

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/28/2015 10:21 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Criterion Education, LLC (U367D150009)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	6
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	30
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	12
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
1. CPP3: Promoting STEM ED	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP4: High-Need Students		
CPP4: High-Need Students		
1. CPP4: High-Need Students	4	4
Sub Total	4	4
Total	107	89

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 5: 84.367D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Criterion Education, LLC (U367D150009)

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:

- (1) The significance of the proposed project on a National Level.
- (2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices.
- (3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

The potential contribution of the proposed project will be the increase in the number of leaders who are trained in the Executive Development Program. (Page 10)

The results of this project are likely to produce improvements in leadership in the partnered states. This in turn will have a positive effect on student achievement. (Pages 11-14)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant does indicate that two states will be the locations of the proposed project, the applicant does not provide specific information on how this project will affect significantly National level education. (Pages 6-8)

Although the project indicates that there will be an increase in the number of new leaders that are more effective in their work, it is not clear if there is development and advancement in this training from previous work that has been accomplished.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design and services of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design and services of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.
- (3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of

disadvantaged individuals.

Strengths:

The high quality of the Executive Development Program is established by past practices and research. (Page 31)

The intensity of the training includes 24 days of classroom instruction and 40 hours of online work. This provides appropriate intensity and duration for training of educational leaders. (Page32)

This proposed project will address the need for highly effective leaders in the schools served by the project. (Page 34)

The proposed project will focus on serving the needs of disadvantaged individuals by providing training for the school leaders in improved student achievement for English Language Learners and Special Education. (Pages 25 and 35)

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how Goal three can be measured. It is difficult to determine how "leverage" can be measured. It is not clear how this goal will be isolated to insure its impact on the student outcomes of the project. (Page 22 and 43)

The objectives in Table 4 are not written in a manner that determines the measurability of the objective. For example, "Prepare Lead Principals to deliver leadership institutes." (Page 43)

The applicant does not clearly support the need for shortage of highly effective school leaders. The applicant states that there is significant evidence that the majority of the nation's current principals are ill prepared to do the job; however, does not provide support for that statement. (Page 33)

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project and of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors.**
- (2) 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.**
- (3) The extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation.**

Strengths:

The qualifications of the key personnel indicate that there is relevant training and experience to address the activities involved in this project. (Pages 36-38 and resumes)

Table 4 outlines clearly the responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks. These elements are closely linked to the objectives and project goals. (Page 43-44)

The applicant proposes a management plan and budget that includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project including the project evaluation. The cost to the partner states and school districts is cost effective. (Page 44)

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates that the proposed project will include a Project Coordinator at 100% FTE. The applicant does not provide a job description that includes the desired training and experiences. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the qualifications of those individuals applying. (Page 39)

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to continue the proposed project after the grant period ends. In determining the adequacy of resources and the potential for utility of the proposed project's activities and products by other organizations, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations.
- (3) The extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

Clearly the train-the-trainer and the career ladder components of this proposed project will provide for building capacity at the district sites. These efforts will result in sustainability for the project activities beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. (Page 45)

The application includes a dissemination plan that will assure that findings from the project will be shared with state and district partners as well as through major conferences throughout the United States. (page 47)

Weaknesses:

Expecting school districts to enhance the salary of Master Principals to complete the project may jeopardize the sustainability of that level of training. (Page 46)

The applicant does not clearly identify the findings and products that will be shared with stakeholders and other agencies and organization. (Page 47)

Reader's Score: 12

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:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Note: We encourage applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:
(1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and
(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

In addition, we encourage applicants to participate in an optional Webinar hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences on March 6, 2015. This Webinar will discuss strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-experimental Design Studies. Applicants interested in participating in this Webinar may find more information at the following Web site: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=37>.

