

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/10/2014 07:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Milwaukee Public Schools (U351C140006)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	5	4
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	14
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	30	29
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	23
Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions		
CPP-Technology		
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology		
1. CPP-Technology	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
Total	120	110

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 1: 84.351C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Milwaukee Public Schools (U351C140006)

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:

see A and B

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 applicant district is large with 79% of the students are from low-income families. The DREAM project will search 6300 K-12 students and 70 teachers. All of the eligible schools serve 50% or more low income students. Data is provided about the district performance levels, all of which are lower than the state average (e17).

As an indicator of local capacity to sustain the intent of this project, the applicant reports that the district moved toward integration of arts by hiring 48 new arts teachers in 2013, and will hire 25 additional arts teachers in 2014. Over 400 other new teachers (non-arts) came into the district in 2013, resulting in needs to support new educators. The project is designed to provide additional support to new teachers by creating school teams, including efforts to link new teachers with experienced teachers for job-embedded coaching through this project to promote arts integration.

The DREAM project will provide professional development (95 hrs over two years, page e14) to engage teacher teams from the designated schools in learning how to organize instruction to facilitate project-based student learning while linked with community arts partners and to design standards-based integrated arts instruction.

In support of the sustainability of the project outcomes, this project links to the district's comprehensive plans for district-wide focus on common core content standards, content literacy, math and science (e22-23).

The DREAM project is designed to deepen participants' understanding of literacy across math, science, reading, and the arts through effective professional development (e24), including how to engage students in their own learning process using inquiry and project-based methods to deepen their knowledge.

Weaknesses:

Assessment data given was aggregated at the district level. Information was not provided specific to teach school from which teachers/students would be involved in this project in order to identify what needs are to be addressed for the targeted student population.

Sub Question

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:

Detailed statements about dissemination of practices and resulting student work are provided for internal dissemination to engage additional teachers and community partners, and are provided through an array of methods to ensure others may learn from the project, including demonstrations of student learning with student-created museum presentations.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed 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:

see a and b

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 district applicant supports the design of the project with ample citations about effective professional development (e24) , teacher use of “visual thinking strategies” (VTS) and student-created museums (e24), student benefits of engagement in the arts (e24) and engagement in their own learning process using inquiry and project-based methods (e24).

The VTS strategies, cited by empirical research (e25), are to develop aesthetic and language literacy, and critical thinking skills for inquiry into art works and their meanings (e23-26).

The district is integrating this project with the evidence-based strategic plans for literacy, mathematics, and science (e22-23).

The Dream project proposal includes detailed crosswalk of the districts report card criteria for visual arts and design in comparison to the national art standards and the state performance standards. The detailed crosswalk provides mid-course focus and end-of-course performance standards (e71+).

The logic model (e125+) provides details of the “process theory” related to teachers receiving sustained, intensive professional develop specific to the goals of this project, and the “impact theory” of short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. Both qualitative and quantitative data elements are integrated in the logic model. The plan design includes collaboration with local artists (as artist in residency), increased collaboration in teacher cohorts and the school community, increased attention to sharing the review of student work samples as ongoing professional learning.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS, e14, e21, e25-26, e30) is to be leveraged “. . . with student-created museums to simultaneously improve student learning in literacy, mathematics and the arts.” The VTS is described with reference to 2004 research. The project design would be strengthened with more recent evidence of the impact and usefulness of the VTS concepts.

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 DREAM project will solicit participation start with 35 teachers from across the 162 eligible schools and will increase participation by another 35 teachers the next year. The project will provide to 70 teachers (affecting up to 7,300 students) with 55 hours of professional development during the first year and 40 hours in the second year. The key focus areas will be for training on visual thinking strategies, training in arts integration with technology, and training to facilitate student-created museums.

