

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2011 01:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education, Buffalo, NY -- Office of Federal & State Prog Buffalo City School District
(U351C110014)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Comments		
Summary Comments		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	20	16
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	25
Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priorities		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Decision-Making	10	7
Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness		
1. Evidence of Effectiveness	10	8
Sub Total	20	15
Invitational Priority		
Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates		
1. Graduation Rates	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	120	106

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.351C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Board of Education, Buffalo, NY -- Office of Federal & State Prog Buffalo City School District (U351C110014)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Please enter any summary comments here.

Strengths:

The applicant proposed to develop a project that has potential to provide professional development that will strengthen and enhance the conceptual knowledge and pedagogical skills of music and art education teachers. The project will focus on collaborative strategies that are appropriate to inform the development of lessons/units that link NYS Arts Learning Standards and district initiatives of best practices, while involving regional teaching artists.

Weaknesses:

Sufficient evidence is not presented through data from other related projects to support increases in student academic growth to help demonstrate the effectiveness of the model.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. (a) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(b) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

(a) The applicant presents information that strongly indicates that the project will likely build capacity to provide improved services to the target population. The proposed project is a peer-coaching professional development model that will empower veteran and tenured teachers to develop comprehensive standards-based arts education curricula that utilize the Buffalo City School District (BSCD) approved Explicit Instruction format while partnering with community artists. The model recognizes the critical role of the arts community in the design and implementation of arts standards in the district curriculum. Collaborative learning and peer coaching are evidence-based professional development strategies that have been shown to be effective through research cited by the applicant (pages 1-4).

(b) Results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways to enable others to use the information or strategies. At the district level, the designed curriculum will be published and distributed to all arts teachers and other relevant education professionals. Participants involved in the project's sequential and intensive professional development timeline will disseminate their new knowledge in best practices, projects and findings during scheduled in-service days. At the state level, the arts higher education consultants and school district administrators will support teachers in planning and presenting at regional and state professional meetings and conferences. At the national level, information will be presented at conferences and published in scholarly publications by district administrators and higher education consultants. Results will also be shared with other districts during curriculum consultancies (page 5).

Weaknesses:

- (a) No weaknesses noted.
- (b) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**

Strengths:

The applicant presents a project design that has a sufficient foundation that will increase capacity and yield results beyond the period of federal assistance (pages 4-7). The project is designed to engage and assist a core of veteran and tenured arts teachers so that they may develop the foundational ability to create high quality, standards-based arts curriculum, building professional capacity and sustainability. The group has 12-14 years of service. The size of the cohort is small enough to facilitate intensive work with each teacher, yet large enough to affect significant change throughout the art and music teacher cadre, with at least one veteran teacher having contact with students in each of the 21 participating schools. Additionally, the team will have a peer coach in-training for the added benefit of turn-keying future peer coaches that can facilitate the model, allowing the district to sustain the program.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

- 1. (a) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

(b) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(c) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.

Strengths:

(a) The applicant describes reasonable strategies to ensure equity among students involved in the project. For example, the district's Academic Achievement Plan specifies equity as one of the most important factors to promote the academic success of its students (GEPA Statement). Among other initiatives, the district plans to partner with several local college programs to help encourage students from underrepresented groups to continue their educational pursuit by working and training with the District through graduate placements, and this project's collaborative work with SUCB should work to

solidify one such relationship. Further, the district employs a program of specific practices designed to ensure the full realization of equal opportunity and the representation of all segments of Buffalo's population in the District's workforce, including to: recruit, hire, train, and promote all persons in all job titles without discrimination; make employment decisions so as to further equal employment opportunity; and take affirmative steps to encourage minorities to apply for positions in which they have traditionally been underrepresented, as demonstrated through the efforts to hire a program manager for the project (GEPA Statement).

(b) The applicant describes a professional development effort that is of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration (pages 5-9). Participants will receive sustained and intensive high quality professional development during the school year and summer. A total of 49 hours will be scheduled in the program each year with the expectation that teachers will fully participate in all professional development hours. Training will reflect current arts knowledge and up-to-date methodological and pedagogical practices used by experts. For example, veteran and tenured teachers will receive instruction in identifying the essential questions in art and music and distinguishing those concepts from lower-level, foundational knowledge. They will also be shown how to design objectives (performance measurements) based on essential questions that help students explore the big ideas or key concepts engaging students in higher-level thinking strategies. Finally, they will be trained to use formative and summative assessments in valid and reliable ways to determine whether students have achieved understanding of a concept.

