

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/31/2013 01:27 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mt. Vernon City School District (U351D130020)

Reader #1: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Need for Project | | |
| 1. Need for Project | 15 | 13 |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 10 | 10 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 30 | 28 |
| Quality of Project Personnel | | |
| 1. Project Personnel | 10 | 9 |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 25 | 25 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 10 | 10 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 95 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference | | |
| Priority Four - Technology | | |
| 1. Technology | 5 | 2 |
| Sub Total | 5 | 2 |
| Total | 105 | 97 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - AEMDD FY 2013 Application Reivew - 7: 84.351D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Mt. Vernon City School District (U351D130020)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project by considering the following factors:

(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.

Strengths:

(a) The application provides strong evidence of the need for the proposed project. The four proposed schools have 75% free and reduced lunch rates, and nearly 1 in 10 students have been suspended from school. Over 1/5 of all students did not meet the New York state math requirements and over ¼ did not meet the ELA requirements (e15,16) Other social factors, like high rate of HIV, drug use, and teen pregnancy, underscore the district's need.

(b) The application provides moderate evidence that the school recognizes the gaps in its current system, through a gap analysis conducted through teachers observations, interviews, and surveys. Those gaps include teacher training in arts integration, in blending arts/STEM, and in developing collegial environments in which to share information (e20).

Weaknesses:

More detail regarding the specific needs identified would be helpful. The application would have been strengthened through information regarding the extent of the problem (eg., 75% of all teachers feel unprepared to integrate arts into the classroom.) Information regarding which stakeholders were involved in the various meetings referenced on e19 would help to validate the proposed gaps.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project by considering the following factor:

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.

Strengths:

The application shows strong evidence that the products resulting from this project will be utilized frequently and effectively throughout the broader community. The project provides strong evidence of a plan to disseminate the program's materials through its own and its partner's websites, and through conference presentations and email dissemination. The team will collect all of its work into a compendium and provide it free of charge to interested schools. (e22) The parent testimonial to her child's experience within previous iterations of this program is moving and a terrific example of what the team has accomplished thus far (e111-112).

Weaknesses:

This criteria was thoroughly discussed and I did not see any weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project by considering the following factors:

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

(b) 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.

(c) 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:

(a) The application shows strong evidence that the design of the project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices. The project-based, integrative design principles are based on up-to-date research (e23-25), including academic research, STEM to STEAM conferences, and practitioners in improving academic performance and motivating at-risk students.

(b) The application shows strong evidence that the project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning. Teachers, artists, and STEM consultants will work together to develop curriculum, thereby ensuring teacher engagement and a sense of ownership of the project's success. The proposal shows an impressive grasp of the key elements of success, from an understanding of the intended student outcomes (e28-29) to the match of the appropriate artistic instructional technique to a STEM concept. The team plans to align the curriculum with national and state standards (e37).

(c) The application shows moderate evidence that the project is designed to build capacity and yield results sustainable beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. The applicant states that the project team will train teachers in 4 project schools and then eventually train through the rest of the district's schools, although it does not explain the funding source to continue (e38-39).

Weaknesses:

The applicant didn't provide specifics around the standards (Common Core, etc.) to which the propose project would be aligned. It is unclear what funding/flexibility would be available to sustain teacher training efforts after the grant period (e38-39)

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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.

In addition, the Secretary considers the following factor:

The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

Strengths:

The applicant shows strong evidence of the encouragement of underrepresented applicants as well as having assembled a team of key personnel with relevant training and experience. For example, the applicant has adopted a formal Affirmative Action Plan that advertises positions in regional minority publications. The proposed team includes people of African-American, Hispanic, Caucasian, and Asian backgrounds (e39).

The project director brings strong experience to her role, including the restructuring of an arts curriculum and designing and implementing professional development, both of which are key to the proposed project. The proposed qualifications of the support team are especially strong in art backgrounds and seem reasonable to the roles and responsibilities of those positions (e40-41)

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened through information regarding the specific STEM backgrounds/required qualifications of the proposed project team.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project by considering the following factors:

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

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

Strengths:

(a) The applicant shows strong evidence of a management plan that will meet the project's objectives on time and within budget. The roles and tasks of the six proposed team members and the consultants/Artists/STEM consultants are clearly laid out (e42-43). Of special note is the participation of all in monitoring the project. The applicant provides timelines on a monthly basis for year 1 and generally for years 2-4. (e45-46)

(b) The applicant shows strong evidence of an efficient allocation of time of the project director and other key personnel to the objectives of the project. Between the 1.0 FTE of the Arts Westchester Co-Coordinator, and the 0.4 FTE of the Project Director, the overall tasks of administration will be amply covered. Forty days of evaluation effort also appear appropriate to the proposed tasks. (e46-47).