The following examples of systemic planning and operations demonstrate the likelihood that the project purposes, activities, and benefits will be sustained beyond the grant: the integration of this project with the comprehensive systemic plans recently developed by the district (focused on content literacy, mathematics, science), and the expectation that processes and outcomes will be monitored, evaluated, and shared with the community to build increasing interest and support for student results related to arts integration.

The project design includes processes that are sustainable, including the establishment of integrated teacher teams, the online and in-person forums for peer team examinations of student work in relation to standards, and the celebration with the community stakeholders of student work.

Weaknesses:

The proposal could have included evidence of specific positive impact at any discrete grade level or within arts discipline beyond the grant.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

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:

see a, b, c

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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The GEPA assurance (e10-11) provides details of practices to ensure equal access to teachers, students, and families, including those from groups that have been underrepresented.

The GEPA assurance asserts that the DREAM project will develop and implement curriculum with attention to cultural competencies and efforts to reflect the multicultural richness of the community. The project is designed to develop cultural arts programs to facilitate sharing of expressions of ethnic pride, to communicate in languages of school participants, to provide intergenerational programs to engage all age groups and artistic disciplines represented in the community, and to host family workshops with hands-on experiences that parallel the professional development concepts provided to the teachers.

The proposal includes a description of effective referral and follow-up strategies to provide equitable access to participate in the project. The community museums and local arts projects selected to partner with the eligible schools represent the diverse cultures in the city.

Weaknesses:

The narrative would be improved with details about how teachers from underrepresented groups will be sought out to participate in the DREAM project. More detail is needed to see how the project will provide specific strategies within the professional development that are needed to engage all student participants with effective strategies focused on “ensuring equal access and treatment “ for the students involved.

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 application provides a table (e29) and detailed narrative descriptions (e30-37) of features and benefits of the two years of professional learning opportunities and extended peer learning processes designed for the two cohorts of teachers. The qualities of the professional development services include deliberate efforts to align and integrate specific arts standards with other core content standards (e30).

Weaknesses:

The application would be improved with clarification of how the teacher team will develop the integrated lesson with content standards in ELA, math, or science.

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 professional development activities and support to teachers that are detailed in this application appear to be adequate in focus and the monitoring practices needed to sustain the implementation of effective strategies described to improve student achievement. The design provides a comprehensive plan to build and sustain teacher capacity to improve student achievement with instruction integrated with arts.

The peer support methods (e.g., integrated teams, work with local artists, peer sharing and examination of student work with the help of technology, community interest and support) are expected to result in improvements in arts and academic achievement.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The application would be improved with clarification of how results of interim outcomes will be analyzed to determine improvements to the PD services that may be needed in support of individuals.

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:

see a, b, c

Reader's Score: 14

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:

Details are needed as to specific efforts to reach out to recruit underrepresented applicants for staff positions TBD related to this project—school support teachers at participating schools, teacher participants, and artist partners (e 45-47).

Weaknesses:

Details are needed as to specific efforts to reach out to recruit underrepresented applicants for staff positions TBD related to this project—school support teachers at participating schools, teacher participants, and artist partners (e 45-47).

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

A description of background training/experiences is provided for the key personnel for the DREAM project (e38-e44).

Weaknesses:

The narrative would be improved with explicit qualifications required for an application for each position in the proposal rather than a description of the background for each personal already assigned. For example, it is unclear what qualifications are needed for the “school support teachers” (e46).

Reader's Score:

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

Key personnel for the DREAM project, most of which are named already (e39-47), include individuals from the district partner, Arts@Large, and the education consultant who wrote a book about student museum projects.

Weaknesses:

Expected qualifications are needed for the project site coordinator position (e41). Expected qualifications, training, and experience for all sub-contracted positions are needed in the event a replacement is called for in this project.

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:

see a, b, c

Reader's Score: 29

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 project staff FTE and roles are provided (e44+). The project timeline shows activities, time period, responsible role, milestone expectations, and measurable indicators of progress for each project objective (e48-54 and e108+).