(c) The applicant presents sufficient information to support the likelihood that the project services will lead to improvement in student achievement (pages 8-9). The focus of the project is to improve the quality of arts teaching for our veteran/tenured teachers who need updated knowledge on contemporary art content and effective strategies for teaching in order to achieve the demands that the NYS Arts Learning Standards have imposed. Central components of the project are a sustained professional development program in which teachers work together and with content experts; developing new student curriculum materials related to specific concepts in the content standards; and continually assessing student work and giving feedback to teachers. Improvement of content knowledge, modeling of curricula, and building a community of reflective practitioners will likely lead to increases in student achievement.

Weaknesses:

(a) The applicant states that priority will be given to teachers in those schools identified as persistently low achieving. To participate in the project, however, no specifics are given on how it will ensure that equal access and treatment prevails.

(b) No weaknesses noted.

(c) The applicant does not present data from other related projects to support increases in student academic growth to help demonstrate the likelihood of an academic achievement increase.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **(a) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**
(b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.
(c) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

(a) The applicant outlines strategies that are reasonable to encourage applications from groups traditionally underrepresented (pages 10-11). The district employs a program of specific practices designed to ensure the full realization of equal opportunity and the representation of all segments of Buffalo's population in the district's workforce. The District takes many steps to ensure this policy, including to: recruit, hire, train, and promote all persons in all job titles without discrimination; make employment decisions so as to further equal employment opportunity; and take affirmative steps to encourage minorities to apply for positions in which they have traditionally been underrepresented. For example, the Program Manager job posting will be open to all applicants for the position without discrimination to any group. Posting bulletins are sent throughout the District and appear on the District website, in several community newspapers, and in The Buffalo News.

(b) The applicant identifies key staff assigned to work on the project. The district has selected a team of personnel who have adequate experience and training to implement the project. The Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Supervisor of Curriculum in Art Education will provide administrative oversight for the project. The team of personnel will be assisted by a steering advisory committee that has appropriate experience, training, and expertise in arts instruction (pages 11-13, Resumes in Appendix).

(c) Subcontractors assigned to work on the project will have adequate training and sufficient experience to work on the project (pages 13-14). The applicant intends to partner with the State University of New York Research Foundation to vet consultants, research assistants, teaching artists, and guest lecturers who may be brought into the program as needed. Research assistants will be selected from a pool of graduate students by the arts higher education consultants. There will be a search for teaching artists within the regional community. All teaching artists will be vetted prior to working with our teachers and students. College faculty will have a minimum of an MFA as well as experience in working with educators in their field. The local and national experts will have a minimum of five years of experience as well as previous experience in instruction in their field.

Weaknesses:

(a) No weaknesses noted.

(b) No weaknesses noted.

(c) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.****Strengths:**

The applicant outlines a management plan that is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (pages 13-20). A general management team and steering committee will oversee and guide the project. Team members will be responsible for completing all management plan elements. There will be multiple opportunities for all team members to actively collaborate that include team planning, peer review of teaching sessions through classroom visits and video recordings, and team teaching.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. (a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

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

Strengths:

(a) The applicant outlines an evaluation plan that is adequate to measure the success and impact of the project (pages 16-19). The evaluation plan for the project will include the collection of data related to teacher knowledge, the direct measurement of teacher effectiveness, the collection and examination of actual student artwork and performances and the collection and examination of a series of teacher lessons. Teachers opinions and beliefs about the effectiveness of the program will be measured for formative purposes. Project objectives and anticipated performance measures are measurable and aligned to the GPRA measures outlined for the project. Measures are also aligned with a clearly specified data collection process, measurement instruments, and data analyses. Methods of will produce qualitative and quantitative data (pages 22-24).

(b) The applicant presents a brief description on how the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. Teachers' opinions and beliefs about the effectiveness of the program will be measured for formative purposes. Project stakeholders will be provided with data soon after it is collected to help guide program implementation, and the project evaluator will serve as an active participant on the planning and steering committee for the life of the project (page 21).

Weaknesses:

(a) No weaknesses noted.

