

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/30/2010 01:21 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Birmingham City Schools -- Fine Arts Department, Instruction (U351D100140)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	15	15
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	25
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	17
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	97
<b>Total</b>	100	97

# Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Panel - 15: 84.351D

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

Applicant: Birmingham City Schools -- Fine Arts Department, Instruction (U351D100140)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:

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

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

#### General:

##### Strengths:

Applicant indicates the need for funding based on severe cuts in arts funding nationwide but specifically for the districts of the targeted schools.

District is experiencing a decline in professional art teachers and shows clearly on page e2 the lack of art instruction across the district. There are currently no dance or theater programs for any 4th grade classes.

Applicant demonstrates that according to a strategic planning document, the general public supports access to more art programs both in and out of school. (e3)

A low percentage of students actually participate in community arts programs outside of school.

Well documented research is provided to support the fact that students are enriched academically and socially through engagement with the arts.

Tables and graphs are provided that demonstrate that the 9 targeted schools are not meeting the standards in both reading and math.

Continued failing test scores indicate that new methods of instruction are needed.

##### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Significance

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

**(1) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

**General:**

**Strengths:**

Program is replicable and based on creating fundamental changes in both the learning environment and teacher practice (e9).

Program guides, unit and curriculum plans will be produced and disseminated across the district through the districts Instructional Broadcast System. This system will also be used to share student artwork and activities.

Plans to disseminate program materials and activities on an existing website will have the opportunity to reach a broader audience and will also potentially enhance the arts community as a whole.

Plans to partner with Alabama State Education Department as well as the Alabama Learning Exchange have a high likelihood of making great impact at a state level.

Program is likely to strengthen teacher knowledge and student learning and to become a model to other states.

Program will impact 2,205 students. (e12)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

**(1) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.**

**(2) 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.**

**(3) 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.**

**General:**

**Strengths:**

Program is based on extensive research on the positive impact that learning through the arts can have on learners, particularly those that are underserved or underachieving.

The program is based on a Teaching Artists Initiative 2009-10 that was implemented in several districts. Fundamental lessons were learned in the previous year that have informed the development of this program, namely that teaching through the arts is more effective when both the arts and the subject being taught are important to the learning objective. This represents a fundamental key to a successful integrated arts program. (e14)

Professional artists of varying arts disciplines rotate through schools at 9 week intervals ensuring that students, and teachers, experience different forms of art throughout the year.

Plans to include intensive collaborative planning, professional development and curriculum design and delivery are well articulated and are evidence of a strong program.

Professional development includes school principals; this is a key factor in sustainability of the program because the administration must continue to support the teachers in both arts integration and curriculum design and teaching methods.

Summer institute facilitated by nationally-known teaching artists and a clear agenda of a variety of important understandings for teachers including creating child-centered classrooms, methods and assessments of integrated learning, critical response and classroom management.

Applicant explains in detail potential targeted concepts in math, literacy and writing which is clearly connected to the project goals (e17) and explains that each teacher will have an opportunity to engage in planning and determining the focus of their work with students. The program empowers and enhances teachers!

A collaborative model that is based on State learning standards is of high quality.

Yearlong school programs will culminate in an arts celebration and students use their own work to become self reflective.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

**Reader's Score: 25**

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

- 1. Your comments and scores should address the following criterion:(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers 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.  
(2) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factor: The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**General:**

Strengths:

Program directors represent diversity and recruitment encourages at least 50% of the teaching artists and consultants to represent diverse populations as well.

Both directors have a wealth of experience and expertise that meet the projects goals.

Extensive resumes are provided.

Key personnel have experience and expertise in the arts as well as in management.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

- (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.**
- (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and Principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**
- (3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**General:**

Strengths:

Management is clearly divided up into several tiers, including school level management where needs of students are greatest. (e22). Each tier is able to facilitate the aspects of the program that they are best suited for.

Principals are integral in the planning and are expected to ensure that individual teachers and collaborative teams have the necessary planning and instructional time needed to facilitate a successful program.

Program expectations for each participant are clearly defined.

Planning and meeting times are clearly delineated. This is a well structured management plan on the whole. (Table e24-30)

Weaknesses:

Both directors will dedicate only 20% of their time towards the program; an extensive program like this may deserve more time than allotted. A full time director would be beneficial.

**Reader's Score: 17**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

### 1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

#### General:

##### Strengths:

The evaluation includes an assessment of the school environment which plays a large role in how learning and teaching can happen and also documents interactions between cultural partners, stakeholders and personnel. Both of these are important aspects of a sound assessment. (e32)

Evaluation also focuses on budget expenditures which ensure that the grant is being properly administered.

Outside evaluators, as well as internal project personnel, will play a key role in on-going assessment.

A variety of methods will be used to collect and assess data, including videotaping, portfolios and observation logs.