Weaknesses:

The management plan would be improved with cross-reference to specific interim monitoring and evaluation data that can be used by the DREAM team in their quarterly meetings in order to identify possible areas for improvements (e108+).

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 commitment for each position is reasonable (e44-47).

The timeline for activities makes reference to the roles involved in each activity.

Weaknesses:

Although .2 FTE is listed for classroom teachers, it is unclear the extent to which time from the classroom teacher (e46) will be made available in order to adequately do the tasks listed in the management plan in order to result in the successful implementation of this project.

Reader's Score:

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Project staff will provide job-embedded coaching by visiting each participating school at least three times per school year – in the fall, winter and spring. The visits allow project staff to ensure that teachers understand and adhere to project plans and schedules and to provide constructive feedback on museum implementation that will support continuous improvement (e33).

The one-on-one coaching provides each individual teacher with specific feedback with their implementation of the project (e34). The project director and the professional development coordinator will review each teacher’s project plan using a rubric and provide feedback to improve the quality of the plan (e37). The project work plan (e47) includes key activities that are aligned to specific goals and objectives (also Appendix D).

Weaknesses:

No significant weaknesses are found.

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:

see a, b, c

Reader's Score: 23

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 application describes the intention for AIR and the district to implement a randomized controlled trial study for this project. (e56-57, e59). The narrative includes evaluation lessons learned from another project (CREATE) being implemented by the district (e60), such as the rubric for rating the implementation of student-created museums. The AIR research team will use a knowledge assessment of the teachers’ content knowledge.

Weaknesses:

Details are needed to verify that each measuring tool has been tested for validity and reliability, such as the assessment of teacher content knowledge. cc

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 DREAM Team (management team, e47, e107+) are expected to review quarterly the assigned steps in the data collection described to assist the DREAMS Team in monitoring and improving the status of the project

Sub Question

opportunities and challenges.

Weaknesses:

Clarification is needed about the ways in which the quarterly reports from the external evaluation team (AIR) can be designed and leveraged to provide objective data to be used to support performance feedback to the management team, the teachers, principals, and the site coordinator. ccc

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:

In year one, a randomized control trial study (e56) will be implemented after identifying each cohort of teachers to be involved. A strength includes the comparisons of the outcomes of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 in the 2015–16 school year to provide an experimental estimate of the one-year impact of DREAM (e57).

Weaknesses:

The application would be improved with an intentional effort to measure more about teacher and student knowledge of specific areas of art and a sampling of other content standards, such as the common core literacy standards. Clarification is needed in the statement (e55) about gathering student achievement data from the districts involved.

The application would be improved if the monitoring and evaluation plan included deliberate efforts to support the principals (e46) in their observations/evaluations of teachers implementation of lessons designed to integrate the arts.

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 integration of technology is supported by the district's information and technology plan and designed to maximize current resources towards a 21st Century Learning environment.

The plan will support the effective digital dissemination of DREAM project products (video, audio, images, reading lists, resources, and links to critical websites, research, agendas and itineraries. The district Moodle-based electronic collaboration is referred to as The Learning Community (TLC) and is an open environment for teacher sharing of lessons and resources; Media site is the video-based tools for the district for taping, recording and viewing presentations—PD, lessons, student presentations. Thus professional development activities will be recorded for additional viewing. Samples of student work (and museum projects) will be posted to the Vimeo Web sites to allow a wider audience to view.

Weaknesses:

The integration of technology is supported by the district's information and technology plan and designed to maximize current resources towards a 21st Century Learning environment.

The plan will support the effective digital dissemination of DREAM project products (video, audio, images, reading lists, resources, and links to critical websites, research, agendas and itineraries. The district Moodle-based electronic collaboration is referred to as The Learning Community (TLC) and is an open environment for teacher sharing of lessons and resources; Media site is the video-based tools for the district for taping, recording and viewing presentations—PD, lessons, student presentations. Thus professional development activities will be recorded for additional viewing. Samples of student work (and museum projects) will be posted to the Vimeo Web sites to allow a wider audience to view.