(b) The details of how the evaluation methods will provide data for utilization by project stakeholders are vague and unclear.

Reader's Score: 25

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priorities - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making**

1. Projects that are designed to collect (or obtain), analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, including data on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in this notice), in the following priority area: Improving instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes

in elementary or secondary schools.

Strengths:

The project meets the Competitive Priority #1 (enabling more data-based decision-making) through the collection of data on teachers' knowledge related to general arts pedagogy and knowledge specific to art or music. A structured rating instrument will be utilized to analyze teacher lesson plans tied to student work and associated assessments at multiple, scheduled intervals. Data from observations of teacher practice through classroom visits and video will also be analyzed. By using multiple measures a better understand of the impact the professional development program has on teacher practice, knowledge, and student learning will be revealed (Abstract and page 1)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not detail the connection data-based decisions-making to the evaluation's data collection and analysis process that could yield results for decision-making.

Reader's Score: 7

Competitive Preference Priorities - Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

1. Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.

Projects that are supported by strong or moderate evidence (as defined in this notice). A project that is supported by strong evidence (as defined in this notice) will receive more points than a project that is supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

The Buffalo Arts Teacher Collaborative will meet Competitive Priority #2 by basing the pedagogical foundation of this program on the BCSD Explicit Instruction model and basing the professional development strategies on collaborative learning and peer coaching models. Explicit instructional delivery is characterized by clear descriptions and demonstrations of a skill, followed by supported practice and timely feedback. Initial practice is carried out with high levels of teacher involvement; however, once student success is evident, the teacher's support is systematically withdrawn, and the students move toward independent performance (Abstract and pages 1-2). The project is supported by moderate evidence of support.

Weaknesses:

Data of previous success and achievement increase is not presented in the evidence.

Reader's Score: 8

Invitational Priority - Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates

1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates.

Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies.

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for high-need students.

No

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2011 01:15 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2011 12:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education, Buffalo, NY -- Office of Federal & State Prog Buffalo City School District
(U351C110014)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Comments		
Summary Comments		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	20	18
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	14
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priorities		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Decision-Making	10	10
Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness		
1. Evidence of Effectiveness	10	10
Sub Total	20	20
Invitational Priority		
Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates		
1. Graduation Rates	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	120	111

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.351C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Board of Education, Buffalo, NY -- Office of Federal & State Prog Buffalo City School District (U351C110014)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Please enter any summary comments here.

Strengths:

This proposal includes a wide variety of well-respected data and research to support the claims potential efficacy of this professional development model of the proposed project.

The evaluation plan is very impressive and seems that this project will develop resources that can be disseminated to impact future professional development activities.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not clearly state what will happen to the program once the funding is over. This proposal would be stronger if it identified ways to sustain the program after the grant period has finished. The timeline ends with the sharing of findings through literary means.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. (a) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(b) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

The proposal clearly identifies the Buffalo City School District as a high need group of schools, which is the targeted population. Data presented substantiates that claim. The impact is high with the district reaching 34,000 students.

Research presented backs up the proposed project's likelihood of improving services to teachers (p. e1) regarding a model that encourage "shared learning."

The logical connection between the BUATA model for serving new teachers provides promise that the expansion to BATC will serve all teachers in research-based professional development.

The plan for dissemination of the data gained during the course of the intended project is clearly defined and adequate.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**

Strengths:

The approach has sufficient research that backs up its claims.

The proposal's goals for building capacity and improving services to teachers are specific and realistic (p. e4).

The project design is structured clearly and includes partnerships from higher education, program participants from the BUATA model, and new participants-which happen to be tenured teachers (p. e5).

The instruction is research-based and the dissemination plan is placed as a high priority.

There is a unique strength in the design of this project: it seems that two "peer coaches" (p. e13) per team will take a leadership role - two newer teachers that will act as coaches to the veteran teachers. This presents leadership opportunities for emerging leaders within the system and creates a role reversal that may strengthen then impact of the project.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

- (a) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**
(b) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.
(c) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.

Strengths:

The proposal states that of eligible participants in the program, priority will be given to teachers of those schools that have been identified as "persistently low-achieving." This shows active encouragement of participation by members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented - students are the ultimate recipients (p. e6) 87.5% of whom are underrepresented ethnic groups.

The program intensity and duration is clearly identified in 49 hours per year with the expectation that teachers will fully participate (p.e7).