Strengths:

Research Questions 4 and 5 relating to student achievement will be addressed by quantitative data from state tests, and student attendance and discipline information. These are examples of effective uses of qualitative data. (Page 57)

The evaluation plan includes performance feedback that occurs bi-monthly, as well as annually. These efforts will assure that progress is being made toward achieving intended outcomes. (Page 58)

The evaluation plan with the randomized sampling should meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (Page 58)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant indicates that the evaluation plan is appropriate to the project's goals and objectives, the applicant does not provide a clear link between the objectives and the measurable results. (Page 48)

Reader's Score: 16

Priority Questions

CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness - CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)

This priority funds projects that will identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources (as defined in the notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

The cost-effectiveness of this training program is reflected in the low per-pupil and per school district cost. (Page 60)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

CPP3: Promoting STEM Education - CPP3: Promoting STEM Education

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education

(Please only assign a score of either 0 or 2 for this question.)

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on student growth (as defined in this notice).

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The proposed project includes training and staff development for potential leaders in math, science and literacy. This training will support increased opportunities for professional development of leaders. (Page 53)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 2

CPP4: High-Need Students - CPP4: High-Need Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Supporting High-Need Students

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;
- (b) Learning environments; or
- (c) Both,

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.
- (ii) Students with disabilities.
- (iii) English learners.
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of

students living in poverty.

(vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.

(vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 4 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

This proposed project has set a priority to meet the needs of rural students, students with disabilities, English learners, students in lowest performing schools and student living in poverty. The project includes targeted leadership institutes to address English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: **4**

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Criterion Education, LLC (U367D150009)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	6
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	31
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	11
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
Sub Total	100	81
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
1. CPP3: Promoting STEM ED	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP4: High-Need Students		
CPP4: High-Need Students		
1. CPP4: High-Need Students	4	4
Sub Total	4	4
Total	107	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 5: 84.367D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Criterion Education, LLC (U367D150009)

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:

- (1) The significance of the proposed project on a National Level.
- (2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices.
- (3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

The National Institute of School Leadership is already a well-established program with national significance: the group already trains and coaches new and veteran principals (p. 2). NISL has already received i3 funding (2014) and has demonstrated its national significance.

The plan for advanced certification of school leaders is potentially very useful to overall school reform efforts.

The proposal makes the case that the EDP process does equal more learning for students. On p.13 the proposal states that there are many graduates of the program already and the correlation between this training and increased student learning looks strong.

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes that systems (and parents) are “desperate” (p.7) for principals with (certified) advanced skills, but no evidence for this desperation is given.

The proposal does not indicate the significance of having an advanced credential. It is not clear what the specific gain of having a leadership career ladder is (for instance, why this advanced credential would be better and different than going to central administration.

The two states for focus Pennsylvania & Mississippi – apparently are interested in an alternative credential route for principals. It is not clear whether EDP training is like/not like IHE routes into administrative certification.

National certification is described as “could be motivating” p. 14 – as a career trajectory. No other evidence is given for this claim.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design and services of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design and services of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable.**
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.**
- (3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.**

Strengths:

The train-the-trainer model EDP p. 18-19 is clearly aligned to goals/objectives.

Quality/intensity of support as indicated on p. 24 is strong, as indicated by the plan for the institutes for resident principals and p. 25-26, the embedded professional development.

On p. 29, the “virtuous circle of support” suggests a comprehensive effort for improving teaching and learning, especially of administrators.

The training for facilitators of the EDP process (p. 32) suggests lots of ongoing connections/layers of support that give quality, intensity, and duration to training for new practices.

Wisconsin Master Principals p. 20-21 are one good example of how the project design is meant to spread best practices.

In making the case for “shortages” there is a very strong response – “stepping stones” p. 35 to indicate the need.

This is a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support – ELLs, Disabilities, community engagement.

The design includes a link between PA and MS because of parallel levels of poverty, and this makes sense for including the two states in the proposal.

Weaknesses:

The focus of the grant on only the states of PA and MS is not truly national. The development of a national certification program is not adequately explained within the context of this proposal. The proposal seems more focused on promoting the spread of EDP as a “comprehensive career ladder” and it appears more relevant on the local or state level.