Reader's Score: **19**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Milwaukee Public Schools (U351C140006)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	5	4
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	6
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	12
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	14
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	30	28
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	23
Sub Total	100	87
Priority Questions		
CPP-Technology		
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology		
1. CPP-Technology	20	15
Sub Total	20	15
Total	120	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 1: 84.351C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Milwaukee Public Schools (U351C140006)

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:

NA

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 applicant details specific challenges and needs that are present in the Milwaukee Public School system such as numerous new teachers. The application details how the project will build their capacity with specific strategies such as peer coaching (p. 2).

Weaknesses:

Additional details that link the technology strategies (e.g., Media site, the Learning Community) to the specific target population would strengthen the application.

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 application provides specific and well described strategies for disseminating the project's products, strategies and findings (p. 3-5). These findings include designations of the responsible project staff for each of the dissemination efforts and specific dissemination tools (e.g., newsletters, emails) that capitalize on new and existing communication strategies.

Weaknesses:

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

Sub Question

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides both theory and research in support of the professional development framework as well as the instructional methods (e.g., visual thinking strategies) (p. 9-11).

The logic model includes short, intermediate, and long term outcomes and presents a strong rationale and theory of change (p. e125-e127).

Weaknesses:

The project proposal should include a rationale for how the instructional strategies work for different grade levels and a diversity of content areas.

The applicant also cites some research that supports the use of visual thinking strategies but it is somewhat dated (i.e., 2004) and cites no research in support of the student created museums.

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 describes quality partnerships between the district, museums, artists and teachers that will support sustainability (p. 11-12). This commitment to include the greater community will extend the reach of the intervention through purposeful collaboration.

Weaknesses:

The project describes the professional development and partnerships as the main sources for sustainability. The project should include additional specificity regarding structures that will remain in place after the grant ends (e.g., personnel, products). This is especially important for urban school districts such as Milwaukee that might have high teacher turnover.

Sub Question

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 12

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 includes a general statement that the district engages in hiring practices that encourage diversity which represents the student population (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant describes policies for a focus on diversity (e.g., recruiting, hiring a diverse staff), (p. 13) there is no assurance that a diversity of staff will have access to the program.

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 project provides multiple opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development through summer sessions, monthly professional development meetings, and coaching (p. 16-17). These opportunities provide ongoing support and ensure the teachers are able to discuss any problems or questions.

Weaknesses:

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

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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The application discusses specific strategies to raise student achievement including current district instructional strategies (p. 21).

The link to improving student scientific thinking seemed well-grounded and might produce improved achievement in this content area (p. 15).

Appendix A (p. 64-73) shows important alignment between the proposed project and national and state standards which ensures rigor and focus of the project.

Weaknesses:

It was difficult to discern how student achievement in a diversity of grade levels and content areas (e.g., mathematics and reading) would be explicitly targeted by the project. Also, the standards outlined in Appendix A only address kindergarten through 8th grade but the project includes high school students so it is unclear what standards will be used for these students (p. 64-73).

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 14

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 application includes specific strategies that the district reaches out to underrepresented groups. This includes targeting teaching colleges and universities that serve minorities (p. 22)

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

The project staff are well qualified to carry out the specified project activities and represent a diversity of experience in project management, arts education, and evaluation (p. 22-27). Specifically, the proposed coordinator has a variety of experience in curriculum development while the project coordinator has an in depth background in arts integration initiatives (p. e89-e98).

