

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/29/2015 01:20 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (U367D150021)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	35
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	13
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	96
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
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	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 6: 84.367D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Teach For America (U367D150021)

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 identifies a significant scale and scope of their project. They state they will train 8,500 new corps members (CM) over the next two years who will go on to teach in 52 communities in 36 states and Washington, DC. The schools where CM are placed are in high-poverty, low-achieving areas where 50% of the students are more likely to not be proficient in math or reading and 78% of the students are on free or reduced lunch. Approximately 90% of the students in TFA placements schools are students of color. This project demonstrates a significance on the national level.

TFA employs a highly diverse pool of candidates through a selective, research based selection process. They have a record of demonstrating success in advancing student achievement. Research consistently shows the TFA CMs are effective teachers.

The proposal will use previous design and program evaluation results to continuously improve their training and redesign their process. They show a strong record of testing and developing new theories, knowledge and practices to refine their model of preparing new teachers for success in high-need schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 10

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 proposal identifies key objective, measures, and quantitative goals associated with the project. Their project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning in support of rigorous standards. With this project, they propose to increase the rigor and relevance of CM training by supporting a fundamental redesign of their core national institute model, developing and refining regional institutes and offering enhanced early childhood education training.

TFA continuously uses qualitative and quantitative feedback to refine an understating of teaching and learning and be responsive to the changing landscape. The chart on p. e26 clearly identifies project objectives, measures, and goals. The information in the table is specific and measures of success are listed. Included in their goals are assessments of teacher performance and identification of the number of highly effective teachers according to student growth. Additionally the chart detailing the elements of the pre-service training mindsets, knowledge and skills has explicit details explaining the skills TFA identifies as the primary framework and components of the training.

The project identifies the four components of the summer training consisting of Institute Pre-Work, Induction, Institute, and Orientation. This proposal focuses on the Institute experience held during the summer wh0020seich consists of summer school teaching and ongoing cycles of professional development. They also provide detail that illustrates how the redesigned institute evolved from the traditional model. The charts demonstrate a commitment to a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 35

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:

TFA has a comprehensive management team that oversees site specific teams as well as the national effort. They also have subcategories of teams that oversee and manage and focus on operations, designs, and strategy. Key personnel are identified with project responsibilities, time commitment and relevant experience. Extensive experience within the TFA organization is present and leaders have sufficient time available to manage the project. Using full time staff and seasonal staff TFA identifies an infrastructure to successfully run and manage the numerous elements of their design. Each team is sufficiently explained and provided roles, responsibilities, and time periods in a way that illustrates a well-designed

machine to deliver the goals and objectives of their project.

Existing staff structures and strategic engagement of contractors and partners demonstrates sufficient and reasonable resources to carry out the project. Their focus is on cost effectiveness, efficiency, fiscal transparency, and reporting quality. TFA is recognized consistently with high ratings affirming their fiscal responsibility and resource use. The existing framework will support the new approach and SEED project to yield maximum results.

Existing staff structures and strategic engagement of contractors and partners demonstrates sufficient and reasonable resources to carry out the project. Their focus is on cost effectiveness, efficiency, fiscal transparency, and reporting quality. TFA is recognized consistently with high ratings affirming their fiscal responsibility and resource use. The existing framework will support the new approach and SEED project to yield maximum results.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 20

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 has designed a project that will develop and implement training institutes with a focus on CM's ability to become effective and highly effective teachers in their first year of teaching. The project is sustainable both financially and programmatically. Long term capacity and results are yielding finding and products that are useful to others and will be effective beyond the funding of the SEED grant. They share that they submitted this proposal with the goal of partial funding of the total cost so that they are not too dependent on any one funding source. The Federal funding speaks to the health of the organization and attracts further investors to TFA.

The applicant identifies tools and resources developed for institutes and provides examples of how one funded project's materials can be used throughout the TFA network in a variety of differing contexts. Development of videos, online resources, and flexible tools increase overall program capacity and tools that CMs and staff can access at any time to support their growth and development. The project also supports extensive trainings and professional development to keep institute staff effective in their own teaching and coaching practices and leadership skills.

The project will produce research findings and new tools and resources while enabling them to provide regional institutes and strengthen the local partnerships in the areas and regions they serve. The plan to rigorously evaluate the 2016 redesigned institute pilot will provide them insight into the efficacy of their model, thus allowing further refinement and improvement.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear from the proposal whether resources developed are shared outside of the network. The resources would be helpful to many of the teacher preparation agencies and sharing results to all involved and needing effective methodology would make this a stronger proposal.

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 will use an independent contractor to evaluate the components of the project. The evaluator will identify the impact on the outcomes of their redesigned training at the Intervention Institute and the impact on the CMs preparedness and results with students.