(c) The applicant provides strong evidence of developing procedures to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. To assess and improve the program, frequent data collection and its analysis, and frequent meetings of the stakeholders who can act on that data are key. The project's Advisory Board will meet monthly (e47), which ensures an opportunity to quickly change course. Additionally, the menu of frequent assessments (including weekly reviews of 10-week residencies (e31) also ensure the use of real-time data collection/analysis in determining what, if any, adjustments need to be made programmatically (e62).

Weaknesses:

This criteria was thoroughly discussed and I did not see any weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

(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 shows strong evidence of the use of objective performance measures that are clearly linked to the intended project outcomes. The formative and summative measures are well-designed and clearly aligned to the project's outcomes. Collecting feedback from parents, students, and educators offers multiple perspectives in which to assess changes in student math and reading scores over time. The random sampling methodology is sound (e49, e54) including the randomization of the selection list to avoid bias. The dissemination of materials nationwide, discussed in Objective 7, is an ambitious yet achievable goal. The utilization of the "Program Outcomes Model" ensures a deep and robust analysis of program effectiveness (e55).

(b) The applicant shows strong evidence of the evaluation methodology providing periodic assessments of progress toward outcomes and performance feedback. The evaluation plans includes reports every 2 months of formative assessments and recommendations with oral and written reports presented at each monthly Advisory Meeting (e60). The data assessed will include feedback from teachers, artists, project administrators, and supervisors (e61).

Weaknesses:

This criteria was thoroughly discussed and I did not see any weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference - Priority Four - Technology**

- 1. Projects that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in the notice) or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.**

Strengths:

The applicant shows weak-to- moderate evidence of utilizing technology to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness. Both students and teachers will receive instruction in utilizing technology tools in the delivery of arts/STEM content (e36), although the application does not provide a great deal of detail regarding those technological tools.

Weaknesses:

More detail regarding the utilization of technology would facilitate the understanding of how this component would align with the goals and objectives of the program.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/31/2013 01:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/05/2013 12:38 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mt. Vernon City School District (U351D130020)

Reader #3: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Need for Project | | |
| 1. Need for Project | 15 | 13 |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 10 | 10 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 30 | 29 |
| Quality of Project Personnel | | |
| 1. Project Personnel | 10 | 9 |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 25 | 20 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 10 | 10 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 91 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference | | |
| Priority Four - Technology | | |
| 1. Technology | 5 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 5 | 0 |
| Total | 105 | 91 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - AEMDD FY 2013 Application Reivew - 7: 84.351D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Mt. Vernon City School District (U351D130020)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project by considering the following factors:

(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.

Strengths:

The project's applicant, the Mount Vernon City School District, in collaboration with the Arts Westchester, intends to implement Project TEAMS, which is an arts in education model and dissemination program to meet the needs of core curriculum teachers, teachers of art and music education, within four highly at need elementary schools. As indicated, the schools collectively exceed the by at least 75% of their students being below the poverty level. (p.1). In addition, students within these four schools did not meet or partially met the following performance state (NY) standards: ELA 26.48% & Math 21.52%. (p.2). Also, the applicant referenced that these schools reflect a large percentage of minority students which includes an ethnically diverse and financially disadvantaged population. (p.2).

The applicant indicated that a sizable percentage of students were retained within these four targeted schools (216 total students). The district is committed to provide its teachers with the resources to improve student performance on state competency exams and to meet state standards both for core academic subjects and for the arts. (p.5).

Weaknesses:

The applicant referenced that a series of district and school leadership team meetings were held where academic and social problems were identified; these sessions were held to maximize the effectiveness and minimize duplication in the project's services. However, the applicant did not provide specific information that related to these sessions: such as indicating the number of sessions that were held, listing the participants (i.e., administrators, teachers, parents, students, community members, etc.), and stating the location of the sessions. (p. 5).

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project by considering the following factor:

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.

Strengths:

As referenced, a STEM based curriculum imbued with the arts can provide motivation and interest in academic core subjects that will impact both academic performance and will contribute to improved social behavior. The applicant emphasized the opportunity for students to participate and engage in “hands-on” learning activities that often will inspire and motivate students; thus, student behavior will be modified. (p.7). The project is intended to implement a peer partnership component, which will target critical grade levels and subjects.