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened by describing the project staffs' background in content areas (e.g., language arts, mathematics) which is crucial to implementing and ensuring integration of the arts into the content areas.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The project consultants include multiple evaluation personnel (p. 25-28). The evaluation staff have extensive backgrounds and experience conducting randomized control trials which will be critical for successfully implementing the planned evaluation.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed 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:

NA

Reader's Score: 28

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 project includes a very specific alignment of project goals, activities, responsible staff and a timeline using the project management table (p. 32-38). The project also includes measureable outcomes which will ensure the integration of multiple activities.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any 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:

The applicant provides specific tasks aligned to the project key project staff (p. 28-31). The staff includes a full time project coordinator, and a .75 full time equivalent for a professional development coordinator. These allocations allow for staff to commit sufficient time and focus for the project to ensure objectives are met.

Weaknesses:

The project management timeline includes a specification that staff are funded through other sources but it was unclear from where this funding was to come (p. 28-31).

The teachers are also budgeted for .20 full time equivalent and it was difficult to discern how they would manage the additional work on top of their typical classroom responsibilities (p. 30).

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 specifies a feedback process that includes the project director meeting quarterly with the evaluator to review the project's progress (p. 38-39). The DREAM team will also meet with school staff to discuss any issues or barriers to implementation. These multiple opportunities to share and review information ensures the project will be thoroughly monitored and any necessary modifications are made.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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:

NA

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 specifies a series of instruments that will measure changes in teacher knowledge, student surveys, rubrics, and teacher surveys (p. 44-46). Several of the instruments utilize pre-existing surveys or items which help ensure the technical adequacy of the items.

The knowledge assessment is an important component of the evaluation and the analysis includes an examination of the technical adequacy of the items and assessment using Rasch methods (p. 47).

Weaknesses:

An important part of the project includes impacting teacher practice. The main data source for measuring teacher practice and implementation is self-report (p. 45). It would strengthen the application to include more objective measures of teacher practice.

The evaluation design specifies detecting change using the North West Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress (p. 43) for the power analyses but also specifies using the district screener as an achievement measure for the outcome analyses (p. 47). It was difficult to discern if the evaluation were using both instruments and or one of the achievement measures.

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 specifies ongoing data collection over the duration of the grant (p. 43-46). The findings of the data collection and analyses will be communicated both informally and formally. This will allow the project staff to make informed and meaningful changes about the program implementation.

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any 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 evaluation design includes a well-considered randomized control trial (p. 40-41). The evaluation team has specified using two cohorts of teachers with a staggered program start. This will allow for teachers who are in the initial control group to participate in later program years. The randomized design should allow for comparability between the two groups as well as incentivizing the control.

Sub Question

The evaluation team has adequately considered how the project impact will be assessed in later years using propensity score matching (p. 41).

The evaluation design includes a description of the sample and a specific power analysis which will help assure that any impact is detected (p. 43).

The evaluation includes a well-defined analysis section that accounts for the nested design of the project and will ensure changes in achievement are detected (p. 47)

Weaknesses:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed 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 project will provide teachers with technology professional development during the summer to improve instructional practices (e.g., Skype, graphics software, and Smart Boards) (p. 16). The project will provide ongoing support to teachers on the technology through teacher coaches.

The budget includes sufficient funds for teachers to purchase technology (e.g., hardware, software) to ensure they had tools needed to support technology in their classroom (p. e134).

The district also has identified a strong partner, Cardinal Stritch to support the technology professional development (p. 16).

Weaknesses:

There was limited evidence to ensure that teachers were using specific technology hardware and software that met the needs of their students or was of sufficient quality.

The evaluation includes a survey to measure teacher's perception of their comfort and use of technology (p. 45). It is difficult to discern if the survey will be sufficiently sensitive to provide information regarding the implementation of the technology, as well as barriers to implementation.

Reader's Score: 15

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Milwaukee Public Schools (U351C140006)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	5	4
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	8
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	15	12
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	30	28
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	23
Sub Total	100	88
Priority Questions		
CPP-Technology		
Competitive Preference Priority-Technology		
1. CPP-Technology	20	17
Sub Total	20	17
Total	120	105

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Professional Development Arts Educators - 1: 84.351C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Milwaukee Public Schools (U351C140006)

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

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 MPS, as presented by the applicant, has a low academic achievement rate among SED students in math (15.3%) and reading (11%), so a clear need to support the target population is presented in proposal (pg. 1).

