

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/25/2010 03:58 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: THE ARTSCONNECTION INC. -- Programs, (U351D100099)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	10
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	21
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
Sub Total	100	88
Total	100	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel - 9: 84.351D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: THE ARTSCONNECTION INC. -- Programs, (U351D100099)

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 describe its subprogram as an innovative researched-based model for teaching and learning in and through the arts (page 1) that will target students in low performing, high need, multicultural communities in grades 3 through 5. The applicant proposes using a formative assessment to alleviate the gaps and weaknesses caused by lack of arts in the curriculum. (W) It is unclear how gaps and weaknesses in the existing curriculum has led to issues of concern addressed at the beginning of the narrative. Specifically, it is unclear how the use of summative assessments caused such gaps. It is also unclear how formative assessments differ enough in administration to alleviate poor achievement patterns. Local data is not provided for ELA learners.

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:

(S) On pages 7 through 11, the applicant explains the significant of its project activities. The project includes formative assessment practices than can be used for theater, dance and ELA; arts curricula; and methodologies that are portable and replicable. "To build knowledge in the field, the project will use a range of media and outlets to share information locally and globally" (page 9).

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 cites best practices and research used to support project activities. On page 13, the applicant provides information on seven research strategies that will support formative assessment practices. These assessment practices will be integrated into an instructional framework for daily teaching activities. As an already existing program, the applicant expects sustainability of its activities since arts integration is supported to some extent within the targeted schools (page 17). (W) No research is offered to offset the benefits of summative assessments, or other assessments for that matter, as it relates to the program intervention of arts into the curriculum to improve student outcomes. Weak connections are made with research cited on parent involvement (page 13). Therefore it is unclear how the research supports formative assessment as a critical tool for the project activities.

Reader's Score: 21

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) The applicant describes the personnel who will be working with the project on pages 25 through 27. Project personnel appear to have the qualifications necessary to carryout project activities. (W) It is unclear as to how the applicant will ensure that persons from underrepresented groups are aware of employment opportunities presented by the grant.

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 information on the roles and responsibilities of key personnel within the management plan. Time commitments of the project personnel appear adequate to ensure timeliness and benchmarks. The applicant states that the formative assessment principles ensure feedback and opportunity for revisions or improvement (page 32). Specific dates within the appendices are within the appendix.

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:

(S) The applicant provides the evaluation plan on pages 34 through 40. The applicant explains the design and analysis that will not have random assignments or control/non-control groups. Instead, performance data will be obtained at the outset of the project for participating students (page 35). Measurements will be aligned with this benchmarks data for longitudinal study over the four year period. Specific objectives are outlined on page 36. (W) Benchmark data should be provided at the beginning project activities.

Reader's Score: 19

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 04/25/2010 03:58 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/26/2010 02:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: THE ARTSCONNECTION INC. -- Programs, (U351D100099)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	12
Significance		
1. Significance	10	9
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	23
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	19
Sub Total	100	92
Total	100	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel - 9: 84.351D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: THE ARTSCONNECTION INC. -- Programs, (U351D100099)

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 project targets four Title I schools, where 90% of students live at or below the poverty line.

A unique approach to the arts integration is identified in the formative assessment focus of this grant. Research supports this as a promising approach for increasing student performance, and it is also congruent with high quality arts education. Further, this proposal offers a promising strategy for addressing the more global challenge of developing thinking and reasoning skills in students.

Dance and theatre were chosen as the two art forms for use in this project due to their underrepresentation in NYC schools.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the project design will meet the needs of the ELL students, since it states that of the 90% of students who live at or below the poverty line, many are from non-English speaking homes. (P1)

Reader's Score: 12

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 collaborative process offers a strategy for ongoing feedback that is broadly replicable in a variety of settings.

The framework is built on familiar processes, and therefore accessible to educators and students when organized and embedded in classrooms as proposed in this project.

This project utilizes tools and processes developed in past projects, and therefore benefits from experience with and revision of many of those elements.

This large organization benefits from the infrastructure that supports ongoing and immediate involvement of and inclusion of others in the project's development through its online system.

The scale of this organization offers opportunities for interweaving the project goals with those of the region, the city's Dept of Education goals, and colleagues in arts education nationally.

Weaknesses:

This is a strictly urban application, and may encounter unexpected challenges in more rural settings, where there is less access to the support personnel that this proposal will employ.

Reader's Score: 9

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:

Research foundations for this project design are synthesized into an innovative approach to arts in education.

The stated goal of making what is implicit in quality arts learning explicit is ambitious, but holds the potential for a major shift in teaching practice in both the arts and academic areas of study.

This process has the potential to build student capacity in ways that will forever impact that student's potential for success, as well as permanently altering how teachers fundamentally teach. This is an important and exciting project design.

With the success of this model, there should be far-reaching support for its continuation and expansion in other districts, states and beyond, especially given this organization's unusually high level of capability to provide documentation and dissemination of the project processes and materials.

Weaknesses:

While it is stated that administrators are included in the implementation of the project (P 15), the specifics of their involvement are unclear.

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:

All personnel are well qualified to carry out this project.

