

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2014 06:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Austin Independent School District (U351C140069)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	5	3
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	8
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	13
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	30	22
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	22
Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions		
CPP-Technology		
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology		
1. CPP-Technology	20	20
Sub Total	20	20
Total	120	103

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 3: 84.351C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Austin Independent School District (U351C140069)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 3

Sub Question

1. (A) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

Strengths:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of the project's likelihood of building local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population. As part of a larger strategic plan, the district's Creative Learning Initiative has partnered with over 40 community arts partners to bring arts-infused education to every child in the district (p 2).

The proposed plan would fund a vertical team of 10-12 Title I educators at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to join the Creative Learning Initiative for three years of professional development and support (p 2). As state and local budgets are tight, this initiative will support investment in the success of this type of student support.

The three years of professional development will be supported with individualized coaching to help design lesson plans and implement effective classroom strategies (p 2-3), utilizing the Kodaly method of music training.

The applicant notes that music is an art form that most classroom educators feel the least comfortable teaching (p 3).

The applicant notes that one Title I vertical team has an almost 93% rate of economically disadvantaged and historically underserved students; this team also has high dropout rates (p 9).

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened with more information regarding the needs or gaps at the district's target schools to better understand the overall impact of this initiative. For example, more specific information regarding student academic performance compared to other district or State averages, or the shortfalls in arts instruction experienced at the target schools, would give a stronger understanding of the Creative Learning Initiative's potential impact.

Reader's Score:

Sub Question

- 2. (B) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence of the extent to which the project results will be disseminated in ways that enable others to use the information or strategies. The applicant will disseminate information at the district, State, and national level through reports and arts organizations, conferences, publications, the Kennedy Center's partners, and teaching videos at the district's website (p 4).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

- 1. (A) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is supported by strong theory.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of the extent to which the proposed project's design is supported by strong theory. The applicant will base its project on the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts' Any Given Child program (p 2) and the Kodaly music intensive training model (p 2, 4). The applicant provides a strong logic model detailing goals and related strategies, activities/outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes; of special note is the strong role that importance of assessment and evaluation plays in the logic model (p 6). Research cited on pages 9-11 regarding effective teacher professional development and instructional-based approaches also points to the strong and teacher-focused theory underlying the project.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

- 2. (B) 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 provides moderate evidence of the sustainability of the project's potential and planning to incorporate the project's purposes, activities or benefits beyond the grant period. The applicant has significant in-kind partner commitments, and seeks the PDAE funding to expand the model, document and disseminate strategies and results, and evaluate program activities (p 8).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

It is unclear where additional funding might come from to continue to expand the project model beyond the grant period to train additional teacher teams.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 13

Sub Question

- 1. (A) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence of the project's strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for underrepresented groups. The applicant offers several strategies for including English Language Learners and students with mobility, vision, hearing, or other disabilities, including audio-taped materials, accessible training spaces, interpreters and translated materials (p e10). The target schools have an average 93% share of economically-disadvantaged and historically underserved students (p 9). The students also have a high dropout rate, which has increased annually since 2009 (p 9).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

- 2. (B) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence of the extent to which the proposed professional development will lead to improvements in practice among recipients of those services. The applicant proposes an instructional strategies approach of embedded, sustained, and ongoing professional development to most effectively engage teachers (p 9-11). Instructional coaches will support teachers throughout the school year (p 9-11). Teacher feedback from the first year of the program indicates that teachers report positive changes in their teaching as well as in student behavior, engagement, and achievement (p 13-14).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Sub Question

Reader's Score:

- 3. (C) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence that the project's services will lead to improvements in student achievement as measured against rigorous academic standards. The applicant's logic model suggests that the initiative will tie arts education to more engagement and increased attendance, improved behavior, and increased academic achievement and college- and career-readiness (p 6). The applicant reports that significant shares of teachers in the pilot version of this initiative report positive impacts on student behavior, engagement, and academic achievement (p 14).

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened by additional information regarding how this initiative will align with State or national academic achievement standards to promote student achievement.