The project’s objectives does include outcomes and activities that can be shared or disseminated locally, state-wide, and nationally through the Arts Westchester (AW) websites, and through presentations at national and state art conferences. Also, the applicant will be able to share information through the New York State Association (NYSATA) and the National Art Educators Association (NAEA) organizations resource sites. (p.8).

Weaknesses:

The applicant showed no apparent weakness in this criterion area.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

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

(b) 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.

(c) 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:

As research has indicated, students who participate in arts learning experiences often improve their achievement in other realms of life. The applicant also indicated that a research-based positive correlation resulted with increased years of enrollment in arts courses with higher SAT scores in both verbal and math. (p.9).

Research indicated that making, playing, and designing are more effective strategies to engage students and promote learning in an arts/STEM curriculum. The benefits of an arts/STEM project-based learning approach also exceed horizontally across other curriculum areas. (p.11). A project-based curriculum allows for deep exploration and critical thinking. Students are afforded an opportunity to plan, organize, and conduct research, which enables them to develop needed skills. (p.11).

The integrated arts/STEM unit approach, according to the applicant, should promote a process of rigorous inquiry, research, and report. The best units of instruction seem to be those that are prepared by teachers and artist/STEM consultants working together. (p.14). The Project TEAMS will support and address the absolute priority, which is the enhancement, expansion, documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of an innovative, and cohesive model that will be based on research and will effectively demonstrate: (p.21).

- Integrated standards-based arts education into the core elementary curricula
- Strengthen standards-based arts instruction in grades 1-6
- Improve students’ academic performance, including their skills in creating, performance, including their skills in creating, performing, and responding to the arts

The project’s objectives include improved student academic performance, intensive professional development, and

development of an arts/Stems-centered integrated standards-based curriculum, parental involvement and the dissemination of project objectives, activities and outcomes. (p.22).

Also, the project will strengthen the capacity of core curriculum teachers and art and music specialists to deliver standards-based arts integrated into the core curriculum, and raise student achievement in both the arts and core curriculum areas. (pp. 22-23).

The project will seek the integration of standards-based arts instruction with other core academic content area. The MVCSD in partnership with Arts Westchester will collaborate to develop a high-quality and innovative arts/Stem-centered model for dissemination and replication in other school districts and similar sites. (p.24).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not specify the method or methods of how dissemination will occur beyond the grant period.

Reader's Score: 29

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 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.**

In addition, the Secretary considers the following factor:

The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

Strengths:

The project director serves as the district's Learning Standards Administrator for the Arts, with the responsibilities that help to reshape and restructure the arts curriculum; designs professional development for arts teachers; and provides classroom modeling of instructional strategies for teachers of all disciplines. The positions of Arts Westchester Co-Coordinator and Administrative Assistant have yet to be filled; however, both positions list minimal qualifications and years of experience that are necessary to be considered as an applicant.

In addition, a descriptive role of key personnel was provided by the applicant that addressed the responsibilities of each position within the project. (p.29).

Weaknesses:

The position of project director relevant to the minimal qualifications (i.e., education, years of experience, etc.) was not formally stated.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

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

Strengths:

A management chart was developed by the applicant that identified the extent of participation and responsibilities of key personnel relating to some of the following duties: (pp. 28-29).

- Fiscal
- Orientation of staff
- Policy establishment
- Evaluation process
- Material selection
- Professional development
- Compiling reports
- Monitoring the project
- Project management

In addition, the applicant provided an activities chart that showed a timeline (i.e., months, year, etc.) of elements of planning and implementation of significant components of the project, which included assessment information. (pp. 31-32).

The applicant specified the projected FTE of key personnel who relate to the project:

Project Director .4 FTE; Arts Westchester Co-Coordinator 1.0FTE; Administrative Assistant 1.0FTE; and the Evaluator who will provide 40 days of service for each year of the project. (pp. 32-33).

The project's advisory board will meet monthly to ensure feedback and continuous modification in the operation of the plan. It was noted that the advisory board consisted of various stakeholders (i.e., project personnel, university faculty, teachers, school district supervisors, parents, and community members) to ensure a diversity of perspectives. (p.33).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a clearly defined narrative to complement the management and timeline charts; therefore, this information was stated in a vague manner without clearly defined features.