Reader's Score: 31

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project and of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors.**
- (2) 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.**

(3) The extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation.

Strengths:

The relationship between NISL and the PA and MS departments of education seems promising (p. 39) for coordinating activities as described.

The plan for meeting regularly (online and sometimes face to face) makes logistical sense in terms of assuring that the timeline will be followed and project tasks completed.

Weaknesses:

Claim NISL “most widely used” p. 45 leadership program in the country. There is no evidence offered for this claim.

Despite the good point made about high-need schools being “stepping stones” p. 35 for principals (rather than a commitment), the proposal seems to be operating in a vacuum. There are no references to IHEs or leadership preparation programs in PA/MS, and there is no discussion of other administrative roles that districts may want principals to move into. As a result, it is not clear that principals have motivation/incentive for expanded roles, or other requirements for advanced certification.

The project manager is only at 50% time (page 36), and other staffing is already established, not necessarily dedicated to the particular proposal. Therefore it is not clear that the management plan includes sufficient human resources for carrying out the project.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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(1) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations.

(3) The extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

On page 45, the discussion of scaling up opportunities to train and coach principals (having a cadre of principals trained), is a compelling description for how the proposed project could build capacity.

There is a plan to disseminate information about the results of the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

There is no described strategy for making the proposed product (national advanced certification) a desired credential so that it would be useful to other agencies and organizations.

The stated wish (p. 45) that there would be increased compensation and other incentives for gaining a Master Principal certification should be directly and strategically addressed. The proposal should explain how building and supporting an advanced certification system can be sustained beyond the period of funding.

Reader's Score: 11

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:

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- (2) The extent to which the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**
- (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
- (4) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.**

Note: We encourage applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:
(1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and
(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

In addition, we encourage applicants to participate in an optional Webinar hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences on March 6, 2015. This Webinar will discuss strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-experimental Design Studies. Applicants interested in participating in this Webinar may find more information at the following Web site: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=37>.

Strengths:

The RAND partnership activities as described on p. 51 are extensive and clearly focused on yielding good evaluative measures of the project.

Implementation/evaluation is structured on clear objective measures (page 49)

Performance feedback on EDP, etc., is not necessarily focused solely on the utility/desirability of advanced certification, but is clearly describing a system for ongoing improvement of the training through formative feedback (p. 50). This suggests that the proposal's central interest is ongoing building of the EDP model rather than developing a new national credential.

The plan to utilize a control group of other principals (who do not receive the EDP "treatment") p. 16-17 makes sense toward meeting WWC standards without reservations.

Weaknesses:

The EDP training is already proven (RQs p. 49), but this raises the question of what is specific to this proposal beyond who it is serving. The implementation plan could be more clearly specific to PA and MS contexts.

The case studies (P. 51-2) offering examples of "coaching implementation" studies of closed networks of coaches/coached principals are illustrative of the working of the organization, but it's not clear what would be done with

the data generated (how would the NISL learn from this work).

The reference to creating a “gap-filling EDF” training group (p. 52) does provide a group that will be good to use as a test of the effectiveness of the EDP model (and a control group), but this training does not seem to be aligned with the specific train-the-trainer (Master Principal, etc.) focus of this proposal.

Reader's Score: 16

Priority Questions

CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness - CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)

This priority funds projects that will identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources (as defined in the notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

The proposal identifies comparative costs (p. 60) to other programs and reasons to expect these will be more effectively by this proposal.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP3: Promoting STEM Education - CPP3: Promoting STEM Education

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education

(Please only assign a score of either 0 or 2 for this question.)

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on student growth (as defined in this notice).