Evaluation methods and data are clearly aligned with project goals.

The Outcome Evaluation Table is organized and well planned and clearly articulates what the outcomes will be and who is responsible for what. This level of organization indicates an evaluation program that is of very high quality.

##### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 20**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 04/30/2010 01:21 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/30/2010 12:28 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Birmingham City Schools -- Fine Arts Department, Instruction (U351D100140)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	15	10
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	2
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	10
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	7
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	8
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	52
<b>Total</b>	100	52

# Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Panel - 15: 84.351D

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

Applicant: Birmingham City Schools -- Fine Arts Department, Instruction (U351D100140)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

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

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

#### General:

Strengths:

Schools involved have a very high poverty rate.

Have targeted the project toward a grade level that they believe is important for students' future success in the system.

Weaknesses:

Concern with the implication that arts integration can somehow compensate for the loss of rigorous arts education delivered by trained professionals. The difficulty with arts integration is that it does not necessarily provide sequential training, which eventually allows students to fully express themselves. The emphasis should be: strong arts, strong arts integration.

Reader's Score: 10

### Selection Criteria - Significance

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

**(1) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

#### General:

Strengths:

This project involves a massive infusion of teaching artists in nine schools on a single grade level- a unique approach that catches some attention.

Weaknesses:

Because of the narrowness of the grade level focus some serious concern about its utility across the district, state and nation. This effort will result in the creation of multiple 4th grade curriculum units; it will not lead to whole school reform or

have a lasting effect on student learning (for the students directly engaged in the project).

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

- (1) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.**
- (2) 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.**
- (3) 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.**

#### **General:**

Strengths:

Demonstrates a good knowledge of current literature.

The infusion of four residencies in each arts discipline into each school will provide a memorable year for students and faculty alike.

Deliberate attempt to engage school leadership.

Applaud the convening of Principals'Institute.

Weaknesses:

The project is fundamentally flawed. Providing services only to the fourth grade will result in a temporary peak for students and faculty, but will not, as the designers intend, bring about change in the school culture. Students need a continuum of instruction over a period of several years to have a lasting effect on their performance and development of skills.

Need more information about the content of the institute.

Who are the presenters or what are their selection criteria?

Confusing comment on p 35 of evaluation plan indicating that teaching artists have responsibility for targeting weaknesses on the ARMT; this should be a collaborative function involving teacher, artists, and administators.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criterion:(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers 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.**

**(2) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factor: The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**General:**

Strengths:

Teaching Artist Staff Meetings are a great idea that should be emulated in other districts where many teaching artists are involved.

The project directors are highly qualified and experienced.

Good that the district will work with the Cultural Alliance Director. This will take some of the load off the Birmingham school personnel.

Expectations clearly defined and articulated in charts.

The school principals appear to be an integral part of the planning.

Weaknesses:

Would like more details about the "Management Planning" (page e22) When, how long are meetings, who facilitates, etc.

The teaching artists play a critical role in this project, but the applicant has provided no names or selection criteria for the artists. Recommend that they contact their state arts council.

**Reader's Score: 7**

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

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

**(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.**

**(2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and Principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

**(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**General:**

Strengths:

The management structure is clearly articulated and has several tiers of responsibility. Expectations clearly defined and articulated in charts.

The school principals appear to be an integral part of the planning.

Weaknesses:

Some concern that this project is overreaching. The Cultural Alliance has a strong track record of coordinating educational events, but have some concern about their capacity to handle such a large load of residencies.

Applicant indicates that the liaison teacher has a "critical" role in the project, but his/her responsibilities do not appear to be articulated. This person should receive a stipend, but nothing is indicated in the project budget.

**Reader's Score: 8**

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.**
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

**General:**

Strengths:

Clear delineation of plan with helpful chart

Includes examination of parental "understanding" of the arts-- a positive. However, would like to know whether this measures knowledge of art history, artistic processes and/or the important role of the arts in education.

Reasonable benchmarks

Weaknesses:

Will the applicant develop a programmatic response to the findings of the parent survey? Suggest that applicant should have a look at the Kennedy Center Arts Education Audit for an approach to involving parents in research and planning.

**Reader's Score: 15**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 04/30/2010 12:28 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/28/2010 11:07 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Birmingham City Schools -- Fine Arts Department, Instruction (U351D100140)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	15	14
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	25	23
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	16
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	91
<b>Total</b>	100	91

# Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Panel - 15: 84.351D

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

Applicant: Birmingham City Schools -- Fine Arts Department, Instruction (U351D100140)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

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

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

#### General:

##### Strengths:

This applicant provides a clear argument, complete with statistics, as to how the public school students in Birmingham are of need of arts opportunities in the schools.

There is a clear decline in arts teachers and this program helps meet that need by pairing teaching artists with classroom teachers.

