

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/31/2013 10:14 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Neighborhood House Charter School (U351D130010)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	12
Significance		
1. Significance	10	8
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	24
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference		
Priority Four - Technology		
1. Technology	5	2
Sub Total	5	2
Total	105	93

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Neighborhood House Charter School (U351D130010)

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 will impact Neighborhood House Charter School's (NHCH) elementary and middle school students from their racially-diverse and primarily low-income Boston areas of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury; as well as for the students at two low-achieving Boston Public Schools. As indicated by the applicant, 26% in ELA and 38% in mathematics across grades 3 to 8 students are failing to demonstrate academic proficiency. (pp. 1-5).

An assessment conducted by the Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency (PEAR) documented a significant magnitude of need at NHCS; the majority of NHCS students were at medium-to-high-risk levels for social-emotional and behavioral concerns. The Rich Structured Learning Experience (RSLE) will provide lessons that enable students at all learning and social-emotional levels to succeed, while at the same time serve as a framework for integrating the arts. (p. 4).

Weaknesses:

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) has indicated that the applicant has demonstrated considerable academic success in the state's standardized assessment with 31 percentage point gain in students at the advanced or proficient levels in mathematics and a 24 percentage point gain in students at the advanced or proficient levels in ELA. This data reflects a decrease of at-risk students academically over these past several years. (p.3).

As a primary goal of the project, the number of teachers using the arts as a part of their RSLE teachings needs to increase. The applicant does not provide specific numbers that relate to those teachers who will be targeted to implement the arts into their lessons. (pp. 4-5)

Reader's Score: 12

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 proposed project is designed to create products that can be used effectively and replicated in schools across the country. A commitment was made by the superintendent of the Boston Public Schools to request the support of Neighborhood House to help turn around low-performing area schools. (p.6). The proposed Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) will partner and work with two of Boston Public School's lowest achieving schools in an effort to increase their student achievement through arts integration.

Weaknesses:

As indicated NHCS will develop products, including information, materials, processes and techniques, which can be disseminated more widely across Boston, the state, and nationwide. However, the method to how this sharing or dissemination would occur was not addressed. (p.7).

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

Reader's Score: 8

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:

The project seeks to strengthen and expand the integration of standards-based arts education into the core curriculum in the lower and middle school grades of Neighborhood House. The project is based on the Understanding by Design framework; therefore, the proposal is based on recent knowledge from research and effective practices. (pp. 17-18).

The intent of the project will improve the integration of common core within the arts education curriculum. Teachers will be able to increase the use of arts within the curriculum that uses research based techniques designed to improve students' creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills. (pp. 10-11).

As referenced, the project's arts specialists will receive additional targeted professional development around incorporating elements of the common core within their classroom. The project will enable the school to develop and create a network of external partners to provide richness to their arts program. (p.20). In addition, the project will help to form successful charter-district partnerships that will enable the implementation of new practices on an ongoing basis. (pp. 21-22).

Weaknesses:

The applicant didn't focus upon a time frame to implement and share this knowledge with external partners regarding future considerations.

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 identified key personnel who will contribute to the implementation of the project. These individuals possessed qualifications and experiences that should enable them to successfully implement the project. (pp. 21-25).

Weaknesses:

The applicant demonstrated no weakness in this personnel area.

Reader's Score: 10

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:

The NHCS is governed by a board of trustees who meet five times during the year; and the executive committee meets an additional four times per year. (p.26). The project's timeline provides the overall design and stages of the project with focus provided to the personnel (i.e., project director, pilot team, etc.) who will oversee these benchmarks and goals. (pp. 27-28).

The structure of the project's timeline appeared to provide sufficient time to complete each stage, as indicated. (pp. 27-28).

The project director and external evaluator will ensure the regular and timely collection of information to provide feedback and opportunities for continuous improvement on all key elements of the project. In addition, it was indicated that other stakeholders (i.e., administrators, teachers, students and parents) will be incorporated into the feedback process through the utilization of surveys, interviews, and reflective meetings. (p.29).