The evaluation plan will collect qualitative data from observations and interviews and will focus on how well the redesigned training was implemented. Quantitative data will be used to evaluate how the training shows promise for improving key outcomes from the project design.

Throughout the project, periodic formative feedback documents will be shared with the CMs. Sharing the performance feedback will support participants in achieving intended outcomes and give them the opportunity to fine-tune and adjust issues that arise.

The applicant has a clear outline linking the assessment to project goals.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation is quasi experimental design and thus meets the WWC standards with reservations, but not WWC standards without reservations.

Reader's Score: 18

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 applicant did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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 will improve and expand development and use of trainings and resources involving Next Generation Science Standards and other STEM subjects contained in the CCSS.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

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 seeks to address academic challenges of high-needs populations in high poverty urban settings. The schools where TFA CMs work are poor performing and high-poverty areas.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/29/2015 01:20 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/27/2015 12:28 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (U367D150021)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	35
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Sustainability	15	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	18
Sub Total	100	93
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
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	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 6: 84.367D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Teach For America (U367D150021)

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:

Teach for America (TFA) has over two decades of successful experience recruiting, selecting, training, and placing a large number of P-12 teachers in high-need public schools in 36 states and Washington, DC. This project will continue and enhance the applicant's national involvement.

It is noted that TFA teachers are more racially diverse than those in traditional teacher preparation programs, with 22% identifying as African American and 13% as Latino (compared to 6% and 4.2%, respectively at colleges of education). The applicant cites research (page 5) showing that increasing the number of teachers who share their students' racial and economic backgrounds can lead to additional impact (Egalite, A.J., Kisida, B., & Winters, M.A. (2015) Representation in the Classroom: The Effect of Own-Race/Ethnicity Teacher Assignment on Student Achievement. Economics of Education Review).

Several components of the project address the development and advancement of teacher and school leadership theory, knowledge, and practices. For example, activities will include the development and use of trainings and resources aligned to recently developed Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) (page 6).

Although not all TFA participants remain in the classroom beyond the expected two year minimum, TFA alumni have advanced school leadership theory, knowledge, and practice by becoming a source of talent and support for schools, school systems, policy and advocacy organizations, nonprofits, the government, and other positions and organizations impacting P-12 education (page 25).

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 10

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 goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, aligned, and measurable. During the grant period, TFA proposes to plan, implement, and evaluate 31 summer training institutes and prepare 8,500 teachers to enter high-need classrooms. TFA will also increase the rigor and relevance of core member (CM) training by redesigning its core national institute model and refining regional institutes.

The key objectives, measures, and quantitative goals associated with the project are described in terms of what each of these components of the project will entail (pages 11 – 24). The applicant is commended for presenting these descriptions in extensive detail and in a manner indicate that the services to be provided by the proposed project are actionable and achievable, and will be of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services. For example, the project describes in sufficient detail how, where and when it will plan, implement, and evaluate national and regional summer training institutes that will prepare and retain first year corps members to teach in low income communities.

In a recent survey of the principals who hire TFA teachers, 95% reported that they make a positive difference in their schools and are better prepared than other new teachers implying that the TFA model is of sufficient quality, intensity and duration to enable participants to become effective first year teachers (page 27).

The majority of teachers (55%) participating in this project will be prepared to teach in shortage areas that include secondary mathematics, secondary science, special education, bilingual or ESL classes, and foreign languages (page 27). In addition, the majority of students served by this project are in schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty, students served by rural LEAs, English language learners, and students who are members of federally-recognized Indian tribes (pages 27 & 28).

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 35

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 project director and co-leader are well qualified for their roles and each is dedicated full time (100% FTE) to the project. The seven other individuals who comprise the balance of key personnel are also well qualified and their time commitments to their specific responsibilities are appropriate.

Program staff from newly selected regions participate in professional development activities that focus on developing skills to train and support CMs. Regional staff also participate in ongoing professional communities to strengthen their project-related knowledge and skills (page 35).

The proposed project has four key objectives that drive summer training institutes, national institute redesign, regional training institutes, and pre-service training for pre-K teachers. The management plan has the structure and resources to achieve its objectives on time and within budget. It does this by providing substantial detail (page 33 – 37) regarding activities aligned with objectives, responsible individuals, their responsibilities, timelines and measurable milestones.

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 20

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:

TFA relies on a diversified financial base to support its own sustainability. Financial support comes from individuals; local and national foundations; corporations; public school partners; and local, state, and federal partners.

This extensive training and professional development received by institute staff to help them effectively train and support new CMs, also prepares them for similar work in education beyond their involvement in the institute.