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The EDP curriculum includes alignment with CCSS and Next Generation Science standards p. 63

The applicant notes that there is an intention to impact "all teachers, all subjects, all students" p. 65

Weaknesses:

This is a one-off impact on student learning because the focus is on leadership/mentoring for leadership, with a secondary focus on instruction. P. 65

Reader's Score: 2

CPP4: High-Need Students - CPP4: High-Need Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Supporting High-Need Students

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;
- (b) Learning environments; or
- (c) Both,

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.
- (ii) Students with disabilities.
- (iii) English learners.
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.
- (vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.
- (vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 4 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

Focus on MS and PA as sites of high poverty (rural and urban). EDP focus is on leadership development for high-need turnaround. Case examples from MS Leads and AZ Leadership Academy and others are compelling p. 68-70.

Specific institutes are also focused on student needs (ESL, disabilities, etc.) p. 70-71.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Criterion Education, LLC (U367D150009)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	7
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	32
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	17
Sub Total	100	87
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
CPP3: Promoting STEM Education		
1. CPP3: Promoting STEM ED	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP4: High-Need Students		
CPP4: High-Need Students		
1. CPP4: High-Need Students	4	4
Sub Total	4	4
Total	107	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 5: 84.367D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Criterion Education, LLC (U367D150009)

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:

- (1) The significance of the proposed project on a National Level.
- (2) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices.
- (3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

The applicant provides compelling details to show the potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices. This can be evidenced by the applicant discussing that this project will further develop and enhance practice by creating a state-of-the-art principal career path, with National Advanced Certificates for Lead and Master Principals based on rigorous criteria; using a proven train-the-trainer model and research-based coaching program to embed theory, knowledge and best practices deeply into the work of less accomplished principals; and providing targeted leadership institutes to further elevate principal knowledge and use of best practices. In addition, the applicant wrote that equally important, this project will contribute to the development and advancement of knowledge about the effects of coaching by principals, for principals, on student achievement.

The applicant provided sound evidence to show the importance of the results likely to be attained by the proposed project resulting in teaching and student achievement. This can be evidenced by the applicant discussing that there is a strong correlation between the number of key concepts that a principal implements after completing the Executive Development Program (EDP) and the gains in student achievement. This project's highly focused coaching model, with intensive coaching delivered over 30 months, is designed to hasten and deepen the implementation of key EDP concepts. The EDP has produced better student achievement results than all seven programs for an average of \$10,000 to \$20,000 per graduate. This makes this project particularly important because it will validate a different approach to school leadership that produces stronger results for a fraction of the investment and will create a career ladder system that provides a scalable, sustainable model for school leadership development and improvements in instructional leadership, teaching and learning.

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates 2 States will be involved in the project but there are no details to show how their involvement will have an impact at the National level.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design and services of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design and services of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

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- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.**
- (3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.**
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided compelling details to show the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable. For example, the applicant discussed their goal to leverage master principals to provide exemplary coaching to fellow principals. The applicant wrote that using the EDP the principals they coach will have a common framework of effective leadership and shared understanding of goals to supporting teachers for instructional improvement and improved student achievement.

The applicant provided compelling details to show the extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. For example, the applicant wrote that the EDP empowers principals to become instructional leaders and drive their schools to high performance. The program emphasizes the role of principals as strategic thinkers, instructional leaders and creators of a just, fair and caring culture in which all students, including high-need students, meet high standards. The project ensures that principals can effectively set direction for teachers, support their staffs and design an efficient organization. Principals learn to establish, share and reach the vision and goals of world-class schooling in standards-based systems. They are given tools to become instructional leaders and gain the knowledge to confidently recognize and guide strong instruction in literacy, math and science.

The applicant provided distinct evidence to show the extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services. For example, the applicant wrote that the program incorporates research on leadership development in education and other professions and best practices in leadership in the United States and internationally. The applicant wrote that the program extends professional learning beyond the classroom with Action Learning Projects in schools, professional readings and participation in communities of practice.

