

Technical Review Cover Sheet

Panel Details

**Fiscal Year** 2014 **CFDA/Subprogram** 84.215J **Schedule No** 1 **Tier No.** 1

**Panel Name** Full Service Community Schools - 8

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**Applicant Name** Mercer Street Friends **PR/Award No** U215J140100

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Questions

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Scored</b>
<b>1. Selection Criteria</b>		
Project Design	25	25
Adequacy of Resources	20	20
Management Plan	25	25
Project Services	20	19
Project Evaluation	10	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98</b>

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Priority Questions

**1. Competitive Preference Priority: Promise Zones**

CPP: Promise Zones	3	0
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>98</b>

Technical Review Form

**Applicant Name** Mercer Street Friends **PR/Award No** U215J140100

**Reviewer Name**

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**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

1. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a description of:

(i) The students, students' family members, and community to be served, including information about the demographic characteristics and needs of the students, students' family members, and other community members and the estimated number of individuals to be served; and

(ii) The eligible services (as listed in the Absolute Priority described elsewhere in the notice inviting applications) to be provided or coordinated by the applicant and its partner entities, how those services will meet the needs of students, students' family members, and other community members, and the frequency with which those services will be provided to students, students' family members, and community members.

**(iii) 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.**

**(iv) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding stream from other programs or policies supported by community State and Federal Resources.**

Strengths:

\*The proposal submitted by Mercer Street Friends met every requirement of the RFP. (pp. 3-12) It was pragmatic in its design and effective in its ability to provide necessary background information about the reorganization of schools in the district that allows this project to build upon existing partnerships in new ways.

\*The proposal has extraordinary match dollars from the partners. All funds go into the efforts of each partner. There was no indirect listed.

\*Each element of the project was presented concisely and effectively. Examples were provided clearly as was the expertise and track record of individual partners.

\*This proposal has potential to bring about change in the community. It is beginning the project with a focus on five family services. This will provide a solid basis from which the subsequent 4 years will build upon.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 25**

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**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**2. (1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources to be provided by the applicant and consortium partners;**

**(ii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project; and**

**(iii) The extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and services to be provided.**

Strengths:

\*The project lead, MST, has investigated a successful program used nationally that will be employed in this project. Programs such as Check & Connect used to curb issues of truancy and behavioral problems provide consistency for students involved. Each counselor works with a student case and their family for a minimum of two years.

\*Similarly, the program plans on using the Bavolek Family Nurturing Curriculum for School Age Children to address trauma based in both adults and children.

\*The majority of the matched funds by the partners go towards providing direct counseling and mentoring opportunities for children and families.

\*They address the need to introduce computer skills to low-income families and have already established the Trenton Digital Initiative that secured and refurbished more than 100 computers for distribution. They plan to continue the call for donations of unwanted computers to corporations, agencies and individuals.

\*The resources already in place were explained, and how those resources will be expanded was addressed throughout the proposal.

Weaknesses:

\*No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 20**

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### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**3. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(i) The extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a description of planning, coordination, management, and oversight of the eligible services (as listed in the Absolute Priority described elsewhere in the notice inviting applications) to be provided at each school to be served, including the role of the school principal, the FSCS coordinator, partner entities, parents, and community members;**

**(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the FSCS coordinator and other key project personnel including prior performance of the applicant on similar or related efforts; and**

**(iii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director, the FSCS coordinator, and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

\*Using the six elements of “What Explains Community Coalition Effectiveness? A Review of the Literature” published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, the project will adhere to the recommendations found therein to codify collaborative protocols in the 1st-3rd quarter of year one, with the implementation of the program beginning in the fourth quarter.

\* The strongest part of the management plan is the extensive experience and track record that Mercer St. Friends has in coordinating large, multi-agency projects. They have already proven that they can be successful.

\*Qualifications for those who will serve as project leaders bridge clinical, psychological, and academic areas of specialty. Perusal of their curriculum vita provides an impressive list of applicable training and experience.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 25**

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**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

**4. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers the following:**

**(i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice; and**

**(ii) 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:

\*Clear evidence of up-to-date knowledge of current research as well as implementation of that research in partnerships with which they work.

\*The services to be provided will lead to improvements in student academic work, but also in the community as a whole. The project plans to begin by addressing the stress needs in families and schools. Once change is effected at that basic level, they will move up the hierarchy to meet other needs. Working with the FoodBank, this project provides "weekend meals" to "food insecure children and families."

