

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/16/2014 08:41 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mind Meets Music, Inc (U351D140061)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	12
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	19
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	90
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Technology		
1. CPP: Technology	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	95

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - Development & Dissemination Grant Program - 8: 84.351D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Mind Meets Music, Inc (U351D140061)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 1 - Need for Project in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 12

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Students served by this project, Innovative Arts, are of Latino and African American ethnicities or come from low-income backgrounds. More than 70 % of the students to be served are living in poverty. One of the schools chosen was a Tier I SIG school in 2010. Proficiency levels in each of the schools to be served are in need of improvement. The third graders in several of the schools who scored proficient in math on the state assessment tests were less than 50%. One of the schools had only 5% scoring proficient in math in 2013. Reading proficiency levels, though somewhat higher are still low and in need of improvement. These needs will be addressed in the proposed project through the use of integrated arts. (Pages 3-4)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a clear definition of the services that will be provided to students living in poverty. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if those students' needs will be specifically addressed by the proposed project.

Reader's Score:

2. (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 major gap that exists in the schools to be served by this project is due to the low proficiency schools in reading and math. This gap will be addressed by interventions in the beginning years prior to grade three. (Page 5)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates research that supports that most teachers are uncomfortable and have little or no training in arts integration. The applicant does not identify that the issue of lack of training is a gap in the schools to be served by this project. (Pages 5-6)

Reader's Score:

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 products that are a result from the proposed project have the potential for being used effectively in a variety of other settings. For example, an in-depth companion teacher curriculum,/technology manual will be developed and available. The project will include an online community for classroom teachers including archived webinars and demonstration videos. The project proposes a 21st Century Technology Lab that will be in each partner school. Guidelines to the development and use of the labs will be made available to other programs interested in this type of technology. (Pages 7-9)

The end results of the project evaluation will be made available through the evaluation team efforts. This will include reporting to major educational institutions and be available to Open Educational Resources and ArtsEdsearch. (Pages 11-12)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 3 - Quality of Project Design in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The proposed project reflects some up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices. The non-profit organization that is applying for the grant has established that elements of this program have been successfully addressed in other similar settings. (Page 12)

Research is cited that concludes the positive effect that music has on brain plasticity and improvement of academic achievement. (Page 14)

Research also supports the arts integration element of this project. The research supports the linkages between arts integration, Common Core Standards, and 21st Century skills, and Depth of Knowledge. All of these elements are part of the proposed project, Innovative Arts. (Pages 15-16)

Weaknesses:

One of the goals of the project is to increase parental and community involvement. The applicant does not provide research based or best practices that support the project's activities in this area.

Reader's Score:

2. (b) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory.

Strengths:

The logic model includes clearly color-coded connections among the resources, activities, output and objectives or outcomes. (Page 20)

The short term outcomes include specific measureable elements for example, "We project that 65% of classroom teachers will integrate arts into academic disciplines incorporating Common Core Standards, National Core Arts Standards and 21st century skills with ongoing support of Master Teaching Artists. These measurable elements support strong theory. (Page 24)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

3. (c) 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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The projects clear connections and linkages to the Common Core Standards, National Core Arts Standards and 21st Century Skills Framework provide support for rigorous academic standards for students. (page 26)

The project includes specific goals, objectives and outcomes that directly relate to the improvement of teaching and learning. For example, one of the objectives is to improve students' academic achievement in literacy and mathematics as measured by multiplicity of data. (Page 28)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

4. (d) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.

Strengths:

The proposed program will build capacity to support teachers to use the instruction after the conclusion of the grant cycle. (Page 28)

The sustainability committee will be charged with the responsibility to ensure that partnerships continue and new staff members are trained. (Page 29)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

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:

In addition to being an equal opportunity employer the Mind Meets Music non-profit group has a specific plan to encourage under-represented groups to apply for the positions that will be created through this project. Those include media and personal contacts. (Page 30)

The qualifications of the key project personnel indicate that they have appropriate and relevant training and experience in the arts and in education. (Pages 31)

Weaknesses:

The qualifications of the key project personnel are somewhat lacking in school leadership and administrative training and experience.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 5 - Management Plan in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

1. (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.