The applicant provided strong details to show the extent to which the proposed project will prepare personnel for fields in which shortages have been demonstrated. For example the applicant discussed that the limited number of principals with the specialized skills required to turn around chronically low-performing schools makes the leadership crisis even more acute. States and districts are playing catch-up to recruit, select and prepare talented individuals to lead schools effectively. The applicant wrote that every aspect of this project is designed to address the shortage of highly effective leaders, including the National Advanced Certification System, the career ladder, professional development, training and coaching at every level of the career ladder; and the leveraging of the knowledge and skills of Lead and Master Principals.

The applicant provided compelling evidence to show extent to which the proposed project will focus on addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals. For example, the applicant wrote that this project will focus on serving the needs of large numbers of disadvantaged students. The applicant wrote that among the districts in Pennsylvania and Mississippi that have submitted letters of intent to participate, the proportions of their students who are eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program range from 100 percent to 37 percent. The average poverty rate for all confirmed districts is 69.54 percent. This project will address the needs of disadvantaged students by equipping principals at every stage of their careers with the leadership competencies to address the needs of disadvantage students, including teacher effectiveness, school climate and improved student achievement in ELA, math, science and other subjects.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide support to show how principals will be selected.

The applicant did not provide details to show their plan to address shortages.

Reader's Score: 32

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project and of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors.

(2) 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.

(3) The extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation.

Strengths:

The applicant provides clear details to show the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, key project personnel, and project consultants or subcontractors. The applicant discussed that the management plan for this project has clearly defined responsibilities for every aspect of the implementation for key NISL leaders and staff, State and District Liaisons, and the evaluation partners. Both state partners share our vision for implementing a National Advanced Certification system and comprehensive career ladder for principals, and have already recruited many district partners for this project. All partners involved with the evaluation team, state departments of education and district superintendents involved with the project and are committed to full participation in the project, including regular engagement in the Project Coordinating Committee.

The applicant provided compelling details to show 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. (For example, the applicant discussed that a full 73 percent of the project budget will directly benefit schools and districts. The budget targets every aspect of the career ladder—and does so at the low cost of less than \$8,500 per school. By the end of the grant period, 1,282 principals will have benefited from this project, which will have a significant impact on the lives of approximately 777,000 students, including large numbers of high-need students. The budget for the evaluation is 19 percent of the total budget, making it sufficient and reasonable to meet What Works Clearinghouse guidelines.

The applicant provides compelling evidence to show the extent to which the proposed management plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources to effectively carry out the proposed project, including the project evaluation. The applicant wrote that only costs that are sufficient, reasonable and necessary to achieve the goals, and allowable under OMB A-122, are included in the budget. A full 73 percent of the project budget will directly benefit schools and districts. The budget targets every aspect of the career ladder and does so at the low cost of less than \$8,500 per school. The budget for the evaluation is 19 percent of the total budget, making it sufficient and reasonable to meet What Works Clearinghouse guidelines.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a job description for the project coordinator which is a key role needed to effectively manage the grant.

The applicant did not provide evidence to show that NISL has credentials to provide quality training which would demonstrate their ability to train with fidelity and sustainability.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources to continue the proposed project after the grant period ends. In determining the adequacy of resources and the potential for utility of the proposed project's activities and products by other organizations, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations.

(3) The extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies.

Strengths:

The applicant provided compelling details to show the extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. The applicant wrote that this project will build on this experience to develop capacity and sustain leadership development programs beyond the grant period. Pennsylvania and Mississippi will use this project to study how they can embed the National Advanced Certification System and career ladder model into state policies and practices. The train-the-trainer model for the EDP and NISL Leadership Institutes and the coach certification model for Master Principals will build capacity in partner districts to take on advanced leadership development programs on their own.

The applicant provides effective details to show the extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that may be used by other agencies and organizations. The applicant discussed that this project will implement and evaluate a National Advanced Certification System and comprehensive career ladder that address a national need for more highly effective principals. Proven and promising leadership development programs, a high-quality project design, highly qualified management and evaluation teams, and highly committed state partners make it highly likely that this project will yield useful findings.