\*After school programs, nutritional programs, parenting and student counseling, use and delivery of training with stress toolkits, allow for important activities that will meet current needs.

\*The project demonstrates careful consideration of health issues within families struggling in poverty. Using a study produced for the Trenton community, they will address the five health priorities identified: Health Literacy & Disparities, Safety & Crime, Obesity & Healthy Lifestyles, Substance Abuse & Behavioral Health, and Chronic Disease such as diabetes, hypertension and cancer.

Weaknesses:

It was unclear how some of the parent services would be covered financially (p. 9), or if this would be an expansion of already existing services.

The budget indicates that four individuals will be hired (p.e46): Check and Connect Coordinator and Mentor, a Youth Case Worker and a Family Support worker. It would have been helpful to break out the fiscal commitment of partners in this area. The provision of additional information regarding what is being done at what cost would have been helpful to the reviewer.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 19**

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## **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**5. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed evaluation:**

**(i) Will provide timely and valid information on the management, implementation, or efficiency of the project; and**

**(ii) Will provide guidance on or strategies for replicating or testing the project intervention in multiple settings.**

**(iii) Will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

Strengths:

\*The external evaluator for this project has worked with all groups involved in the partnerships for this project. The group was chosen not only for its successful work with MSF, and others, but also for their national reputation for assessments related to education, youth development, and large multi-year projects.

Weaknesses:

\*The listing of Objectives, Outcomes and Performance Measures (pp. 31-34) was clear but could have been condensed to allow for greater narrative in that section.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 9**

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Priority Questions

**Competitive Preference Priority: Promise Zones - Promise Zones**

**1. The Secretary gives competitive preference to applications that propose to work with communities that have been awarded a Promise Zone designation. Promise Zone designees have committed to establishing comprehensive, coordinated approaches in order to ensure, among our**

goals, that America's most vulnerable children succeed from cradle to career. This designation is designed to assist local leaders in creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving educational opportunities, leveraging private investment, and reducing violent crime in high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities. Promise Zone designations establish comprehensive, coordinated approaches in order to ensure America's most vulnerable children succeed from cradle to career. By partnering with Promise Zones designees, the Federal government will help communities access the resources and expertise they need--including the resources from various neighborhood revitalization initiatives--to ensure that Federal programs and resources support the efforts to transform these communities.

### **Strengths**

No strengths noted.

### **Weaknesses**

Applicant does not address this competitive preference priority, as the target area is not one of the five Promise Zone Designees.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 0**

Technical Review Cover Sheet

Panel Details

**Fiscal Year** 2014 **CFDA/Subprogram** 84.215J **Schedule No** 1 **Tier No.** 1

**Panel Name** Full Service Community Schools - 8

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**Applicant Name** Mercer Street Friends **PR/Award No** U215J140100

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Questions

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Scored</b>
<b>1. Selection Criteria</b>		
Project Design	25	25
Adequacy of Resources	20	20
Management Plan	25	25
Project Services	20	15
Project Evaluation	10	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>93</b>

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Priority Questions

**1. Competitive Preference Priority: Promise Zones**

CPP: Promise Zones	3	0
<hr/>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>93</b>

Technical Review Form

**Applicant Name** Mercer Street Friends **PR/Award No** U215J140100

**Reviewer Name**

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**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

1. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

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**(iii) 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.**

**(iv) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding stream from other programs or policies supported by community State and Federal Resources.**

Strengths:

The applicant does an excellent job of providing a fully developed project design that includes eligible services, demographics and the overall plan for incorporating a Full Service Community School (FSCS) program leveraging partnerships and existing funding (p.1-3). The proposed project design focuses on the various challenges facing the target community that include high rates (33.6% vs. 12.2% county and 11.4% state) of children living in poverty; individuals not completing high school (29.5% vs 12.8% county and 12.1% state); unemployment rates (17.9% vs 10.2% county and 9.5% state); and violent crimes (14.9% vs 4.5% county, and 2.9% state).

The applicant has identified a number of challenges facing the community and the students at the target schools. As a result, the applicant provides a detailed list of eligible services to be provided by the lead and partner agencies. The detailed MOUs clearly document the roles, responsibilities, and commitment of each partner (p.4-6 & appendices). Many of the agencies have worked with the applicant and will build upon existing programs and services in addition to leveraging existing federal, state, and local funding streams.