Strengths:

Each of the key project personnel has well-defined responsibilities. This includes the employees of the Mind Meets Music staff and the school educator team and the outside evaluator. These clear responsibilities will provide for the necessary work to accomplish the project tasks. (Pages 33-35)

The management plan includes clearly defined milestones and timelines that will ensure the accomplishment of the project tasks. During year one in the first couple of months the applicant includes several planning processes that will lay the ground work for a success project during the subsequent months and years of the project. (Pages 36-38)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

2. (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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The time commitments of the Project Director and the support staff for that position are appropriate for the project. The Project Director, the Education Director are both assigned at .73 FTE. The Master Teaching Artists will be assigned full time. The Marketing and Communications Director will be assigned at .5 FTE. These assignments are adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. (Pages 38-39)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The management plan includes well developed procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. Those procedures include both internal and external evaluations. Those procedures include collection up to four times a year. The procedures ensure input from the stakeholders including students, teachers, and principals. (Page 40)

Weaknesses:

The management plan does not include specific procedures that will be utilized in addressing parental input on such activities as the User Manual for parents. Without the inclusion of parental input, it is not clear what role parents will play in planning and implementing the project (Page 10)

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 6 - Project Evaluation in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.**

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

- 1. (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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The Project Evaluation will consist of both formative and summative components and will employ multi-method approaches to collecting data. Examples of Formative Data include the student achievement and attendance data and classroom observations. Additional formative data will be collected on the extent to which professional development activities are of sufficient duration and quality. (Pages 41-42)

Summative evaluation will include the quasi-experimental matched comparison data for the project and will reflect the results in academic and arts proficiency. (Pages 43-47) Summative data will also address implementation fidelity of the classroom centered projects. (Page 49)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

2. (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 Evaluation Plan includes the sharing of formative evaluation findings in a "timely manner" to Innovative Arts Project staff to address further program improvement if necessary. (Page 43)

Evaluation findings will be reported to project staff and key stakeholders. Communication will continue between the evaluator and the project staff throughout the project to ensure that progress is continuing toward achieving intended outcomes. (Page 50)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant indicated that a newsletter would be sent out, the evaluation plan does not include specific procedures that identify the types of information that will be used for informing all parents and staff members in the district regarding the progress of the project.

Reader's Score:

3. (c) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of promise (as defined in the notice.)

Strengths:

Through the use of a quasi-experimental design matched comparison study this project will produce evidence of promise. The analysis of the data by the outside evaluator and the project director will provide an extensive review of the data that is collected. (Page 43)

Weaknesses:

This sub-criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - 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:

One of the long term objectives is devoted to technology. This objective states: "Increased academic achievement by 15% in ELA, math, and 21st Century Skills for students served enhanced through the use of technology." (Page 20) To address this objective, teaching tools will be utilized by the master teaching artist to be implemented by the classroom teacher. (Page 22) Each participating school will have a technology lab set up for the use in arts integration. (Page 28) The Communication Director will be advising on technology uses. (Page 34)

Weaknesses:

This priority was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/16/2014 08:41 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/16/2014 11:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mind Meets Music, Inc (U351D140061)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	9
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	17
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Technology		
1. CPP: Technology	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	87

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - Development & Dissemination Grant Program - 8: 84.351D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Mind Meets Music, Inc (U351D140061)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 1 - Need for Project in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The schools identified for participation in the project are clearly described as having students at risk of failure, with most schools showing math and reading proficiency rates below 60% and all schools serving a large percentage of free and reduced lunch students (p. 3&4).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not make a strong case that the project will address these needs. The applicant state that there are studies that show that art & arts integration make changes in at risk student's lives (p. 4) but do not describe what specific arts & arts integration programs are effective and how the current project intends to use strategies based on these effective programs to address the needs in the target schools. The current project focuses on music integration, so the applicant should make a case for music integration increasing math and reading achievement.

Reader's Score:

2. (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 applicant identifies weaknesses that need to be addressed. These include lack of resources (p. 5), student not scoring well in reading and math (p. 5), and teachers not having training in arts integration (p. 5).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide data sources to justify the identified weaknesses such as budget or staffing numbers to support the need for more resources, and teacher surveys to support the need for teacher training in arts. The description of how the program addresses the identified weaknesses is not specific enough to understand how the project will result in change. The applicant indicates that the program will address the needs by providing resources, and identifies K-2 teachers and students as resources that the program will provide (p. 6).