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 following factors:**

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

- 1. (A) 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of the extent to which the applicant will encourage employment applications from underrepresented groups. The applicant will recruit bilingual teachers through offering a bilingual stipend and posting through arts organizations.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

- 2. (B) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence of the qualifications of key project personnel. The applicant team is impressive in the scope of its experience (p 15-18), including music, State standards, arts enrichment, classroom experience, administration, and grants management. The evaluation team also has a rich background and experience in evaluation of federally, state, and locally-funded programs (p 17-18). Most importantly, the team will be co-headed by a Project Coordinator who is now completing the first year of the proposed program on time and

Sub Question

under budget (p 15).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

3. (C) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence of the qualifications of project consultants or subcontractors. The Kodaly Lead Instructors, local master teachers, and other professional development leads offer significant experience and expertise, including published reference guides (p 18-21). The local teachers also have bilingual experience and have worked with diverse student populations in urban areas, a key skill for connecting with the proposed student population (p 20). The Level I Professional Development lead offers a wide variety of theater background and community-engagement work (p 20).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

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:

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 22

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 moderate evidence of the project's management plan to achieve project objectives on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for project tasks. The applicant presents a detailed timeline with significant detail surrounding Year I's development of the training and coaching, along with baseline evaluation data (p 25). The plan also includes pre- and post-testing of teacher knowledge (p 25).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the different project members will interact in the completion of project tasks or the level of administration and oversight of the project. Further, within the timeline, it is not clear what formative assessments will be conducted throughout the process or what formal continuous improvement activities will take place.

Sub Question

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 provides moderate evidence of the appropriateness and adequacy of the time commitments of key project personnel to meet project objectives. The applicant provides information regarding the two Project Co-Directors' and Co-Principal Investigators' activities.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not specify the time commitment (e.g., 1 FTE) that the two Project Co-Directors and Co-Principal Investigators will provide to the project. Without this information, it is difficult to evaluate whether the timeline's activities will be met on time and within budget.

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 provides moderate evidence of the adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the project. The applicant will answer a short digital survey after each professional development session in order to understand the engagement, motivation, and emotional levels of the teachers (p 28). The applicant will also use the Concerns-Based Adoption Model to assess teacher development and adoption of the new methodology (p 29). The frequency of these surveys suggests that the project team will have a good amount of data to review the progress of the training.

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened by more detail regarding the formal procedures and process for the leadership team to review the project's data in order to make needed recommendations and changes to the project's implementation.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

General:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and these scores reflect my professional opinion.

Reader's Score: 22

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 applicant provides strong evidence of the extent to which the project evaluation includes objective performance measures clearly related to the project's intended outcomes and which will provide quantitative and qualitative data. The proposed evaluation questions (p 30) are well-aligned with the goals of the project. Mixed methods of data collection (including surveys, self-assessments, classroom observations, focus groups, student attendance and scores on State tests) will offer a rich variety of quantitative and qualitative data (p 31-32).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

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 provides strong evidence of the extent to which the evaluation plan will provide periodic feedback and assessment of progress toward intended outcomes. The project will employ a web-based feedback collection system that will offer on-time feedback about individual, school, and district process and recommendations for improvements (p 33). Additionally, student art progress will be linked within a web-based tool to evaluate the impact of arts strategies on student achievement in reading, math, and other core areas (p 33).

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened by detail surrounding the formal process by which project leaders will receive and review the feedback and progress data in order to make program modifications as needed. While teacher review and real-time feedback is helpful, it is also important for project leaders to come together as a team to evaluate the project's progress and determine which, if any, changes are needed.

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 provides strong evidence of the extent to which the evaluation will, if well implemented, provide evidence of promise. The research design takes into account the effect of different levels of professional development exposure within cohorts on internal validity as well as the possibility that teachers at non-participating campuses could become part of the treatment plan at a later date (p 34). The applicant will utilize Propensity Score Matching and a Quasi-Experimental Design to account for these potential concerns. The applicant will also use longitudinal data and multi-level modeling to identify and adjust for individual student, classroom, and school effects (p 36-37).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP-Technology - Competitive Preference Priority-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 application provides moderate evidence of the extent to which the project will utilize high-quality digital tools or materials to prepare teachers to use technology to improve instruction, as well as develop, implement, or evaluate digital tools and materials, in order to improve student achievement. The project offers some innovative ways for teachers to evaluate their performance as well as the progress of their students. First, a web-based feedback collection system will offer on-time feedback about individual, school, and district processes as well as make recommendations for improvements (p 33). Another web-based tool will evaluate the impact of arts strategies on student achievement in reading, math, and other core areas (p 33).