The applicant has demonstrated the investment by the MPS to increase the access to arts education by hiring 48 new arts teachers in 2013 along with an additional 25 teachers by 2014-15. In addition 400 non-arts teachers were hired during 2013-14, so the need to build capacity among arts teachers and classroom teachers is clearly demonstrated by the applicant and very important at this time of increasing arts education to students in targeted communities (pg. 2).

Weaknesses:

The data demonstrating need of targeted schools for those new and experienced teachers who are participating with proposed would present a clearer picture of the proposed project's baseline.

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 applicant will disseminate information through multiple digital platforms that are either already developed or will be developed upon completion of the project (pgs. 2-3).

The project's coordinator will report results of findings through publishing of articles about proposed project. The applicant demonstrates the coordinator's track record for publishing articles (pg. 5).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

With the DREAM team presenting at the Council of Great City Schools national conference in 2014, the findings, data and best practices developed during project will not be presented due to the timing of the conference (pg. 4).

Specific conferences to provide presentations

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

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 proposes professional development for those classroom and arts teachers who have been teaching 5 or less years by incorporating evidence-based Visual Thinking Strategies into the 5 goals of the proposed project (pgs. 5-6).

The goals clearly delineate the design to build capacity among the teachers to support rigorous arts education, math literacy, science literacy and English literacy skills for targeted students. (pgs. 6-7).

A clear understanding of building teacher capacity by deepening content knowledge for specific content areas, based upon research, supports design of proposed project (pgs. 7-8).

Increasing parental involvement through arts education, an ESEA goal, is incorporated into the project proposal (pg. 6).

Weaknesses:

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

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 VTS curriculum will align with instructional strategies that support student learning and understanding of CCSS. The implementation of these arts strategies will be sustained beyond the grant cycle due to the alignment to CCSS (pgs. 9-11).

The applicant will develop partnerships with various museums and local artists to support the goals of the project beyond the completion of the grant (pgs.11-12).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not demonstrate the potentially specific, positive impact in discreet grade-levels and arts disciplines/classrooms beyond the completion of the grant. This information would provide the proposed project a more strategic approach to sustaining and expanding these efforts beyond the completion of this grant.

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

Reader's Score: 12

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 presents the purpose of including all eligible teachers who may participate in the project, particularly those who represent the diverse culture of the community (pg. 13).

Weaknesses:

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

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's timeline and number of PD hours to implement project is aligned to a practical, sustaining professional development practice that will change instructional practices in current MPS classrooms of participating teachers (pg. 13).

The proposed model is designed around researched-based VTS visual arts strategies to ensure the quality of the training provided to teachers (pgs. 14-15).

This model specifically addresses Visual Arts standards to guide professional development and instruction (pgs. 54-62).

Summer sessions, technology-based tools to support teacher and student learning, and monthly PD sessions for participating teachers will provide continuous growth and development for participants. Teachers will analyze student samples with rubrics to implement ongoing cycle of improving instruction to support all students (pg. 16-17,

Sub Question

20).

Weaknesses:

Specific ELA and math CCSS are not clearly presented in the proposal, so proposed model to increase student academic achievement in these subject matters are unclear.

The selection of CCSS to be addressed aligned to MPS student need is not clearly presented in project proposal.

Designated visual arts standards presented in the project proposal mostly address K-8th grade instruction, even though the applicant presents this project to address the needs of K-12 students in MPS (pgs. 54-57).

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:

Due to the use of formative assessments, student data, analysis of data to drive teacher professional development and instruction, this project will support improvement in student academic achievement (pgs. 14-17).