Proposal states that staff and teaching artists reflect the diversity of the city of New York.

Weaknesses:

No specific information about accessibility accommodations that are made or diversity of staff is provided.

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:

All 3 of the above criteria are adequately and appropriately met in this management plan. Past experience would offer further assurance that this organization can effectively execute the plan, continuing to build on its past experiences.

Responsibilities, timelines, and milestones are specific and clearly defined.

Letters and commitments from the schools for professional development time for the project and provision of administrative liaisons reflect the reputation of this organization. The schools appear to feel confident in the organization's capability and reliability in carrying out the project and positively impacting their students and teachers.

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:

It is most interesting that the core concept for this project is formative assessment that is woven throughout the project evaluation plan. This provides a seamlessness to the work that is very strong.

This evaluation plan builds on prior products of projects of the organization, benefiting from the experience with those tools.

A thorough overview is provided of the design and analysis of the evaluation, as well as control groups, instrumentation, data collection methods, the reporting and dissemination of evaluation results and project accountability. This is a

comprehensive feedback mechanism well-suited to the project goals.

Weaknesses:

Evaluation instruments rely heavily on New York State standards, limited some of the national direct applicability of the results. (P38)

Reader's Score: 19

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/26/2010 02:32 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/27/2010 09:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: THE ARTSCONNECTION INC. -- Programs, (U351D100099)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	11
Significance		
1. Significance	10	9
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	23
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	18
Sub Total	100	91
Total	100	91

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel - 9: 84.351D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: THE ARTSCONNECTION INC. -- Programs, (U351D100099)

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 proposed project will serve 4 Title I schools with 1,400 students and 45 teachers (p. 1). On average, 90% of the student population lives below the poverty line. All four schools have a high percentage of English language learners (p. 17).

Weaknesses: The applicant does not provide any performance data indicating why these four elementary schools were chosen from among the many New York City schools. It is also not clear to what extent gaps in services and training exist in these schools as far as art education is concerned. Data provided show that many schools lack theater and dance specialists (p. 7), but these are data for the city overall â not the target population.

Reader's Score: 11

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 has through previous projects shown a history of model development and dissemination (p. 8). The proposed project will attempt to build a body of work in arts assessment practices that to this point is lacking (p. 9). The first two years of the project will be spent developing a communication network for resource sharing (p. 10). Beginning in year 3, the products produced through the project will be shared regionally through the city department of education office.

Weaknesses: The use of e-mail blasts described (p. 10) in the narrative sound like spam. It is unclear how effective this method of dissemination would be.

Reader's Score: 9

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 proposed project combines the implicit skills present in quality arts learning experiences with explicit skills developed through a curriculum rich in formative assessment (p. 11). The applicant plans to adapt educational assessment strategies proven effective in other content areas to arts education (p. 12). Formative assessment strategies will be developed around three concepts: where the student is presently, where the student needs to go, and how to close the gap (p. 13). Yearly gatherings will be held to connect with parents in this high English language learner population so that families can see their children working in the arts (p. 14). This provides for both student engagement in the curriculum and parental involvement in student work. Professional development will teach teachers effective formative assessment strategies. Copious research examples are provided, including recent high quality research on schools as learning communities (p. 15). The applicant shows consideration for examining how student behaviors will be changed as well as how teacher behaviors will be changed (p. 16). Beginning in year three, the arts lessons will be integrated with English/language arts standards. Student objectives listed both before and after the arts/ELA blending are measurable (p. 18).

Weaknesses: Without data showing current student performance, it is unclear how the proposed project fits into the overall plan to improve the academic rigor of the schools.

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: The applicant includes a statement of non-discrimination (p. 25). The project director has been director of professional development for a decade at Arts Connection (p. 25). The project associate is currently a program manager for Arts Connection who has researched the relationship between language learning and dance. The grants manager has many years of experience in projects of a similar magnitude. Consultants, program managers, and teaching artists attached to the proposed project are also satisfactorily qualified for the roles they will play (p. 26). The program evaluator and his team are also very experienced in working with this kind of evaluation (p. 27).

Weaknesses: None were 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: The applicant has a track record of success in managing projects of this scale (p. 27). Several monthly and bi-monthly meetings will help with the steering of project activities (p. 28). Each school will designate an administrative liaison to support the program (p. 29). The project director will spend 50% of her time on the project (p. 30), the project associate will spend 60% of her time, and the grants manager will spend 7.5% of her time (p. 31). Each of these time commitments is adequate for the proposed project. The evaluation team will make at least 50 classroom observations annually (p. 32).

Weaknesses: None were 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 team has worked together on over 30 research projects to date (p. 34). The quasi-experimental design proposed is appropriate due to the limitations inherent in selecting the control population (p. 35). The tests to be run on the treatment and control groups, including means difference testing, are appropriate measures to determine the significance of any difference found to be present between the two groups (p. 37).

Weaknesses: It is unclear why the applicant has not included baseline data that will be collected as part of the evaluation plan. This would clarify several aspects of the proposal, in this case, the performance data that will be used to evaluate the effects of the project (p. 35).

Reader's Score: 18

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/27/2010 09:05 PM