Reader's Score:

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 provides a detailed description of the materials and processes that will result from the program including a curriculum/technology manual, webinars, and video demonstrations of integrated classroom instruction (p. 8). The applicant describes plans to nationally disseminate some materials online to encourage use of the program in other settings (p. 8).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 3 - Quality of Project Design in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

The program reflects up-to-date knowledge by incorporating the existing standards Common Core and National Core Arts Standards (p. 13). The figure presented on page 17 is helpful to see how music is aligned into the Common Core State Standards and therefore to show how the current program has the potential to address effective practices.

Weaknesses:

The applicant makes research claims without citing any sources, for example, on p. 12 the authors state that past empirical data, teacher surveys, etc. support that innovate arts lessens the achievement gap, but they do not provide resources for these data. The applicant also cites some research but it is generally not specific, the applicant include statements like music has been shown to improve academic achievement (p. 14), but they should describe what specific types of music strategies or programs are effective and what exactly is being done with music in this project that is aligned to these types of effective programs. The applicant also suggests that the project design is built on up-to-date research because the evaluation is being conducted by WestEd (p. 14); the evaluator of a program has nothing to do with the research base that supports the program.

Reader's Score:

2. (b) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory.

Strengths:

The applicant provide a logic model (p. 20) to demonstrate the theory of change, and a detailed description of the components they identify in the logic model to further demonstrate their theory (p. 21-26).

Weaknesses:

The logic model and description of the logic model components does not identify the "key ingredients" of the project making it difficult to understand how the project would lead to increases in student engagement, and achievement. For example, the logic model seems to be missing aforementioned project activities , like the development of the curriculum/ lesson plans that will be implemented (p. 13), development and delivery of the six hour professional development (p. 9), and the development of the technology lab at each school (p. 9).

Reader's Score:

3. (c) 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.

Strengths:

The project includes professional development related to national standards (p. 9) which shows how it is aligned to comprehensive efforts to improve teaching. The project also creates a leadership team (p. 10) in order to increase school ownership of the project which should lead to incorporation of the project into larger school efforts to improve teaching. The project provides each school with a technology lab (p. 9) and provides hands on training (p. 9) on how to use the lab which should result in improvement of teaching in all teachers in the school (not just the program teachers) by increase their technology integration.

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates the project is aligned to the Common Core and National Core Arts standards but does not clearly describe how the program will help to improve teaching and learning in relation to these standards. The six hour professional development should be described in detail – what will teachers learn about in relation to how to integrate Common Core, National Core Arts, and 21st Century Skills. The applicant suggests that the project component "accurate assessments" is related to comprehensive efforts to improve teaching (p. 28), but they provide little detail on what this component involves and do not describe how it fits in with the overall project like describing

Sub Question

if the assessments are for the lesson plans that are being developed and describing why principals are developing the assessments and not teachers.

Reader's Score:

4. (d) **The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.**

Strengths:

The applicant describes plans for sustainability including plans to ensure that professional development for teachers is provided, and plans for rising funding to support the program resources and activities after the grant (p. 29). The applicant also includes the development of a sustainability team whose purpose is to identify ways to sustain the program after the grant ends and provides specific tasks that the sustainability committee will address. (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

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 staff has the relevant experience and education to implement the project. The project director has experience in managing projects and also holds a PhD in music education (p. 31). The project education director has experience in arts education (p. 31). The master teachers have teaching experience and degrees in music education (p. 31-32) The evaluator has expertise in program evaluation (p. 32).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 5 - Management Plan in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. (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.**

Strengths:

The applicant's description of staff roles, activities and milestones suggests that there is plan that would result in accomplishing all project tasks. The plan clearly defines the responsibilities of each of the key staff and of the school staff and evaluation team (p. 34-35). The applicant describes the overall role of project staff on p. 34-35 and also identifies responsibilities by task in the timeline on p. 36-38. The plan also includes a clear description of activities and milestones in each year (p. 36-38).

Weaknesses:

The timeline does not clearly indicate when the curriculum will be implemented.

Reader's Score:

2. (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.**

Strengths:

The time commitments seem to be adequate for completing this project. There are three staff serving in a directing capacity each with 73% or more of their time devoted to the project (p. 38) which should allow for enough time to oversee and manage the project. The plan also includes four full time master teaching artists to support project implementation (p. 39).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes plans for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. The applicant includes a review of data multiple times a year (p. 40) that is intended to measure progress made towards objectives. The applicant describes data that will be reviewed including surveys, focus groups, lesson plans, etc. (p. 40) that is aligned to the data review timelines and relevant to the project objectives.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The proposal states that the project director will lead the data analysis and disseminate results and initiate appropriate action (p. 41); it seems that the entire project team should be involved in this data review in order to identify areas for improvement and potential action steps. The whole team would bring additional insight and context that could support the improvement of the project.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 6 - Project Evaluation in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.**

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

- 1. (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.**

Strengths:

The evaluation plan includes the collection of several types of data including classroom observations, surveys of teachers and parents, interviews and focus groups, and student achievement data (p. 43). The applicant includes the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to answer both formative (p. 42-43) and summative (p. 43-44) evaluation questions

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan provides limited details on how the formative data will be analyzed, such as describing if the observations will be reviewed against set criteria for implementation and if they will look at changes in observation scores over time.