Some elements of the quality of the program are clear when referring to the "multidimensional approach to professional development that is consistent with the critical components&" (p.e7) and when describing the "formative and summative assessments&".

The proposal identifies the need for arts teachers to maintain rigorous standards while developing curricula and that arts are not optional in New York State. This presents is a very strong case for the likelihood of quality in relation to the standards and state support for this project.

Weaknesses:

Some elements of the proposal describing quality of the professional development program described seems a bit vague in sentences such as "the notion of emphasizing the major concepts in the field directly relates to constructivist theory and teaching for understanding". This gets off topic and seems confusing.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **(a) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**
- (b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**
- (c) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

Strengths:

The commitment to inclusion of members of traditionally underrepresented groups is thorough, clear and strong (and consistent throughout the proposal).

The credentials of the key personnel are impressive and relate directly to likelihood of success of this project. It's wonderful to see that the steering committee for the BUATA group - the group that was responsible for similar professional development for the newer teachers are present and on hand for advice and consultation (p. e11-12).

The partnership with the higher education research consultants (SUNY Research Foundation) provides more depth to the project.

Weaknesses:

It is not made clear whether or not the SUNY Foundation will be handling the research and data collection elements of the proposal (p.e12).

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

The timeline is clear and commitment to achieving milestones on time is illustrated well.

The milestones are rigorous yet achievable. This section clearly identifies what needs to happen when in order to reach the benchmarks set. It also includes roles and responsibilities associated with each milestone.

The management plan clearly identifies research and evidence, aimed to be obtained by the set timeframe and throughout the grant period (p.e14-18).

Weaknesses:

This section would have been stronger if it related back to clearly identified objectives within the timeline, milestones and responsibilities.

The management plan does not include reference to completion on budget. There are no financial figures found in this section at all.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. (a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.**

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

Strengths:

The project objectives, intended outcomes and performance measures are clearly described and adequately explained (p. e19).

Considering evaluation will occur throughout the life of the project, it is certain that the data obtained during the course of the project may be used to effectively shape the progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

The table on p. e22 is thorough, organized and sufficiently describes the excellent evaluation plan.

The third party independent evaluator who will direct the evaluation and monitor the progress has extensive experience and is well-qualified in program evaluation.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priorities - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. **Projects that are designed to collect (or obtain), analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, including data on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in this notice), in the following priority area: Improving instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in elementary or secondary schools.**

Strengths:

The various plans (design, management and evaluation) to collect, analyze and use high quality data in the project are consistently detailed throughout the proposal. The periodic check points that the data will be used ensure the project will be able to improve instructional practices, policies and student outcomes during the grant period.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priorities - Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

1. **Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.**

Projects that are supported by strong or moderate evidence (as defined in this notice). A project that is supported by strong evidence (as defined in this notice) will receive more points than a project that is supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

The effectiveness of the professional development methods and approaches of the project is supported by strong evidence throughout the proposal. The research is thorough and presents data that supports the likelihood of success in achieving the desired outcomes.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 10

Invitational Priority - Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates

1. **Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates.**

Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies.

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for high-need students.

Yes

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2011 12:04 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2011 01:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education, Buffalo, NY -- Office of Federal & State Prog Buffalo City School District
(U351C110014)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Comments		
Summary Comments		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	20	14
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	30
Sub Total	100	94
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priorities		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Decision-Making	10	7
Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness		
1. Evidence of Effectiveness	10	8
Sub Total	20	15
Invitational Priority		
Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates		
1. Graduation Rates	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	120	109

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.351C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Board of Education, Buffalo, NY -- Office of Federal & State Prog Buffalo City School District (U351C110014)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Please enter any summary comments here.

Strengths:

The applicant presents the foundation of a strong need for the program based on the diverse ethnic population to be served. Many of the components of the program, such as the implementation of collaborative teaching cohorts, are well outlined and seem likely to have solid impact on current teaching shortcomings.

