

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/23/2010 11:44 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jersey City Public Schools -- Visual and Performing Arts, (U351D100033)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	15
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
Sub Total	100	96
Total	100	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel - 9: 84.351D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Jersey City Public Schools -- Visual and Performing Arts, (U351D100033)

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:

(S)The applicant provides extensive information as to the target of its proposed projects including demographic information, economic statistics, education attainment, and school district characteristics. Gaps and weaknesses in services are identified on pages 3 through 7. Specifically, the applicant indicates that "visual and performing arts is clearly not fully being addressed at the elementary school level" (page 5), a gap not filled by the previously funded program. Another gap includes the graduate level of expectation of the communication level in each of the four arts discipline and how this level has not traditionally started at the elementary school level (page 5). Gaps and weaknesses are identified in professional development unavailability to elementary school teachers. Based on the success of the previous program in addressing goals for higher level students, the applicant ably explains how this will meet the needs of the target population.

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:

(S) The applicant describes the utility of products resulting from project activities. These include an integration handbook, a training guide, a training DVD, model implementation, journal articles and conference presentations. These items represent tangible products that can be utilized and duplicated for project expansion and use in other settings.

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:

(S) The applicant provides information on the up-to-date research and best practices that support its program activities. On page 10, for example, the applicant cites research by Stevenson and Deasy (2005) citing evidence that its proposed activities may have a positive impact on students from economically disadvantaged circumstances. As a best practice, the applicant cites the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education that promoted partnerships with teachers and artists. This positively benefited students in the Chicago area (page 10). On page 13, the applicant indicates that the proposed project is grounded in national and state core curriculum, resulting in efforts to improve teaching and learning. The proposed activities included providing goals and objectives for improving teaching methods through systematic training. The applicant provides information that supports continued results beyond the funding period. Specifically, "the standards based lesson plans can be applied in the trained teachers' classroom beyond the grant funding at no cost to the district, as has been the case in the two previously funded AEMDD grants" (page 18).

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:

(S) On pages 21 and 22, the applicant provides information on the project director and the team that will lead the day-to-day activities of the proposed activities. The applicant also indicate the qualifications of the evaluator of the project.

(W) The applicant does not indicate how it will ensure equal access to persons of various races, ethnicities and disabilities for any vacancies occurring during project administration.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

(S) The applicant provides a detailed management plan on pages 23 through 29. The management chart indicates activity descriptions, persons responsible and the timeline for activities. Notably, project meetings are held monthly to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. (W) Specific time commitments are not included with key personnel. It is unclear, then as to the commitments of the evaluator, project director and project manager.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

(S) On pages 29 through 39, the applicant provides extensive information on the project evaluation. Using an evaluation hypothesis supports by six research hypothesis, the applicant describes a plan that includes a multiyear activities using control and treatment groups. Dissemination of information is provided throughout the community. The applicant provides a logic model with components, target population, intervening factors, short-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes (page 39). The evaluation plan appears to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Reader's Score: 20

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jersey City Public Schools -- Visual and Performing Arts, (U351D100033)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	15
Significance		
1. Significance	10	8
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
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	20	20
Sub Total	100	98
Total	100	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel - 9: 84.351D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Jersey City Public Schools -- Visual and Performing Arts, (U351D100033)

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:

Multiple criteria are offered to establish the need of this targeted group. The criteria are specific and consider national and state comparisons in ranking this project population as extremely needy for services that address academic shortfalls. The history of success that this school district has had with two prior AEMDD grants in obtaining substantial improvements through similar projects targeting other grade levels also gives credibility to expectations for project capacity to meet stated need.

Weaknesses: None noted.

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:

The Theatre and Language Arts Integration handbook, a training guide and DVD as well as the Model Implementation Design and Evaluation Findings Report collectively offer a comprehensive range of documentation that should greatly increase the capacity for replication of the project. These products appear to be available for free to others nationally. The documentation appears to exceed and build on the knowledge gained in the prior projects, benefiting from those efforts and bringing to fruition products that might not be possible in one grant period.

The encouragement of external study of the processes of the project by university graduate students as part of their dissertations is another example of creative dissemination and potential longevity of the information gained in this project without increase in cost.

Weaknesses:

The project serves to duplicate, in actual student and teacher services, the efforts of two prior AEMDD grants, only changing grade levels for this project.

It is unfortunate that a project of this scope incorporates only one art form.

Reader's Score: 8

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 research used to inform the project design is very strong- broad and specific to the issues being addressed through the project.

Concept-based learning ("big ideas") and problem-based learning, proven and under-used educational strategies, are included in the design plan.

There is extensive evidence of the comprehensive nature of the system's approach, including several literacy initiatives and test preparation work. Additionally, there have been efforts to evaluate and document prior efforts that mirror the proposed project, which showed substantial gains.

The project design includes many methodologies supported by current research, such as mentoring, coaching, reflective practice and experiential learning.

Four specific components of the training activities have been identified and reflect a well-designed, systematic approach to changing teacher practice.

