supports for system change. Secondly, planning for project tasks appears to have been thorough with ongoing and focused strategies for achieving the goals. (e47-50)
- (ii) The project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population. The district will build capacity by expanding such services as teacher and leader support and changes in district policy such as restructuring the school day to accommodate cluster meetings and coaching. (e47-50)
- (iii) The applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. The partnership with NIET, a national group with a successful history of creating meaningful change, will assist the applicant with identification and improvement of targeted areas for teachers, leaders, and students. (e48-50; e67; e74-80) There is evidence of broad-based support from stakeholders as evidenced by the letters of commitment and by commitments exceeding of the 50% required match. (e48-49; e66-73; e82-84) A multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan will be created by district leaders to support sustainability. Current district funds, as well as Title II funding will be utilized to continue the project post-funding. District policies have been upgraded to support strategies of improvement for teachers and leaders. (e49-50)

**Weaknesses:**

- (i) Strategies incorporated were not directly correlated to the needs for improved student achievement. Therefore, it is difficult to ensure that student achievement will be enhanced for the targeted population of students. (e42-49)
- (ii) The applicant did not provide a direct correlation between building capacity for teachers and leaders and the targeted group of students. (e49-50) The applicant mentioned that more than a third of the students were Hispanic and that the intent was to raise capacity by more adequately aligning the educator/student demographic, however, there was no mention of specifically recruiting Hispanic individuals to teach the majority of children in the schools.
- (iii) A multi-year financial and operating model and plan were not submitted. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain if finance and operating strategies were in alignment or that the project benefits could be sustained post-funding. (e49-50)

**Reader's Score: 24**

**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:**

After a thorough needs assessment, the applicant intends to establish a comprehensive and effective human capital management system to improve outcomes for students, teachers, and school leaders. Tasks within the new system include such strategies as differentiated coaching and professional development that will improve retention of high-quality teachers and school leaders. (e13; e17; e34; e36; e128)

**Strengths:**

a. Data for three high-need schools was presented at three levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Data show that the students in the schools have a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students. The applicant linked this data to strategies that would build their capacity to provide high-quality, experienced teachers to meet the needs of the

students academically. (e84-85)

b. The applicant will utilize differentiated coaching and professional development, as well as the improved educator evaluations systems, to improve the retention of high-quality teachers and school leaders. (e34; e36)

**Weaknesses:**

a. No weaknesses noted.

b. The proposed project does not detail the recruitment and hiring of high-quality certified teaching staff from traditionally underrepresented populations. (e45)

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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 project is designed to provide professional growth that will increase the proportion of well-prepared effective educators serving students from underserved populations. The high-poverty school districts will increase their capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective educator workforce. Data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator diversity will be developed. (e13; e24-25; e130)

Strengths:

The applicant intends to support an effective educator workforce by utilizing such methods as coaching and professional supports, school leader training and supports, and enhancing the staffing and compensation strategies. (e24-25; e38)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address methods of recruitment and hiring staff to ensure that a diverse population of educators is trained and working with the students in the district, especially the Hispanic teachers (e25-25)

**Reader's Score: 2**

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