The project design has a “Cradle to Career” focus with mental health counseling and other interventions that are research-based (p.5-6) and have a strong likelihood of sustainability after grant funds end (p.6-7).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 25**

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**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**2. (1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources to be provided by the applicant and consortium partners;**

**(ii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project; and**

**(iii) The extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and services to be provided.**

Strengths:

The applicant does a good job of documenting the in-kind resources from the lead agency and community partners. The budget details a 50% match in year one; 33% in years two-four; and 32% in the final year demonstrating a strong commitment to implementing a project that has potential for long-term sustainability (p.14 & appendices).

The applicant provides detailed MOUs that document the commitment of each partner, roles, responsibilities, experience, and capacity to support the proposed project objectives. The applicant documents future expansion through matching funds from partner agencies, including a pledge of ongoing technical assistance further demonstrating a strong commitment to the project (p.14-15).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 20**

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### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**3. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(i) The extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a**

**description of planning, coordination, management, and oversight of the eligible services (as listed in the Absolute Priority described elsewhere in the notice inviting applications) to be provided at each school to be served, including the role of the school principal, the FSCS coordinator, partner entities, parents, and community members;**

**(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the FSCS coordinator and other key project personnel including prior performance of the applicant on similar or related efforts; and**

**(iii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director, the FSCS coordinator, and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive management plan that documents long-range planning, service-delivery procedures, coordination, and management of the project. The detailed timeline with objectives, performance measures, services/activities, and key personnel demonstrate strong strategic planning skills amongst all partner agencies (p.16-19).

The training, experience, and time commitment of all personnel are clearly described and are more than adequate to meeting project objectives. There is a comprehensive plan for coordination amongst each of the partner entities as evidenced by detailed timeline and MOUs (p.16-19, appendices).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 25**

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#### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

- 4. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.**
  - (2) In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers the following:**
    - (i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date**

**knowledge from research and effective practice; and**

**(ii) 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 has identified a number of program activities that they believe are based on up-to-date research and effective practice. The applicant states that “research suggests” that projects based on the guiding principles of the Community Schools model and that incorporate the six key conditions for learning have shown some increases in the achievement level of students when measured against rigorous academic standards (p.26). The applicant cites two programs (Check & Connect and the Trenton Digital Initiative) as after-school enrichment programs that have enhanced classroom work (p.27).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to adequately address this selection criterion as there are no details on how the proposed research will address a number of the challenges that the applicant listed as it relates to high crime rates and the variety of social and health indicators facing the target population (p.3, 27-28).

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 15**

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#### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**5. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed evaluation:**

**(i) Will provide timely and valid information on the management, implementation, or efficiency of the project; and**

**(ii) Will provide guidance on or strategies for replicating or testing the project intervention in multiple settings.**

**(iii) Will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

Strengths:

The applicant will provide for a formative and summative evaluation that will be conducted by an external evaluator with previous experience evaluating federal grants and projects similar to FSCS. The applicant will collect qualitative and quantitative data that aligns with the various performance measures and objectives outlined (p.30-32). The role of the evaluator will be supported by a contingent of project team members with considerable expertise in the area of evaluation (p.31 & appendices).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide for a thorough evaluation as no baseline data is provided to determine if the goals align with the objectives and outcomes (p.32-34). The applicant provides a number of proposed increases without providing baseline data to determine the efficacy of the proposed objectives.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 8**

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Priority Questions

**Competitive Preference Priority: Promise Zones - Promise Zones**

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**Strengths**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses**

Applicant does not address this competitive preference priority, as the target area is not one of the five Promise Zone Designees.