Weaknesses:

The applicant could improve the proposal in many areas, particularly by identifying specific models and strategies to be utilized for professional development of tenured/veteran teachers. Many of the areas of the proposal are under-developed, perhaps because there is no clear direction on methodologies to be used. Areas of academic weaknesses that the program intends to improve are not well addressed, for example, the current academic pitfalls in the district arts curricula that need to be revised in order to sufficiently align with state standards. More clarity in these areas would have improved this proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. (a) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

(b) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

1a. The proposed project is likely to build local capacity by utilizing targeted professional development to arts teachers throughout its school district to increase effective teaching methods for improvements in student state standards. The applicant presents a solid proposal to address new state requirements mandating arts instruction as part of regimented daily curriculum. By implementing teaching cohorts comprised of tenured/veteran teachers who are generally not up-to-date on improved standards based practices, the applicant will expand the current NYS Arts Learning Standards and district initiatives which will link to professional development upgrades locally. The result will be student academic improvements in class and on state standards. Additionally, capacity will be built into the future as teachers learn better instruction strategies that will spread throughout the district. (P. 1-2)

1b. The applicant provides an effective discussion on dissemination efforts which will enable others to use the proposed outcomes, information and strategies. Throughout the district, the newly designed curriculum will be circulated via published results distributed to all art teachers and relevant educators. Teacher workdays will also be used as a forum for information sharing in best practices, project findings and updates. On both national and state levels, presentations at

conferences will also provide the dissemination of program successes. Journal publications expounding on program efforts will also be a good source for others interested in applying the same instructional techniques. (P. 5)

Weak

Weaknesses:

1a. No weaknesses cited.

1b. No weaknesses cited.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.**

Strengths:

2. An efficient plan is proposed to build the sustainability of the program beyond the life of the grant cycle. The applicant will put several strategies into place to ensure the longevity of program outcomes and activities. First, veteran/tenured teachers will be recruited from high needs and persistently low achieving district schools where intervention strategies will have the most impact. These teachers will work alongside higher education consultants to perfect research-based instructional concepts to complement the current service delivery plan and curricula. Revised learning strategies will then be taught at local schools through a peer coach in-training model to ensure that all arts instruction throughout the district is updated and meets mandated state requirements. Improved standards-based lesson plans, district-wide workshops, and in-service training days are effectively outlined and capable of being sustained beyond the life cycle of the grant. (P. 6-7)

Weaknesses:

2. No weaknesses cited.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

- 1. (a) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

(b) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(c) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.

Strengths:

3a. The applicant provides strong assurance of its commitment to equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups. Tenured and Veteran teachers will be one

segment of the project participants. Priority for participation will be given to those schools indicated as low-achieving, wherein teachers will very likely be those hailing from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Further, these schools are comprised almost fully of underrepresented ethnic groups (87.5%). Thus, equity among diverse student populations will be assured since all students district-wide will benefit from the revised arts curriculum over the grant cycle. (P. 7-8)

3b. The applicant provides the foundation of a professional development component capable of leading to some improvements in practice among targeted teachers. The proposed program's intensity and duration are well described and include 49 hours of professional development for teachers annually. Teachers will be guided, in part, by higher education field experts and work in collaborative teams which will help to disseminate revamped protocols in district schools, particularly those that are high-need. Because state regulations require that grade-level appropriate art classes be taught daily, professional development methods will be designed to link to state standards while incorporating new curricula to actively engage students. (P. 10-11)

3c. The applicant proposes some likely improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards. The state mandates art instruction in all grades in various capacities from K-12. While new teachers receive increased professional development and training, tenured/veteran teachers remain typically behind on new learning strategies and methods designed to increase student academics. The proposed program will help district teachers by aligning professional development strategies to the existing state regulations and learning standards. (P. 11)

Weaknesses:

3a. No weaknesses cited.

3b. While the proposed program presents a strong model on professional development intensity and duration, specific researched-based models are not cited detailing how teachers will receive the necessary knowledge to revamp the current curricula and align lesson plans to state standards. It is unclear throughout the narrative what, if any, methodologies will be utilized to accomplish this goal. Professional development strategies are unclear and not well-defined, which raises a red flag of the successful of long-term teacher effectiveness. (P. 9-10)

3c. The applicant does not fully address the sub-criteria. Information is not clear detailing what impact the program would have on state standards, nor how improvements will be measured. Providing expectations of specific systemic changes would have strengthened this section.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. (a) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**
- (b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**
- (c) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

Strengths:

4a. The applicant presents a strong plan with evidence of its commitment of encouraging applications from persons who hail from traditionally underrepresented groups. The district abides by a firm policy to recruit, hire, train and promote diverse populations without regard to race, creed, national origin, etc. Additionally, posting employment bulletins on the district website and in community newspapers, as well as recruiting graduate students with disadvantaged backgrounds, are all great strategies to ensure equal access for program employment. (P. 10-11)

4b. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel are more than sufficient to helm

a project of this size and scope. Project oversight will be assigned to the current district Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, who has a proven track record in education as both an assistant principal and Director of English Language Arts. The assigned Grant Project Manager is well equipped for the post as well. Currently serving as the district Supervisor of Curriculum in Art Education she is highly qualified with such noted accomplishments as developing a successful support system/program for new arts teachers. A Steering Committee will also lend valuable support and guidance to meeting program objectives. Committee members are all highly qualified as noted by their included resumes and cited experience. (P. 11-12 & Appendix - Resumes)

4c. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants and subcontractors are more than adequate to help manage the program. The majority of consulting posts will be garnered from the partnering university. College faculty will be required to hold a master's degree, minimally. Graduate students will serve as research assistants. Teaching Artists will be sought from a pool of recommendations. (P. 12-13)

Weaknesses:

4a. No weaknesses cited.

4b. No weaknesses cited.

4c. No weaknesses cited.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. 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:

5. The applicant provides an efficient and effective management plan to achieve the proposed goals and objectives of the program on time and within budget. The layout of the management team is clearly outlined and includes a stated hierarchy detailing the chain of command. A Steering Committee comprised of administrators, university content and evaluation specialists, consultants and community artists will help to implement and maintain project efforts. A timeline is provided that is sufficiently detailed outlining activity dates, milestones, personnel responsible to keep the program successfully on track. (P. 14-20)

Weaknesses:

5. No weaknesses cited.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- (a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.**
(b) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Strengths:

7a. The applicant presents a sufficient evaluation plan inclusive of objective performance measures that are clearly linked to the intended project outcomes. An outside evaluator will be utilized to ascertain if projected outcomes are achieved. Data collection will be ongoing and include the analysis of quantitative and qualitative measures, such as pre-post test gains and classroom observations. The evaluation plan is comprehensive as both students and teachers will be measured for satisfaction and academic progress. (P. 14-23)

7b. The applicant ensures continuous program feedback through a variety of levels that will assess the progress towards continuous gains. Data collection and analysis will be monitored by the evaluator and program staff throughout the year culminating in annual reports. Feedback will also be generated by the comparison of baseline data compared with post-intervention measures. (P. 14-23)

Weaknesses:

7a. No weaknesses cited.

7b. No weaknesses cited.

Reader's Score: 30

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priorities - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making**

- 1. Projects that are designed to collect (or obtain), analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, including data on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in this notice), in the following priority area: Improving instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in elementary or secondary schools.**

Strengths:

The applicant presents an adequate project design that will collect, analyze, and use effective data in a timely manner to measure the improvement of instructional practices, policies and student outcomes. The evaluation efforts of the program will guide the staff to collect data and analyze results to determine program impact.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant will collect a variety of data driven indicators, the data is not aligned with the program goals in many areas. Thus, because data is not connected to specifically projected outcomes, the analysis of data-based decision-making efforts will not be complete. An explanation of how collected data will be used to drive project analysis is unclear.

Reader's Score: 7

Competitive Preference Priorities - Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

- 1. Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Strong or Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.**

Projects that are supported by strong or moderate evidence (as defined in this notice). A project that is supported by strong evidence (as defined in this notice) will receive more points than a project that is supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

The applicant provides a project that is supported by moderate evidence by citing the use of the explicit instruction model. This model is fully described throughout the narrative and focuses on improving teaching skills, mandating timely feedback, and revising curricula to meet state standards. (P. 1-5)

Weaknesses:

The applicant could improve this sub-criteria by explaining how continued support will be provided to teaching staff based on the use of the evidence noted. Currently, the applicant plans to withdraw support systems to the teaching staff once students make significant improvements. It is unclear what impact ceasing support will have on both the student and teacher target population, as per data cited, lack of support could result in a shift back to student and teacher decline.

Reader's Score: 8

Invitational Priority - Improving Achievement and H.S. Graduation Rates**1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates.**

Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies.

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates for high-need students.

No

Reader's Score: 0

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