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I did not find any weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2014 06:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2014 09:15 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Austin Independent School District (U351C140069)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	5	3
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	7
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	10
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	30	22
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	25
Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions		
CPP-Technology		
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology		
1. CPP-Technology	20	20
Sub Total	20	20
Total	120	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 3: 84.351C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Austin Independent School District (U351C140069)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

General:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Sub Question

1. (A) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

Strengths:

The applicant is an independent school district located in the state of Texas and plans to provide two tracks of professional development and coaching in the area of arts integration and music education. (Page 2) Both general education classroom teachers as well as music teachers will participate in the project and receive ongoing coaching from instructional coaches, specialists, and Kodaly master teachers. The applicant intends to build capacity by improving the skills and knowledge of music teachers who will work with general education teachers to integrate arts and music into the curriculum. It is expected that the activities will improve achievement, attendance, and graduation rates and Title I schools.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide demographic information about the students who will receive the benefits of this professional development. More information about current levels of achievement, attendance, and graduation rates in the schools would provide a baseline to understand how well this program will meet the needs of the students.

Reader's Score:

2. (B) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

That the applicant indicates that the activities of the project including teaching videos will be linked to the school district website. (Page 4) In addition, general information and data results will also be posted on a number of websites as they become available.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides limited information about how it will disseminate the results of the project. It is unclear if other activities such as conferences and publications will be made available on a state or national basis.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

General:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

1. **(A) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is supported by strong theory.**

Strengths:

The overall project design is supported by a logic model which includes inputs, goals, strategies and short-term and long-term outcomes. (Page 6) The design is focused on three levels and will utilize various approaches in the initial three years of the project. For example, year one will focus on theater-based instructional strategies, year two will examine visual arts instructional strategies, and year three will include music and dance instructional strategies. In addition, the project will emphasize the Kodaly concept of music education in terms of local and instrumental background. Overall, the project is focused on model expansion, documentation, dissemination, and evaluation activities.

Weaknesses:

In describing the design of the overall program, the applicant does not identify any key studies or research that supports this particular approach to music education. In addition, there is no documentation to support the specific professional development and coaching strategies that are being proposed.

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) 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 professional activity included in the application will enable the general education teachers as well as arts educators in the district to continue using the strategies that were developed by the project. (Page 5)

Weaknesses:

Is unclear how the district will support the activities being developed by the project as well as supplement the training and development of the staff after the grant funds end. The applicant does not identify how it will reallocate funds or seek external funding to support the activities once the grant is completed.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

General:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

1. **(A) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

Strengths:

applicant provides information about the diversity of the student body, indicating that 60% are Hispanic and are low income. (Page 8) The applicant also indicates that approximately 93% of the students on the 11 campuses are economically disadvantaged and have been historically underserved. The applicant indicates that it will seek to increase the levels of student engagement which will lead to greater student achievement and decrease the high school dropout rate.

Weaknesses:

From the information provided, it is unclear how the activities being proposed are directly related to student achievement and dropout prevention. More information is needed on how the professional development in particular will reduce the number of students dropping out, particularly in the later middle school grades.

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**

Strengths:

The applicant describes how the training will be conducted at each of the levels being proposed by the application. It provides this information for both art education as well as music education. (Page 10) The applicant indicates that the focus will be more on instruction than curriculum, reflecting a belief that instruction will bring about quicker adoption of the proposed activities. The applicant cites a number of survey results showing that teachers currently using the various approaches were able to reframe their instructional strategies as well as their confidence levels that the program was helping students achieve more.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicates that its surveys of professional development and art-based strategies indicated that teachers felt that they were impacting on student achievement. (Page 13)

Weaknesses:

The higher academic achievement levels that the applicant suggests occur as a result of earlier use of the approaches is not supported with specific documentation of student change. No data in terms of reading and math levels were provided. Similarly, information on graduation and dropout rates are not provided.

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 following factors:**

General:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. **(A) 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicates that it will hire three new full-time personnel to support the project. (Page 14) It further indicates that it will make a concerted effort to encourage applicants who are members of groups that have been traditionally under represented. It further states that it will seek highly qualified, bilingual arts educators offering a bilingual stipend and posting the position with arts organizations.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

Strengths:

The applicant identifies as key personnel two project co-coordinators that are based in the district. (Page 15) Each will provide direction for the project in terms of their background in either arts-based instruction or music and choral music areas. A third project coordinator is within an organization that coordinates citywide efforts both in and out of school. All three have appropriate educational backgrounds and experience in their specific fields. All will assist the project in meeting its objectives in a timely fashion.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