The need for arts education during the school day is presented and the proposed project directly provides services to address the need specifically for students at risk of educational failure.

Almost all students participating in the program are on free/reduced lunch and none of the schools have dance or theater classes currently.

95% of the students are African American and the applicant mentions recruiting staff that represent the student population.

##### Weaknesses:

While it is wonderful that the project focuses specifically with fourth grade, a clear argument as to why fourth graders in particular has not been provided by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 14

### Selection Criteria - Significance

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

**(1) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.**

#### General:

##### Strengths:

A local cable network will feature student development in the arts. This has possibility of influencing a larger reach of

teachers as well as placing additional value on the learning for the students.  
A prototype for processes in learning through the arts are being developed.  
Teachers will learn arts integration techniques as the teaching artists model them.  
Teachers who have no arts experience are gaining hands on experiences from experts which will lead to sustainability.  
The applicant mentions technology as a way to disseminate resources such as the thematic units which are developed as a result of this project.  
The sharing of student artifacts as well as the student performances has potential to positively affect parent involvement in the schools.  
The Cultural Alliance will provide community resources to support the classroom study.  
The professional development for teaching artists and classroom teachers will be taped and shared with others.  
This project is a real opportunity to expand arts education in an urban school district.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

- (1) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.**
- (2) 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.**
- (3) 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.**

**General:**

Strengths:

The project design reflects up to date research.

The school selection criteria mentioned on page 15 of the narrative is well thought out to truly address the need of the project and the students.

The project design fully realizes the value of engaging with school leadership in order to change school climate and have a successful experience with teachers and students.

There is an intention for students to have authentic connections with the arts rather than imply infusing the arts into various subject matters. The example of "hitching" is made on page 14 so that the arts may compliment academic areas and vice versa, through discipline based learning. The arts are not an afterthought in this project design.

The project celebrates students through the student showcases after each quarter or artistic subject that is studied.

The program has been tested in 2009-2010, so it is a chance to grow upon a successful experience.

Each school has sufficient time to study the arts with 9 weeks per art form.

The week long professional development summer session provides teaching artists and educators to learn alongside each other.

The advisory committee is well considered with both teachers and teaching artists planning alongside the project director for the first year of the project.

The Cultural Alliance places resources towards the teachers to fully support them in building capacity in teaching and learning that can affect school change beyond the period of financial assistance.

Weaknesses:

More details could be provided as to what will actually occur during the summer institute and who the nationally recognized teaching artists are that lead the sessions.

A sample lesson plan or examples of themes for the residencies would have been helpful in fully understanding the project design.

**Reader's Score: 23**

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

- 1. Your comments and scores should address the following criterion:(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers 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. (2) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factor: The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**General:**

Strengths:

Core staff are extremely qualified for this project and appear to have an interest and background in the arts.

The applicant states that 50% of artists and consultants will be of minority race (p. 21).

Weaknesses:

It would be helpful to see resumes from previous teaching artists who have worked with the Cultural Alliance in the past, or at least a list of qualifications for the position.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

- 1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:  
(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.

**(2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and Principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

**(3) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**General:**

Strengths:

Adequate planning time is realized in the first year of funding. In addition, school needs will be well considered in the planning process as a teacher from each school is a member of the Advisory Team.

Much of the planning year has a focus on teaching artists figuring out (with the help of the teachers) fourth grade student learning processes and themes.

The budget seems reasonable and realizes teacher stipends, supplies for the professional trainings, and the costs of consultants for the summer institute.

Clear roles and responsibilities for the project are assigned and there appears to be a clear plan for regular meetings for feedback and adjustments as needed.

School principals design the schedule and assign a faculty liaison for the project. This guarantees that the project will be sustainable for the selected schools.

The timeline provided on page 31 of the narrative is realistic.

Weaknesses:

More details are needed about the school based teams. For example, are parents included? How often do these teams meet?

The liason teacher does not appear to receive an extra stipend for his or her duties.

There is not a full time staff member assigned to this project.

**Reader's Score: 16**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. Your comments and scores should address the following criteria:**

**(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.**

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

**General:**

Strengths:

The project evaluation considers perspectives of all stakeholders: the school, students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

A variety of methods are pursued in collecting feedback.

The evaluation strongly considers if funds are federal funds are allocated appropriately through input evaluation.

Parent knowledge and interest in arts education is an important part of this evaluation plan.

Quarterly meetings will be held and annual reports will be produced.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected.

The benchmarks mentioned on page 36 of the narrative are reasonable.

The evaluation measures the goals mentioned earlier in the narrative and is appropriate to the project design.

Weaknesses:

There does not seem to be an external evaluator identified yet.

**Reader's Score: 19**

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 04/28/2010 11:07 PM