Weaknesses:

In regards to the reference to holding working sessions with partner schools, the applicant does not provide specific information, such as the amount of time and sessions, that will be provided in these sharing or working endeavors.

In reference to the partner school's pilot team that will be chosen, the applicant does not provide specific information that defines the composition of its members (i.e., teachers, administrators, parents, etc.).

Reader's Score: 24

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 project will incorporate a comprehensive evaluation plan that will provide timely and valuable information on the project's implementation, operation, and impact. The evaluation process will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve these goals. Student achievement in ELA and Math will be measured using the state's annual assessment. In addition, the student achievement of state arts education standards will be measured using the NHCS Arts Education Assessment. (pp. 31-32).

Student engagement will be measured using the School Engagement Measure (SEM). The instrument incorporates three subscales that include behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and emotional engagement. In addition, the evaluation plan provides for assessing the project's implementation and operations; therefore, this will contribute to the evaluation of professional development programs relevant to the project. (pp. 33-34).

Weaknesses:

The applicant process referenced that results will be communicated "regularly" to the project director and other personnel related to the program; however, the time frame of what constitutes regularly was not clearly defined.

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

Reader's Score: 9

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 referenced the utilization of technology in the school's curriculum, where students use their creativity to generate online animated avatars; as noted in their technology classes. (p.4).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not specifically identify the use of high-quality digital tools or materials beyond the previous strength listed in this competitive preference priority.

Reader's Score: **2**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/31/2013 10:14 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/07/2013 01:26 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Neighborhood House Charter School (U351D130010)

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	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	93
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference		
Priority Four - Technology		
1. Technology	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Total	105	97

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Neighborhood House Charter School (U351D130010)

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, which will serve a charter school serving at-risk children; the school is comprised of 69% free- or reduced-lunch eligibility, 12% special education students, and 11% whose first language is not English (e16). Further, a Harvard University-McLean Hospital PEAR assessment found that the majority of NHCS students were at medium-to-high risk levels for socio-emotional and behavioral concerns, which is underscored by the 2012 26% failure rate in ELA and 38% in Math across grades 3-8 (e18).

(b) The application provides moderate evidence that the school recognizes the gaps in its current Rich Structured Learning Experiences (RSLE) approach to learning. The applicant states that, beyond a small core group of teachers, many of its teachers need more professional development and peer guidance to feel confident utilizing arts in their classrooms. The applicant also recognizes the need to develop measures of the art program's impact that balances hands-on learning with standards requirements (e19-20).

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened by additional detail regarding the specific issues teachers face, as well as a sense of the number of teachers affected and the degree to which their work will be improved.

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. Such dissemination of work is required of all Massachusetts charter schools. Further, NHCS has already shared its successful approaches to help turn-around a low-performing school (p e21). Specifically, the school plans to partner with 2 low-performing Boston schools to boost achievement through the integration of arts, and will develop other informational materials for dissemination locally and nationwide. The applicant

provides a detailed list of professional development materials, which will be tested and then shared widely at the conclusion of the project, including through a website (p e22-23).

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 proposed project is based on the Understanding by Design Framework, which is supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness. (e33) The interactive UbD method is supported by empirical research especially in the areas of math and reading. The applicant cites additional research that suggests that artistic expression also promotes academic achievement (e33).

(b) The application shows strong evidence that the project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning. The proposed project will be aligned with the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework and with Common Core Standards (e25, e30). The applicant includes a thoughtful discussion of the manner in which hands-on and standards-based education are integrated (e26), which ensures that the innovative approach will meet established educational goals.

(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 use of the existing KidLab, a hands-on classroom integrating science and arts education, will allow for ongoing work after the grant funding (e27).

Weaknesses:

Integrating the new materials in to this interactive environment will ensure some degree of sustainability, but it is unclear what, if any, funding will be available to support the project.

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 advertises its job listing on NCMNET (National Employment Minority Network) (e38). Twenty three percent of the school staff is Asian, African-American, or Latino. The school is led by an African-American headmaster with 30 years experience.