Strengths:

The applicant identifies a number of professionals who will participate in the project and provide technical assistance to the staff. (Pages 17 through 21) Included is the individual who will lead the evaluation of the project. Her credentials and experience reflect appropriate education and involvement in several projects. Others include a senior research associate, faculty members from various universities and colleges, and individuals who are specialists in such aspects of the project as the Kodaly concept. The information is detailed and supports of the project activities.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

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:**

General:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 22

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 management plan includes a description of the 11 vertical teams currently functioning in the district. (Page 21) A vertical team is made up of a high school, two or more middle schools, and 8 to 12 elementary schools. Focusing on four vertical teams, the project required the principal of each vertical team to sign an agreement of participation. The plan is supported with a table that identifies benchmarks, activities and indicators, the staff responsibilities, and the date associated with the activity. (Pages 23 through 26) The table supporting the management plan covers all years of the project.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear from the information provided how the applicant will conduct day-to-day functions of the project in terms of decision-making and fiscal control. The current plan focuses on project activities but does not describe how the various staff interact with each other and exercise administrative and supervisory responsibilities. As a result, it is unclear if the project will complete activities within budget.

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 indicates that it will hire one full-time instructional coach, two full-time instructional specialists in fine arts, and a part-time administrative clerk. These time commitments are appropriate and will assist the project in accomplishing its goals and objectives.

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates that the project's co-directors or project co-investigators will provide in-kind contributions and will serve as the project co-directors. (Page 26) It is unclear from the narrative and from the budget how much time the staff members will commit to the project. More information is needed about how much actual involvement of these individuals will have in the management of the project.

Sub Question

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 indicates that it will use a number of approaches to ensure that formative assessment results will lead to continuous improvement in both the professional development activities and a job embedded coaching processes. (Page 28) Included in the process will be digital surveys which will provide information at the end of any major activity. It will also use a Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) to assess how well individuals are learning the arts-based instruction and have adopted the activities in the classroom.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

General:

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

Reader's Score: 25

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 will be guided by a team of external specialists from a variety of professions from the University of Texas as well as from the district's Department of Research and Evaluation. (Page 29) It will include both quantitative and qualitative data and will generate both formative and summative feedback and reports. They will focus on such areas as attendance, student engagement, and program implementation. The plan will focus on the objectives of the project, especially the arts, the integration of standards-based art instruction into the core curriculum, and the overall strengthening of the arts education program. The plan is supported by a table describing the types of evaluation that will be conducted, how it will be measured, and both a development and data collection timeline.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant indicates it will employ technology to assist in the collection of the program data and its dissemination of the outcomes. (Page 33) The applicant has adopted two approaches, CBAM Stages of Concerns Questionnaire and the Innovation Configuration Map data, which it will use to provide feedback about individual, campus, and district progress. It will also use a Standard Aggregate Report program which is a web-based tool to assist in determining if students are meeting the expectation levels in reading, math and other core areas.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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 plan includes the development of comparison groups that will neutralize biases and assist in identifying key elements of the project. (Page 34) Using two matched groups, the applicant will employ a research design that is quasi-experimental and will collect longitudinal data. The design will generate trend data as well as examine current archival student records in considering the progress of the project. The applicant indicates that aggregate, quantitative analysis will be used and that both formative and summative reports will be completed.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP-Technology - Competitive Preference Priority-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 indicates that the project will produce teaching videos that will be linked to the project website. In addition, the website will make materials available to other educators seeking information. For example, the applicant will work in partnership with a local television station to create videos and will distribute online arts curriculum information through another organization as well. (Page 8)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/17/2014 09:15 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2014 04:36 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Austin Independent School District (U351C140069)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	5	4
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	9
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	13
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	30	28
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	25
Sub Total	100	94
Priority Questions		
CPP-Technology		
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology		
1. CPP-Technology	20	20
Sub Total	20	20
Total	120	114

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 3: 84.351C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Austin Independent School District (U351C140069)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 4

Sub Question

1. (A) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

Strengths:

The proposed project intends to improve student engagement and achievement in high-needs K-12 schools as a result of their teachers' participation in a series of workshops and seminars on arts integration and the Kodály method of teaching music. The project emerged from the district's participation in the Kennedy Center's "Any Given Child" pro-gram during 2013, which assisted the district in developing a comprehensive 10 year strategic plan to ensure that any given child in the district gets a full education in and through the arts. Targeted for training are both the music specialists and K-12 classroom teachers who will participate in Kodály music training as well as workshops on integrated arts instruction for three years along with job-embedded coaching. Results of this project will help the district document how students benefit when their teachers receive a well-conceived process of professional development and students receive a Kodály structured music education in the general and music classrooms when taught by Kodály trained certified specialists.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

2. (B) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

The evaluation results from measuring the impact on teachers and students will be disseminated through district reports to local, state and national arts education organizations.