The applicant did not make any reference to the type of data that would be monitored and reported. In addition, the advisory board membership did not include a list of officers or roles that indicated the delegation of duties and responsibilities of such a group (i.e., chairperson, secretary, etc.).

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project by considering the following factors:

(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 applicant's evaluator has an abundance of experience in programs funded by the United States Department of Education, which was reinforced by a number of identified schools, districts and higher education institutions. (p.34). The design of the evaluation method included information that related to the collection and analysis of meaningful data throughout the project; including both qualitative and quantitative data. (p.35).

A list of specific goals and objectives included benchmarks to ensure that measured outcomes would be used to assess the impact of the arts/Stem-centered curriculum framework. (p.35).

The twelve objectives and outcomes were clearly stated with a timeline and percentage gain referenced in this criterion area. (pp. 36-39).

In conclusion, the evaluation reports will include an executive summary, a focus of the evaluation, a plan and procedures of the evaluation process, evaluation results that would include a summary, and both conclusions and recommendations to be considered. (pp. 42-43).

The applicant identified myriad means of methods (i.e., pre and post inventory on knowledge and skills, workshop contributions, interviews conducted by the evaluator, self-evaluation of students, and a rating scale implemented by the mentors) to assess performance feedback and information that would identify the project's progress relevant to students. A formative process of evaluations on an ongoing basis will help to assist in decision-making matters that enable the project's effectiveness and needed changes. (pp. 47-48).

Weaknesses:

In regards to this criterion, the applicant showed no weakness in this area.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference - Priority Four - Technology**

- 1. Projects that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in the notice) or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.**

Strengths:

The applicant showed no specific strengths in the application and usage of technology or digital tools in their project's design.

Weaknesses:

The applicant showed no specific strengths in the application and usage of technology or digital tools in their project's design.

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/05/2013 12:38 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2013 04:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mt. Vernon City School District (U351D130020)

Reader #2: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Need for Project | | |
| 1. Need for Project | 15 | 14 |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 10 | 10 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Project Design | 30 | 29 |
| Quality of Project Personnel | | |
| 1. Project Personnel | 10 | 9 |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 25 | 23 |
| Quality of the Project Evaluation | | |
| 1. Project Evaluation | 10 | 10 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 95 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| Competitive Preference | | |
| Priority Four - Technology | | |
| 1. Technology | 5 | 3 |
| Sub Total | 5 | 3 |
| Total | 105 | 98 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - AEMDD FY 2013 Application Reivew - 7: 84.351D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Mt. Vernon City School District (U351D130020)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project by considering the following factors:

(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.

Strengths:

(a) The applicant proposes to work with four most in need elementary schools in the Mt. Vernon City School District in New York through Project TEAMS (Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics, Science). The targeted schools have a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. Also the percentage of students who scored at level one or two (indicates not meeting or partially meeting learning and performance standards) in English Language Arts and Mathematics on the state proficiency test was significant (page 1-2).

(b) The applicant indicates that in 1999 the school district recognized the positive impact of arts education and appointed a New York State Standards Administrator for the Arts. The district continues to focus on unifying and upgrading the arts curriculum (page 5). The applicant also identified, through core curriculum teacher observation, interviews and surveys (1) need the knowledge and expertise that utilize creative and innovative teaching strategies and approaches that integrate the arts (2) need to know ways to integrate classroom lessons with arts/STEM-based projects (3) need to have better understanding of innovative approaches in teaching arts/STEM-centered lessons (4) need to create innovative arts/STEM-centered teaching models and (5) need to promote productive communication and the collegial exchange of ideas among art teachers and teachers in the content areas (page 6).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not state how these needs will be addressed by the project.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project by considering the following factor:

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.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to implement a Peer Partnership component. Targeting critical grade levels and subjects, art teachers or artists/STEM consultants-in-residence will be able to work with core academic subject area teachers to

integrate arts/STEM-centered teaching techniques into the core academic curriculum. Also the applicant proposes to disseminate the project's objectives, outcomes and activities, nationally and statewide, through the Mount Vernon City School District's and the Arts Westchester websites, presentations at national and state art education conferences: New York State Art Teachers Association and the National Art Educators Association, and through emails to facilitate the successful replication of the arts/STEM-centered education (page 8).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project by considering the following factors:

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

(b) 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.