Dissemination plans are far-reaching and varied in their approach. The newsletter in particular is a meaningful short-term method that is seldom used in project planning.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

It is significant that the Project Director position, at 20% is an in-kind contribution of the school district, and, in utilizing their district supervisor for the Visual and Performing Arts, should make for a tightly connected project within the school system.

All personnel are qualified for their positions.

The time allotted for the different functions is adequate and reflects comprehensive planning for the many varied functions of the project.

Weaknesses: None noted.

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:

A comprehensive collaborative team with a range of pertinent skills is included to develop and refine the lesson plans., many funded by the district, representing a substantial investment in the program.

The project is designed to approach and expand the targeted teacher and student populations to provide for incremental growth, informed by the formative assessment elements of the plan.

Budget appears to be adequate for named undertakings of the project.

Timelines are provided with specific information about the time the task is to be completed and the person(s) responsible for their completion.

Multiple sources of both qualitative and quantitative data are included, as well as ample formative and summative assessments, providing for the feedback needed to inform the work of the project.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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 and research hypotheses are grounded in strong constructivist educational theory, and as such represent potential for significant contributions to our understanding of theatre as a vehicle for meaningful arts integration.

The evaluation design and data analysis described is appropriate and will provide reliable feedback to inform the work of this project and others replicating some or all of the strategies being examined.

Multiple sources of both qualitative and quantitative data are included, as well as ample formative and summative assessments.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **20**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/26/2010 02:28 PM

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jersey City Public Schools -- Visual and Performing Arts, (U351D100033)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	15
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	20
Sub Total	100	97
Total	100	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel - 9: 84.351D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Jersey City Public Schools -- Visual and Performing Arts, (U351D100033)

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:

The applicant demonstrates a high rate of poverty (p. 1). Several indicators of at risk factors are shown for the schools to be served by the grant. The district has been state-run since 1989 due to low performance. The applicant has a high number of limited English proficient students (p. 2) and shows low performance in all grades in state language arts assessments (pp. 2-3). Three of the schools to be served are in corrective action and three are in restructuring mode. Additionally, the district has a high student mobility rate. The applicant has had two prior AEMDD grants (p. 4). The results demonstrated from those show that increasing student contact with the arts has had an impact on achievement. Only five of 25 schools have drama teachers (p. 5). Teachers lack professional development in arts integration (p. 6).

Weaknesses:

None were noted.

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: The applicant plans to develop several products as a result of the proposed project (p. 7). These include: a theater and language arts integration handbook; a training guide; a training DVD; a journal article; conference presentations; and web site postings (pp. 7-9). Overall, these varied products and activities will be useful to disseminate.

Weaknesses: None 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 applicant has aligned goals and objectives with both New Jersey and national standards for visual and performing arts and language arts (p. 9). The arts are cited as a key to success in a study by Stevenson and Deasy (2005) in which students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were succeeding in school (p. 10). Overall, a thorough and fairly recent body of research is cited. Data are provided to show how prior AEMDD programs have led to increase in academic rigor and success (p. 11). Specifically, the applicant provides research showing the link between the arts and story comprehension. Brain research linking the arts and processing is provided (p. 12). The applicant has a measured plan for phasing in the program over time (p. 14). Rather than rushing in with all schools at once, the training will begin with a few schools. Still, the impact at these schools will be far reaching (360 lessons, 300 students, and 12 teachers). The lesson and professional development content created during this project will be replicable and sustainable. The applicant includes clearly written goals and objectives (pp. 15-17). They include ambitious performance targets for student achievement. Several different types of training activities will be used to engage teachers differently and ensure that most show changed practices in their classrooms.

Weaknesses: None were noted.

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: The project director has worked with the prior AEMDD grants the district has received (p. 21). She is the district supervisor for the visual and performing arts and will spend 20 percent of her time with the project. The school district will partner with the Educational Arts Team (EAT), which is a local arts educational agency, to implement the program. The director of EAT will devote 45 percent of his time to the project (p. 22). He has prior experience working with student art programs. The program evaluator to be used has performed the evaluation of two previous AEMDD projects (p. 22). The prior evaluation has been published.

Weaknesses: The qualifications of the Teaching Artists to be hired are not discussed in the application (p. 22).

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: The timeline submitted (pp. 24-28) is thorough, shows major project milestones, lists responsible parties, and includes dates for all four years of the proposed project. The project team, which will be responsible for feedback and improvement, consists of the project director, the project manager, and the program evaluator (p. 23). The project director and project manager will meet monthly to discuss program status (p. 29).

Weaknesses: The time commitment of the project evaluator is not discussed.

Reader's Score: 18

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 applicant includes six research hypotheses, all centered around the idea that arts integration will lead to improvement in reading comprehension, writing skills, and social learning (p. 29). The research model includes a discussion of possible mediating factors for both student and teacher outcomes (p. 30). Schools will be randomly assigned to either the control or the treatment group (p. 31). Performance goals include 10 percent improvement in student indicators included (p. 32). Questionnaires to be used have been measured to show high reliability rates (p. 33). Teacher and student data collection procedures are appropriate to the project and will be cleared through the Institutional Review Board (p. 37).

Weaknesses: None were noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted

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