Reader's Score:

- 2. (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 evaluation includes data collection that will be useful for providing performance feedback. The evaluation plan includes the collection of implementation data (p. 49); this will be useful in determining adjustments to the program. The evaluator will share the performance feedback to guide assessment of progress through periodic reports and ongoing communication and meetings with the project staff (p. 50).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

3. (c) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of promise (as defined in the notice.)

Strengths:

The evaluation will use a quasi-experimental design (p. 43) which has the potential to produce evidence of promise. The applicant describes a plan for identifying comparable schools to serve as the control group (p. 44). The analysis will take into account nesting of students in classrooms and classrooms in schools (p. 48). The analysis will also include exploratory analysis to examine differences in effectiveness across subgroups (p. 48).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - 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 project includes plans to prepare teachers to use technology. The project includes the development of a technology lab at each school (p. 28). The technology lab will include iPads, laptops, and video equipment (p. 28). The project all includes the provision of hands on training to help teachers learn how to use the technology available in the lab and encourage the integration of technology into their instruction lab (p. 28)

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/16/2014 11:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/20/2014 04:19 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mind Meets Music, Inc (U351D140061)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	12
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
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1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	92
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Technology		
1. CPP: Technology	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - Development & Dissemination Grant Program - 8: 84.351D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Mind Meets Music, Inc (U351D140061)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 1 - Need for Project in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 12

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant meets some elements of the criteria by demonstrating a need for the proposed program in the target area to serve students at risk of academic failure. For example, applicant shows a need for the proposed program in the target area by presenting issues of 70% of the students to be served are living in poverty. The applicant has chosen title one schools based on low educational performance and lack of resources. The applicant provides data on race. The applicant presents data from the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (2013) that reveals third graders scored 64% proficiency in reading and 31% proficiency in math on the state assessment tests. The applicant reveals state assessments proficiency letters at the two target schools. The applicant conveys that at one of the target school, 88% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch (p.3).

Weaknesses:

For some of the demographics, the applicant does not provide the source of the data that would provide evidence that the target students are impacted by at risk factors (p.5). For example, no data source is provided to validate the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (p.3).

Reader's Score:

2. (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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant clearly meets elements of the criteria by presenting particular gaps in services, infrastructure, and opportunities. For example, the proposed project identifies issues of chronic absenteeism at all of the target schools. Additionally, the applicant indicates that teachers have not been trained in how to implement arts integration (pp.4-5).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

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 clearly meets elements of the criteria that products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) from the proposed project will likely be produced and used effectively in a variety of other settings. For example, the proposed project is designed to integrate standards-based arts into core elementary school curriculum, strengthen standards-based arts instruction and improve student. The program will serve more than 2,300 students and 89 teachers over the duration of the grant (p.e15 & p.12). The proposed project will focus on Common Core State Standards, English language arts, math, 21st century skills, technology, National Core Arts Standards and meeting the increasing need for integration of the arts to improve student achievement. The program has been developed, tested, and successfully implemented in multiple settings (urban schools, public schools, and after school programs). The program is presently implemented as a part of the daily school curriculum (p.7).