(c) 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:

(a) The applicant cites that certain arts/STEM project-based activities promote growth in positive social skills, including self-confidence, self-control, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy and social tolerance. Research evidence demonstrates these benefits apply to all students, not just the gifted and talented. The arts can play a key role in developing social competencies among educationally or economically disadvantaged youth, who are at greatest risk of not successfully completing their education (Vaughn, Kathryn 2002) (page 12). Integration of the arts as a critical component of the school curriculum affords students a complete and well-rounded education. An arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community (The Dana Foundation 2002) (page 13). The applicant proposes a convergence of Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics and Science – Project TEAMS.

(b) The applicant states that the Arts Westchester is a forty-five year old organization located in White Plains, New York. The organization has been a leader in arts/STEM integration programs with a one hundred member artist/STEM consultants' roster and an affiliate membership of more than one hundred and thirty organizations in various disciplines. Arts Westchester has a long and successful relationship with the targeted Mount Vernon School District, beginning in the mid 1990's (page 16). The four targeted schools' arts educators and the Arts Westchester's artist/STEM consultants in residence will collaborate with teachers of core academic subjects to facilitate the integration of the arts into the core subject areas, using an interdisciplinary approach across the curriculum. Project TEAMS will be aligned with state and national standards across the curriculum and is intended to improve teaching and student academic performance (page 23).

(c) The applicant states that Project TEAMS will build capacity of core curriculum teachers to deliver standards-based arts/STEM-centered education programs, to raise student academic achievement in the content areas and to ensure that all students meet challenges in state academic learning standards in science, mathematics, technology, engineering and English language arts, in particular reading. This will continue even when federal funds are no longer available (pages 24-25).

Weaknesses:

(c) The applicant does not fully discuss resources that will continue beyond the work of the grant.

Reader's Score: 29

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 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.**

In addition, the Secretary considers the following factor:

The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

Strengths:

The applicant ensures that available positions are advertised in regional minority publications such as El Diario, Amsterdam and La Prensa. The Assistant Superintendent for Resources participates in minority career affairs (page 25). The current key project personnel have some of the qualifications, including relevant trainings and experiences. Resumes are provided for key personnel.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not list for current or future key project personnel any qualifications, including relevant training and experience, in the areas of STEM.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project by considering the following factors:**

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

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

Strengths:

(a) The applicant indicates in charts which staff member(s) will be performing each task and provides a monthly timeline for accomplishing project tasks for years one through four (pages 28-32).

(b) The applicant states that the Project Director will commit 0.4 FTE to the proposed project at no cost to the project, Arts Westchester Co-Coordinator and Administrative Assistant will be full-time or 1.0 FTE commitment. The evaluator will provide forty days of evaluation services for each year of the project (pages 32-33).

(c) The applicant states that a twelve-member project advisory board will convene periodically on a monthly basis to react to progress reports on project implementation and progress, in order to plan, make recommendations and to make decisions that would help guide the successful implementation of all project components, including the evaluation of the program. The twelve-member advisory board includes project key personnel, University faculty, teachers, participating school district supervisors, project participants, parents and other members of the community to ensure a diversity of perspectives (page 33).

Weaknesses:

(b) As stated in the selection criteria, the applicant does not reference a Principal Investigator under key project personnel.

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project by considering the following factors:

(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 states that evaluation procedures will involve the collection and analysis of quantitative data and qualitative data. The types of data collection will depend upon the nature of the outcomes to be assessed. The applicant as indicated in the objectives that the evaluation methods will use objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes and will produce quantitative and qualitative data (page 42).

(b) The applicant states that formative evaluation activities will take place on an on-going basis. Oral and written reports will be provided to all concerned parties at regular monthly meetings of the project's twelve-member advisory board and at the yearly school district plenary session. The applicant further states that summative evaluations will be used at the end of each year, including the determinations as to whether or not strategies were effective and to what extent. Data on project classroom teachers' program satisfaction, school supervisor and project director evaluations of their improved proficiency/efficacy as arts/STEM-centered educators will also be collected, analyzed and reported (page 48).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference - Priority Four - Technology

1. Projects that are designed to improve student achievement (as defined in the notice) or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing

teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.

Strengths:

The applicant states that Project TEAMS (Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics, Science) by its very nature is designed not only to provide instruction in understanding and utilizing the latest technology for students, but it is designed to provide professional development for participating teachers through the use of high-quality digital tools and materials to use technology to improve instruction.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not fully discuss for CPP 4 specifically, how student achievement or teacher effectiveness is improved through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials. This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 3

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