**Question Status: Completed****Reviewer Score: 0**

Technical Review Cover Sheet

Panel Details

**Fiscal Year** 2014 **CFDA/Subprogram** 84.215J **Schedule No** 1 **Tier No.** 1

**Panel Name** Full Service Community Schools - 8

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**Applicant Name** Mercer Street Friends **PR/Award No** U215J140100

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Questions

	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Scored</b>
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Priority Questions

**1. Competitive Preference Priority: Promise Zones**

CPP: Promise Zones	3	0
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
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**Applicant Name** Mercer Street Friends **PR/Award No** U215J140100

**Reviewer Name**

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**(iii) 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.**

**(iv) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes using existing funding stream from other programs or policies supported by community State and Federal Resources.**

i-The applicant provides a thorough description of the school and community served by the proposed project. The inclusion of poverty, unemployment and crime statistics for the local community highlights the need for project services in the target area (p1). The inclusion of data on violence, academic underperformance, low-graduation rate, and low rates of post-secondary education participation indicate that services are needed in the school and will have a residual impact on the surrounding community (p2-3). The project intends to serve 501 students, who are predominately minority and come from families with low family income (p3).

ii-Services targeted for the project will meet the needs of students and their families in that each service reflects feedback received from partner service providers (p6) and data from the local community survey (p1). The level of low adult education attainment and college enrollment begs the implementation of the Check and Connect program to increase the likelihood that students consider and enroll in college/post-secondary training. The use of vetted parental engagement curricula will meet the needs of the school's poor families in that specific skills and strategies will be provided. Extended delivery of parental training, social services and mentoring activities (i.e., monthly, 8-week, 15-week, year-round) will also increase the likelihood that skills will be retained by participants (p8-11).

iii-The applicant's intent to leverage other partners to secure funding that will support and expand the project is described in the narrative. The identification of supplemental district programming is a best practice in that it identifies parallel program options to address identified needs in the event funding is not secured (p12). A strength of the proposal is that the applicant has long-standing relationships with local service organizations that can be utilized to provide services going forward (p13).

iv-The proposed project is built on a city intervention program and a grant application submitted for funding (p13). The applicant also has other local service providers that are not named in the proposal, but provide supports to the school and its families. Organizations providing match funding and those providing letters of support, most notably the National Center for Community Schools, is further evidence that the applicant intends to partner with and integrate funding and support from project and non-project organizations (appendix).

Weaknesses:

i-No weaknesses noted.

ii-No weaknesses noted.

iii-No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 25**

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### **Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**2. (1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources to be provided by the applicant and consortium partners;**

**(ii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project; and**

**(iii) The extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and services to be provided.**

Strengths:

i-The applicant provides an adequate level of support for the project. The leveraging of district personnel, office space and supplies, security services, and district partner services demonstrate that appropriate resources will be available to the project (p14). The presence of MOUs that clearly discuss project commitments will also likely ensure services and resources pledged to the project will be provided by project partners.

ii-Each project partner has indicated support for the proposal in the attached MOUs. An MOU with the consortium members and another with the Trenton Board of Education clearly delineate duties accepted under this proposal (p14; appendix). The presence of the MOU will likely encourage partner accountability and facilitate project evaluation.

iii-The budget clearly delineates anticipated project costs. The amounts noted are reasonable for a project serving 501 students. The budget narrative clearly identifies costs and, where applicable, defines how costs were determined. The inclusion of a detailed budget narrative

provides context for anticipated services and is a strength of the proposal.

Weaknesses:

i-No weaknesses noted.

ii-No weaknesses noted.

iii-No weaknesses noted.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 20**

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### **Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**3. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**(i) The extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a description of planning, coordination, management, and oversight of the eligible services (as listed in the Absolute Priority described elsewhere in the notice inviting applications) to be provided at each school to be served, including the role of the school principal, the FSCS coordinator, partner entities, parents, and community members;**

**(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the FSCS coordinator and other key project personnel including prior performance of the applicant on similar or related efforts; and**

**(iii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director, the FSCS coordinator, and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

i-The applicant's use of a steering committee to guide the development and implementation of the proposed project is a best practice because each partner has committed a member to the committee (p15). The opportunity to provide feedback in a substantive manner increases the likelihood that the project takes advantage of specific partner expertise, and partner buy-in will increase and impact project sustainability. The roles of the principal and project coordinator are appropriately detailed in the narrative, and partner roles/responsibilities are indicated in the

attached MOUs (p21-22).

ii-The project coordinator has the requisite qualifications to serve in this capacity based on experience as a social worker and knowledge of the lead organization, Mercer Street Friends. The principal is particularly qualified given her knowledge of the target site, parents and residents of the surrounding community. Additional key positions have not been filled but have job summaries in the narrative that define qualifications and anticipated job duties (p23-24). Both the lead organization and school have a history of working with project partners and collaborating on school-wide initiatives (p19-20). The narrative provides several collaboration summaries that further document the extent to which the lead agency has history with and ability to partner with other organizations to impact its programming.

iii-The budget provides an FTE allocation for all personnel paid with grant funds (budget narrative). Overall, the coordinator's 1.0 FTE and identified FTEs for additional personnel are appropriate for duties assigned or referred to in the narrative.