The applicant will provide dissemination online. Following revisions after each year, an in-depth companion teacher curriculum /technology manual will be nationally disseminated online for other educators. The participants will share findings through an online community for learners including webinars, archived webinars, demonstration videos, and examples of integrating arts curriculum into classroom instruction, among other instructional materials. Online access will be available to educators in partner schools during the implementation phase and accessible nationally after the evaluation of project is complete. Educators will share effective best practices. Superior lesson plans will be shared and later made available in the World Web with benefits for educators (pp.8-9). The audiences for dissemination will include teachers, principals and administrators at public, charter and private elementary schools, educational policy makers, arts and literacy educators and regional/national education or arts conferences attendees (p. 11). The evaluation report will distributed to all major educational institution, foundations, and partners. The report will be available to Open Educational Resources and ArtsEdsearch. The website will offer videos, webinars, and teacher forum. Research videos, the evaluation, and manuals will be accessible inline (p.11).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 3 - Quality of Project Design in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant meets an element of the criteria by reflecting in the design of the proposed project up-to date knowledge from research and meaningful practices to support the proposed project. For example, the proposed project is based on research and effective practices. The proposed project is a research-based program that blends arts, arts integration, and academic achievement. The model uses a pedagogical framework that incorporates the CCSS, National Core Arts Standards, and 21st century skills along with teacher coaching, and expert artists (p.12). The applicant provides some up-to-date knowledge research and meaningful practices to support the proposed project (p.14-19 & pp. e82-86).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides some outdated research ranging from 7-14 years that does not support the proposed project (pp. e82-86).

Reader's Score:

2. (b) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly meets elements of the criteria by describing how the anticipated project is supported by strong theory. The applicant articulates how the proposed project is supported by strong theory by providing a logic model. The applicant provides a conceptual framework within the logic model that identifies major components of the project and describes the relationships among the components and outcomes. The logic model lists elements of resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes (short and long- term) (p.20-36).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

3. **(c) 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant clearly meets the elements of the criteria by providing a comprehensive effort to enhance teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. For example, the applicant describes the integration of the Common Core State Standards, National Core Arts Standards, and 21st century skills with latest technology and the arts to produce a rigorous curriculum focused on meeting students' needs and preventing educational failure for at risk students (p.e15). The applicant will attempt to improve teaching and learning and enhance rigorous academic standards for students through the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and enhancing teacher effectiveness and student learning through an innovated approach (p. e16).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

4. **(d) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant beyond the end of the grant.**

Strengths:

The applicant meets the elements of the criteria by providing a defined plan for sustainability that outlines how the anticipated project will contribute to self-sufficiency and help guarantee that the impact of the project will survive after Federal assistance has expired. For example, the applicant will create a Sustainability Committee consisting of the principal, the Lead Teacher, the Project Leader, community representatives, and the music director. The committee will be created in year three of the grant. The purpose of the committee is to plan for funding replacement and allocation of school resources to permit the project to continue beyond the grant period (p.23). The committee will look for other grants, Title 1 monies, community resources, state government, agencies, fundraisers, and other sources of support (p.11). The applicant provides letters of support from several organizations to support existence beyond the grant period (pp.e.90-93).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

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 clearly meets the elements of the criteria by providing quality personnel to include persons from traditionally underrepresented groups of persons who can carry out the anticipated project. For example, he proposed project encourages applications from minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. The proposed project is an equal opportunity employer. 30% of the proposed staff is Hispanic/Latino/a and 80% female. Employment vacancies are advertised in numerous newspapers and on organizations websites such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Disability Advocates (p.30). The applicant provides a GEPA 427 form that ensures that all information disseminated by the project will be made available in a variety of formats for participants with carrying disabilities and learning needs. All web-based information will be fully accessible. Current and future faculty will learn how to diversify materials and teaching tactics to ensure accessibility for all learners. The program is available to K-2 graders regardless of gender, race, etc. Written communication will appear in English and Spanish (p.e12).

The applicant addresses employment requirements that include relevant training and experience. For example, the applicant provides job descriptions, desired qualifications for positions, and actual qualifications (pp.31-32). The applicant provides individual resumes for the project director and key personnel (pp.e69--80). the applicant provides time commitments for the project director and other key personnel pp.34-35)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found:"This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 5 - Management Plan in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

- 1. (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.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a narrative budget that describes costs over the duration of the grant. The applicant provides an itemized budget breakdown of personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, contractual, and other direct and indirect costs for each year. The budget reflects the personnel needed to effectively plan and manage the grant. The costs seem reasonable in relation to meeting the objectives and carrying out the anticipated program activities.

Sub Question

There are no unnecessary or unrelated costs that appear in the budget (pp.e124-125).