Research evidence provided by applicant demonstrates project's potential to increase academic achievement among targeted students (pgs. 14-19).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not explicitly demonstrate the impact on specific students by grade levels or standards in all areas being addressed.

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

Reader's Score: 13

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 will adhere to MPS equal opportunity practices and will actively seek applicants from underrepresented groups to fill key project and consultant positions (pg. 22).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The key project personnel come to this proposed project with extensive background in arts education, specifically visual arts, curriculum and professional development implementation (pgs. 23-25, 76-81).

Weaknesses:

Clearly demonstrating project personnel experiences with instruction or curriculum in ELA, math and/or science would provide a better understanding of the capabilities of designated individuals to achieve all proposed project goals including academic achievement in these designated areas.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates the extensive background and expertise of project consultants to carry out proposed project, particularly those who will be responsible for evaluation of project (pgs. 25-28, 82-93).

Weaknesses:

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

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

Reader's Score: 28

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:

Table presented by applicant clearly demonstrates the key points of the management plan to support the accomplishment of proposed project (pgs. 32-38).

An additional timeline for proposed project are provided by applicant to demonstrate the milestones established per semester (pgs. 95-101).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly demonstrate how the management plan will address differentiated professional development for classroom teachers and arts teachers. Arts teachers will most likely have an extensive background and experience teaching visual arts, unlike many classroom teachers, so it is important that the professional development is differentiated to address the needs of both sets of learners, in order to build capacity at all levels. Providing in the management plan these details demonstrating how this will occur during the timeline of the proposed project would support the achievement of the plan's goals.

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 demonstrates the appropriate time allotted to Project Coordinator, Project Evaluation Team, Site Coordinator, School Principals, and others to ensure the project meets proposed objectives (pgs. 28-31).

Weaknesses:

Considering the Project Director is also the designated Visual Arts Specialist/Administrator for MPS, the amount of time designated by the applicant (.25 FTE) does not seem practical considering the amount of work expected for that position as presented in proposal and the additional amount of time needed to observe and possibly provide coaching to teachers.

Reader's Score:

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

Strengths:

Applicant incorporates job-imbedded coaching at least 3 times a year and monthly cohort meetings to review data aligned to indicators in order to determine next steps during the implementation of the proposed plan (pages 28-39). A rubric will be used to assess the professional development and measure the effectiveness, allowing the leadership team to determine possible changes or improvements (Appendix B, pages 63-74).

Weaknesses:

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

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:

None

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

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 demonstrates evidence-based, reliable tools to be used to create an evaluation structure to include multiple sources of assessment to gather quantitative and qualitative data to measure teacher practice, student achievement and effectiveness of overall proposed project (pgs. 40-48, 103-110).

Weaknesses:

Teacher observational data is missing from the evaluation process as presented by the applicant. This data would provide a clearer objective understanding about the instructional transition that may or may not be occurring within the classroom among the participating teachers. This data would also help the evaluation team understand the teacher questionnaire data.

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 project proposal includes multiple assessments including student periodic assessments throughout each year of the proposal to provide feedback to guide the professional development and classroom instruction process (pgs. 43, 103-110).

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 design of the evaluation method for the proposed project will support positive findings, leading to the potential of the project to be documented in the What Works Clearinghouse (pgs. 43-48).

Weaknesses:

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

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 incorporates technology to improve student learning of content by providing teachers professional development in graphic software, Powerpoint, Smartboards, and Museum Box during the summer (pg. 16).

The project includes a partnership with Cardinal Stritch University to provide access to hands-on training with technology as well as additional support from undergraduate art education students (pg. 16).

The project professional development coordinator brings to this project experience with technology-based professional development in education (pg. 24).

Weaknesses:

In the proposed project, the applicant does not clearly demonstrate using ongoing evaluations of the technology implemented in classroom, so it is unclear whether the digital tool(s) are making an impact on student achievement or a better digital tool or software.

Reader's Score: 17

Status: Submitted

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