Weaknesses:

i-No weaknesses noted

ii-No weaknesses noted

iii-No weaknesses noted

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 25**

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#### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

**4. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers the following:**

**(i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice; and**

**(ii) 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:

i-The Check and Connect program, the primary component of the project, reflects effective practice because it meets What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards (p24). The use of other vetted curricula recommended by national advocacy groups (e.g, Bavalke Nurturing Parenting Programs, SAMHSA) is also evidence of best practice in that it ensures programs and project activities are aligned with and have a history of producing desired results (p24-26).

ii-The applicant provides some documentation that project services will lead to improvements in achievement. The combination of the applicant's focus on technology, after-school enrichment activities and summer programs will likely yield some improvements in achievement, given that activities have an academic component (p10-11, 27).

Weaknesses:

i-No weaknesses noted.

ii-The applicant does not present a convincing argument that the combination of Check and Connect, parenting programming, mental health services, afterschool/summer enrichment, and mentoring will impact academic performance at a level significant enough to effect change in a school designated as a priority school. The lowest graduation rate in the state and district-wide persistently low performing schools may not see immediate results from programs that do not include or directly address intensive academic interventions in core academic subjects (p2, 17-19). The narrative also does not clearly identify the set of rigorous academic standards against which student performance will be measured.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 15**

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**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**5. (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.**

**(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed evaluation:**

**(i) Will provide timely and valid information on the management, implementation, or efficiency of the project; and**

**(ii) Will provide guidance on or strategies for replicating or testing the project intervention in multiple settings.**

**(iii) Will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes.**

Strengths:

i-The annual and quarterly review of program data is appropriate for this project given that project interventions last for several weeks and are best assessed after interventions have taken effect (i.e., stress reduction, improved parenting skills, improved attendance rates) (p31-34). Regular reporting of data to the steering committee will also provide timely information on the status of the project implementation and efficiency (p15).

ii-The evaluation plan has predetermined three sets of recommendations that will be included in the project evaluation: implementation recommendations, outcomes and partnership effectiveness (p30). The holistic assessment of feedback on these measures will facilitate discussions regarding whether the project is replicable because it addresses the major components of the proposal. Of particular usefulness will be feedback on the actual interventions (i.e., Check and Connect, Bavalke Nurturing Parenting Programs) and their ability to impact change in a school/community facing significant academic and social challenges.

iii-The narrative contains both process and outcome objectives that clearly define valid and reliable performance data (p31-34). The listing of data collection frequency, persons responsible, targeted data collection tools, and validation methods are strengths of the application and exemplify a well-developed evaluation.

Weaknesses:

i-No weaknesses noted.

ii-No weaknesses noted.

iii-The evaluation plan does not include feedback from project participants on each intervention. This data would provide the applicant with an assessment on the effectiveness of the specific program and its unique impact on the process and outcome objectives assessed by the evaluation plan.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 8**

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Priority Questions

## **Competitive Preference Priority: Promise Zones - Promise Zones**

- 1. The Secretary gives competitive preference to applications that propose to work with communities that have been awarded a Promise Zone designation. Promise Zone designees have committed to establishing comprehensive, coordinated approaches in order to ensure, among our goals, that America's most vulnerable children succeed from cradle to career. This designation is designed to assist local leaders in creating jobs, increasing economic activity, improving educational opportunities, leveraging private investment, and reducing violent crime in high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities. Promise Zone designations establish comprehensive, coordinated approaches in order to ensure America's most vulnerable children succeed from cradle to career. By partnering with Promise Zones designees, the Federal government will help communities access the resources and expertise they need--including the resources from various neighborhood revitalization initiatives--to ensure that Federal programs and resources support the efforts to transform these communities.**

### **Strengths**

No strengths noted

### **Weaknesses**

Applicant does not address this competitive preference priority, as the target area is not one of the five Promise Zone Designees.

**Question Status: Completed**

**Reviewer Score: 0**