Key personnel have extensive experience and relevant graduate degrees in education. The proposed project director has been recognized previously for her efforts, and two other personnel played key roles in the successful turnaround of another Boston school (e37-8). This is a very strong team.

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 10

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. It has established its ability to do so by managing previous federal grants, including Race to the Top funds. (e41) The role and responsibilities of the Project Director and her team generally are provided and seem appropriate. (e41). The detailed timeline provides a reasonable framework for accomplishing the project's objectives (e42-43).

(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. The time commitments of the Project Director (60%) and her key personnel (at 25% and 10% FTE) seem reasonable given the demands of the project.

(c) The applicant provides strong evidence of developing procedures to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. The plan details numerous formative and summative assessment mechanisms for ongoing feedback that ensure (1) feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders and (2) ongoing refinement of the model. The mix of surveys, feedback forms, interviews, and meetings regarding all aspects of the project -- training, content, materials and logistics -- ensures continuous improvement. At least 2X year, the feedback of key players will be sought (e44-45).

Weaknesses:

More detail regarding the other key project personnel's responsibilities and tasks would help highlight the manner in which the project will be managed.

Being able to tie individual tasks to FTE would clarify the adequacy of proposed time commitments to the project.

Reader's Score: 22

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 applicant proposes three major objectives (e23) tied to the state's ELA or Math Assessments; arts proficiency through a measure to be developed by the project based on other assessments; and a 5% increase on the School Engagement Measure -- MacArthur Network. (e47)

The evaluation plan provides a well-detailed account of the control and treatment strategy (e46) and how the annual changes of each group will measure the affect of the project (e49). The Pre- and Post-Design (e49-51) will help identify key results of the project.

The broad variety of tools and the annual and ongoing assessments, ensure a broad and deep review of the efficacy of this initiative.

(b) The applicant shows strong evidence of the evaluation methodology providing periodic assessments of progress toward outcomes and performance feedback. Rather than performance measures for each year, the plan envisions identifying trends between the control and treatment group year after year to measure project effectiveness. The explanation of various evaluation levels on pages e49-e51 shows how specific stakeholder feedback will be utilized throughout the project for continuous improvement; evaluator information will be shared with the Project Director and other key decisionmakers in order to fine-tune the process. (e51-52).

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 moderate evidence of utilizing technology to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness. The proposed program offer students technology classes, in which they can utilize programs such as Voki (e19) to create their projects. The Tech Specialist/Trainer, a key member of the Creative Arts Department, will advise the Pilot Team in developing best practices (e25). The existing KidLab, which some have described as the school's "own little children's science museum," will provide a forum for interdisciplinary work integrating science and the arts (e27-28).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear whether technology will be utilized to train teachers or to prepare them in its use in the classroom.

Reader's Score: **4**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/07/2013 01:26 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2013 04:19 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Neighborhood House Charter School (U351D130010)

Reader #2: *****

	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	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	23
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	97
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference		
Priority Four - Technology		
1. Technology	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	102

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Neighborhood House Charter School (U351D130010)

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 address the needs of elementary and middle school students from three neighborhoods in Boston, Massachusetts as well as for the students at two low-achieving Boston Public Schools. The Neighborhood House Charter School has a low-income student population, where sixty-nine percent are eligible for free and reduced price lunches. The Charter School still has too many students who are failing to demonstrate academic proficiency – twenty-six percent in ELA and thirty-eight percent in mathematics across grades three to eight in 2012 (pages 1 & 3).

(b) The applicant states that not all Neighborhood House Charter School teachers are comfortable and confident with using arts in their classrooms. Many are in need of professional development and guidance from their peers on how to best integrate the arts into their standards-based lessons so students effectively and successfully learn core subjects (page 5).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 15

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 the use of Rich Structured Learning Experiences (RSLE) framework which integrates the richness of the arts with the structure of standards-based curriculums. The Neighborhood House Charter School will develop a series of professional development and training presentation materials, overview materials, rubrics and sharing protocols, along with practical curriculum ideas and tools that teachers can put to use in their classroom to begin integrating arts immediately. Neighborhood House Charter School will publish materials to make these processes and practices widely available, including through a Weebly website that will share arts integration ideas. In Massachusetts, the charter

legislation specifically requires that charter schools disseminate effective programs and practices to the broader public education community (pages 6-8).