The applicant will work with partner elementary schools, principals, classroom teachers, and arts specialists. The applicant provides a timeline that consists of key project tasks, the roles and responsibilities of partners for completion of those tasks, the proposed timeline for the project development and dissemination, and milestones for monitoring the progress of project implementation (pp.36-38).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

2. **(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.**

Strengths:

The applicant meets the element of the criteria by describing the time commitments of the project director and other key project staff necessary to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

For example, the applicant provides Figure 2 that describes the time commitments of the project director and other key project staff. Figure 2 breaks down the number of hours and weeks dedicated to the proposed project. The commitments appear reasonable to achieve the objectives of the anticipated project (pp.38-39).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant adequately meets the elements of the criteria for ensuring feedback and ongoing enhancement in the operation of the anticipated project. For example, the applicant adequately meets the elements of the criteria for ensuring feedback and ongoing enhancement in the operation of the anticipated project. The project team will use two means to guarantee feedback and continuous improvement in the movement of the proposed project. External and internal data will be used to monitor feedback. External data will consist of teacher and student surveys, focus group, individual interviews with teachers, principals, and administration; lesson plans; teacher assessment; parent feedback; and teacher observations. External data will be gathered two times a year. Internal data will consist of staff observations, assessments, and School Leadership Team input. The internal data will be collected four times a year. The applicant will use evaluation information collected from external and internal data to make revisions and review program' effectiveness of objectives and overall progress. Data collection and analysis will guarantee that the project is on track to meet deadlines, within budget, and meet program objectives. The project director will oversee the data collection and analysis, and the dissemination of the results and initiate corrective actions as a result of analysis (p.41).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Please provide a brief summary and your scores for Question 6 - Project Evaluation in the space below. If you opt to not include a summary, please indicate N/A in the comment boxes. Your detailed analysis and comments for each of the sub-criteria should be provided in each of the subsequent, specific sub-questions. Scores are not captured at the sub-question level and can only be provided here.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. (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.

Strengths:

The applicant meets the elements for the criteria by using methods of evaluation to include the use of objective performance measures that are vividly associated to the proposed outcomes of the project and will yield quantitative and qualitative data. For example, an educational research, development and service organization will act as the external evaluator. The evaluator will conduct formative and summative evaluation. The evaluation will be a multi-method approach, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. The formative evaluation will consist of the collection, analyzing and reporting of a variety of data (student achievement and behavior data, classroom observation, etc (pp.41-43). The summative evaluation will use a rigorous quasi-experimental matched comparison study (QED) to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed project on student mathematics and reading success in grades K-2. The summative evaluation will be lead by research questions. Cluster analysis will be employed to choose schools in the comparison state. The summative evaluation will be performed across years 2 and 4 of the grant to focus on program development and piloting happening during year 1. The applicant provides Table A to show cross-sectional and longitudinal program impacts. The group assignment and intervention schedule of elementary schools for summative evaluation is from year 1-4 (pp.45-47). The applicant will conduct an analysis of student achievement and attendance data based on multi-level Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) modeling techniques (pp.47-48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:

2. (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 meets an element for the criteria by providing methods of evaluation that will provide performance feedback and permit ongoing assessment of progress to meeting proposed outcomes. For example, the evaluation will offer timely information for measuring progress, making revisions, strategic planning and maintaining an emphasis on achieving goals and objectives (p.50). The evaluator will make annual and systematic reports on the

Sub Question

progress of the proposed project through emails, staff meetings, and conference calls. Annual reports will inform program staff, and funding agencies on the progress of the proposed project. The evaluation will document the effectiveness of the proposed project toward dissemination of effective strategies and best practices, and arts-integrated lessons across the K-2 curriculum (p.50). Annual reports will inform program staff, funding agencies on the progress of the proposed project. The evaluation will document the effectiveness of the proposed project toward dissemination of effective strategies and best practices, and arts-integrated lessons across the K-2 curriculum (p. 50).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not inform the school districts and parents about the progress of the proposed project.

Reader's Score:**3. (c) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence of promise (as defined in the notice.)****Strengths:**

The applicant meets the elements of the criteria by providing quality implemented methods of evaluation to produce of evidence of promise. For example, the evaluation process has the potential to result in evidence of promise, because the program will utilize a comprehensive in the evaluation plan (pp.41-50). The findings offer a possibility of sharing with others, because the applicant discusses means of dissemination for the generation of effective strategies suitable for replication in other settings (pp. 8-9 & p.50).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score:**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority 2 - 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 will be placed a 21st century technology lab in each partner schools, helping them in providing high-quality arts –integrated core curriculum classics. Also master teaching artists will have access to the lab as they work with students. I pads, recording equipment, a video camera, a laptop, and software will be made available to program staff and teachers (pp.9 & 28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found: "This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weakness."

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/20/2014 04:19 PM