Teaching videos and data results will be posted on the AISD and MINDPOP websites as they become available.

In addition, as a partner with the Kennedy Center, the district expects to distribute arts curricular information through its ArtsEdge website.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The proposal lacks information related to what tests will be used and how frequently they will be administered

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

1. **(A) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is supported by strong theory.**

Strengths:

The Logic Model (page e23) clearly describes the flow of inputs to goals and related strategies, activities and short- and long-term outcomes.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) 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 proposal describes in detail a well-developed plan that incorporates realistic purposes, appropriate and differentiated activities for teachers with different levels of proficiency and beneficial outcomes for teachers and students.

Weaknesses:

While the district plans to replicate this project for other vertical teams of teachers, the narrative does not reveal how they will find the funds to do so.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 13

Sub Question

1. **(A) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

Strengths:

The proposal describes the present situation in regard to the district and the selected school.

Demographic information indicates that eligible project participants (students) are most likely to be members of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**

Strengths:

Arts integration PD is appropriate in quality, intensity and duration of activities and is sub-stantiated by strong research on characteristics of impactful PD (pages 39-40).

Weaknesses:

The proposal lacks a reference to research that substantiates the value of the Kodaly system of instruction.

Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.**

Strengths:

There is a strong likelihood that the intentions of this project will be realized as measured by student growth in engagement and music proficiency which should lead to increases in academic performance.

The creation of a vertical team of peers who network with each other and on-site coaching should contribute to that likelihood.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

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 following factors:**

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. **(A) 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.**

Strengths:

The project calls for hiring three new full-time professionals, including an instructional coach, two creative learning specialists and part-time administrative effort. The applicant will recruit highly-qualified bilingual arts educators to meet the needs of ELLs, posting the positions with arts organizations in a timely way and offering a stipend for bilingual in-structors.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

2. **(B) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

Strengths:

Qualifications for leadership positions are commensurate with the job requirements.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

3. **(C) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

Strengths:

Contracted individuals and organizations are highly qualified and leaders locally and na-tionally.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

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:**

General:

N/A

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 proposal contains a detailed chart (pages 23-26) that specifies benchmarks, activities and/or indicators, designated roles and responsibilities and deadlines or indications that activities are ongoing throughout the project. The timelines seem reasonable and within budget.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

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:

Key personnel from within the district (Project Co-Directors and Principal Investigators as Principals of Vertical Team campuses) are underwritten by the district's in-kind contributions. Dedicated time to this project is commensurate with their responsibilities. New hires, including the Instructional Coach and Instructional Specialists will serve the district as full-time employees.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Table 4.1 (pages 31-32) describes in detail the evaluation measures, levels of measurement, the timeline for each measure and each measure's contribution to information about the impact of the program.

Weaknesses:

While the Logic Model calls for periodic progress reporting of formative and summative feedback and program status (page e23), the narrative does not describe how this information will be used for continuous improvement of the project.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

General:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and these scores reflect my professional opinion.

Reader's Score: 25

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 methods are clearly stated, and several instruments to generate subjective and objective data are named on Table 4.1 with their precise purpose. All evaluative measures are related to the goals and objectives of the project. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model, as well as the Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness are identified. Qualitative data gathering (e.g., field observations and focus groups) will generate data that will indicate to staff and administrators indicators of success.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

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 is based on a quasi-experimental model that will reveal the extent to which analyzed data indicates meaningful benefits for the treatment group.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

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 project's dual purpose of increasing the level of expertise of teachers as they teach an arts-integrated curriculum and expanding music teachers' repertoire as general and instrumental/vocal teachers, should generate evidence of promise as the evaluation team studies student performance on rigorous standardized tests and other measures.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score:

Priority Questions

CPP-Technology - Competitive Preference Priority-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 proposal addresses in detail the instructional, evaluative, and administrative applications of technology. The proposal describes existing and potential technology that will be integral to the operation of this program.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly reviewed and discussed with my fellow peer reviewers, and I found no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 20

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