The applicant provides compelling details to show the extent to which the applicant will disseminate information about results and outcomes of the proposed project in ways that will enable others, including the public, to use the information or strategies. The applicant wrote that they will work with a communications firm to reach the media and the general public about the project and its evidence. We will create a dedicated web portal for this project, updated quarterly. NISL, and its state and district partners, will present at major conferences, such as AASA, The School Superintendents Association; ASCD; and National School Boards Association. Finally, our evaluators will publish at least two articles on the project results in peer-reviewed journals and present their findings at several research conferences.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide details to show how and who will be selected for the train the trainer model which would help to determine the number of trainers available to provide training. This will also provide an estimate of the ratio of trainers to an adequate number of trainees.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.
- (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
- (4) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Note: We encourage applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:
(1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/iddocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and
(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

In addition, we encourage applicants to participate in an optional Webinar hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences on March 6, 2015. This Webinar will discuss strategies for designing and executing well-designed Quasi-experimental Design Studies. Applicants interested in participating in this Webinar may find more information at the following Web site: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=37>.

Strengths:

The applicant provided clear details to show the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (For example, the applicant discussed that the proposed evaluation of the project activities is thorough, in that it addresses both the project's intended outcomes on schools and its fidelity of implementation, while also exploring interim outcomes and potential mechanisms of impact. The applicant wrote that their project is feasible, consisting of targeted research activities to develop rich qualitative data on program implementation, alongside larger scale randomized control trials and data collection activities that participating districts have already agreed to take part in. The applicant wrote that the plan is appropriate to the project's goals and objectives, and will produce evidence about a variety of potential impacts at a scale commensurate with the scale and scope of project activities.

The applicant provided clear details to show the evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data. The applicant provided several quantitative performance measures such as the percentage of principals receiving training who perceive change/improvement to their leadership practices (via principal coaching logs, interviews with coaches and principals, questions on annual Principal Practices surveys included for coached principals). Qualitative performance measures involve school climate surveys of teachers, in a sub-sample of up to 600 schools in 60 districts (January 2016 and April

2018).

The applicant provided well-documented details to show the extent to which the methods of evaluation will produce evidence about the projects effectiveness that would meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. (For example, the applicant wrote about their performance feedback such as that bi-monthly update calls with NISL staff will result in informal updates on evaluation progress and findings to date regarding implementation quality. The applicant wrote that they will have a final published project report and impact analyses with the purpose of sharing and disseminating more broadly, the final results from both the Impact and Implementation Studies.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a clear link between objectives and measurable results.

Reader's Score: 17

Priority Questions

CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness - CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)

This priority funds projects that will identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources (as defined in the notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

This project identifies strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. For example, the applicant wrote that this project will substantially improve efficiency and student outcomes without commensurately increasing per-student costs. The Executive Development Program (EDP), an integral component of this project, is a cost-effective model for improving principal effectiveness and student achievement. Every principal is trained to cultivate the conditions for high performance schoolwide. Training just one principal positively impacts hundreds of students every year, over many years.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP3: Promoting STEM Education - CPP3: Promoting STEM Education

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education

(Please only assign a score of either 0 or 2 for this question.)

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on student growth (as defined in this notice).

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The applicant provided details to show increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects. The applicant discussed that this project is particularly important for promoting STEM education, because it includes a rigorous, randomized control trial evaluation that will examine the impact of principal coaching on student achievement in science for the first time.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP4: High-Need Students - CPP4: High-Need Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Supporting High-Need Students

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;
- (b) Learning environments; or
- (c) Both,

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.
- (ii) Students with disabilities.
- (iii) English learners.
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.
- (vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.
- (vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority

area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 4 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The applicant wrote that this project will improve both academic outcomes and learning environments for high-need students, including students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies, students with disabilities, English learners, students in the lowest performing schools, and students living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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