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 cited the principles of Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe 2005), a standards-driven framework for improving student achievement through curriculum development, instructional design, assessment and professional development. Research by Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001) analyzed multiple studies to show that certain instructional strategies positively affect student achievement, strategies such as asking students to explain their thinking using nonlinguistic representations such as artistic expressions or kinesthetic activities like acting (pages 17-18).

(b) The applicant stated that their teaching philosophy is grounded in Rich, Structured Learning Experiences (RSLE) which are lessons that are engaging, deep, meaningful and multi-modal (this is the richness) and that are well-organized, focused, standards-driven and informed by data and assessments (this is the structure). RSLE lessons are based in the school's educational philosophy – which children learn best, that they are most effectively prepared to achieve proficiency in rigorous academic standards, when they are experiencing, creating, enjoying and thinking in the environment that is carefully structured to achieve goals of the unit or lesson effectively (pages 10-11).

(c) The applicant that the Neighborhood House Charter School KidLab, a unique hands-on classroom that integrates science and the arts, has been a part of the school's curriculum for seventeen years. The interdisciplinary curriculum uses art and experimentation as tools to facilitate scientific learning. KidLab's curriculum is aligned with Massachusetts State Frameworks for science, technology, engineering and the arts (pages 12-13).

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 all job postings are listed on the National Employment Minority Network, a national resource organization committed to assisting schools and organizations in the identification and recruitment of minority teachers, administrators and coaches (page 23). The current key project personnel have the qualifications, including relevant trainings and experiences. Resumes are provided for key personnel.

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 10

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 which staff member(s) will be performing each task and provides a monthly timeline for accomplishing project tasks for years one through four (pages 25-29).

(b) The applicant states that the Project Director/Creative Arts Department Head will commit sixty percent of time to the proposed project, Arts Specialist/Trainers will commit twenty-five percent and the Neighborhood House Charter School leadership staff members will commit ten percent of time (page 26). The Board of Trustees for Neighborhood House Charter School is responsible for key strategic, organizational and financial decisions (page 25).

(c) The applicant states that the perspective of project stakeholders, including Neighborhood House Charter School administrators and faculty along with students and parents, are incorporated into the feedback process using a combination of feedback forms, surveys, interviews and reflective meetings. The Project Director will conduct mid-year and year-end reflective meetings. The meetings will be used to assess the effectiveness of the team and the effectiveness of all key elements of the project's operation. These meetings will also be used to integrate the results from other feedback sources, including the feedback forms and surveys, with the observations of the involved staff to identify areas requiring changes in the implementation plan or adjustments in the project's operation to ensure effective project implementation (pages 29-30).

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 the overarching goals of the annual evaluation will be to (1) document the design of the project and the structures and processes used for its implementation, (2) monitor progress in achieving its operational benchmarks and (3) measure project outcomes for participating faculty, students and schools. The evaluation will employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve goals (pages 30-31).

(b) The applicant states that student achievement in ELA and math will be measured using student results from the annual state assessment. Student achievement of state arts education standards will be measured using the Neighborhood House Charter School Arts Education Assessment. Student engagement with schooling will be measured using the School Engagement Measure-MacArthur Network (page 32).

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 proposes technology to be integrated into the Rich Structured Learning Experiences (RSLE) framework (integrates the richness of the arts with the structure of standards-based curriculums) using Voki, a web-based program. The Tech Specialist/Trainer is a key member of the Creative Arts Department and will be a member of the Pilot Team (four general education teachers), working to develop best practices and professional development around arts integration. The applicant also proposes using technology tools such as video to aid in dissemination of the Rich Structured Learning Experience (RSLE) framework and model (pages 9-10).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2013 04:19 PM