TFA shares information about outcomes of this project with its national network so that all members may benefit from the lessons learned in these pilot initiatives. TFA conducts outreach and marketing efforts to communicate learnings to the field and general public through traditional print vehicles and social media. Additionally, the external evaluator will share its final report in the organization's reviewed journals.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not provide evidence that the project will make available specific information, materials, processes, or techniques that may be used by other agencies and organizations, nor does it 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.

Reader's Score: 10

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:

A major evaluation effort will be undertaken to quantitatively and qualitatively examine whether one of the project's objectives, the redesigned national institute, shows promise for improving the outcomes of participants and their students. Because the evaluation design uses time series data in combination with a comparison group, this analysis will provide the most cogent quasi-experimental estimates of the effect of the redesigned institute. Other targets of evaluation include Instructional Practice, Retention, Corps Strength Index, Corps and Alumni Learning Index, and Value added based on state tests (page 51). This report will be made available to the public via the evaluator's website.

Observational data is used to inform institute teacher training in an ongoing way throughout the +institute. At the end of the summer, this data is further rolled up to TPT and Regional Operations leadership and used to inform the design and development of future institutes.

Weaknesses:

There is not a clear link between some of the objectives and outcome goals displayed in table 1 on pages 11 and 12, and the indicators and methods used to evaluate them. For example, to evaluate the extent to which the objective to redesign the institute model to better prepare CMs is met, the evaluators measure the number of new institutes established and the

number of CMs trained in them rather than the effect the redesign has on CM preparation.

With the exception of objective 2, it is not evident that the evaluation of the other objectives is of an experimental design that meets WWC without reservations standards.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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 estimates and sets goals that over 30% of its participants (CMs) teach STEM subjects (pages 5 & 54). The percentage of minority teachers in this program is higher than in most other teacher training programs. Most of the program's CMs teach in high-need public schools. The proposal cites research showing that teachers sharing students' racial and economic backgrounds can have greater impact.

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

TFA teachers work in high-poverty location (pages 3 & 27) where they are trained to address specific outcomes for the high-need student demographics they teach. For example, over 9% of the students in participating schools are in programs for English language learners.

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/27/2015 12:28 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/28/2015 10:30 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America (U367D150021)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance		
1. Significance	10	9
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design & Services	35	35
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	18
Sub Total	100	93
Priority Questions		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness		
1. CPP2: Cost-Effectiveness	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
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	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - 2015 SEED Peer Review - 6: 84.367D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Teach For America (U367D150021)

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 project, Investing in a Pipeline of Effective Educators for High-Need Students: Sustaining and Bringing Innovation to Teach For America's summer Training Institutes, has a vast scale and scope through the use of a nationally developed program for preparing Corps Members to be teachers in high need schools and programs. This project will provide a significant impact at the National Level. (Pages 2-5)

The impact on past experiences of Teach for America Corp Members has positively affected student learning and achievement. This proposed project will be built on the successes of these efforts. (Page 9-10)

The project includes a summer school component that will likely result in improvement in student achievement. (Page 10)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant indicates that the proposed project will make changes and enhancements from their previously granted project and that this project will address Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, it is unclear how the project will advance the field of training relating to these standards. (Page 6)

Reader's Score: 9

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 applicant includes clearly specified goals, objectives and outcomes that are to be achieved by the proposed project. The objectives are linked to the measures and the outcomes. (Pages 11-12)

The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. The project includes summer institute training session on both a national and regional basis. These efforts are built on past successes and are enhanced by addressing rigor standards as well as implementing enhanced training for Early Childhood educators. (Pages 22-23)

The summer institutes are established with sufficient quality standards for pre-service training for teachers. These institutes are built on the Teach for America model that has been successful in developing effective teachers. (Page 26)

The proposed project through the selection processes will prepare teacher for field in which shortages have been demonstrated especially in the STEM areas of need. (Page 27)

The proposed project has a focus on servicing and addressing the needs of disadvantaged students as the Corp Members serve in schools that are in high-poverty areas. (Page 28)

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 35

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 project personnel have relevant training and experience that will provide leadership for the completion and success of the project's completion. (Pages 31-32)

The management plan includes well defined milestones and timelines as well as persons responsible for the actions. These efforts will support the accomplishment of the objectives in a timely manner. (Pages 33-36)

As clearly outlined in the management plan and the budget narrative the plan includes sufficient and reasonable resources both human and financial to effectively carry out the proposed project including the project evaluation. The assignments of staff to the national and regional institutes are appropriate for the number of participants. (Pages 36-37 and budget narrative

Weaknesses:

The regional leaders are also key project personnel; however, the persons in those positions were not identified. Therefore, it is not clear what training and experience will be present at the regional levels.

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:

. To assure that the program will continue in some capacity after the end of the grant, the applicant identifies other funding sources that are being used for the program. (Page 38)

The training of the Corp Members that will be part of established communities and schools will provide for sustainability of the learning from the institutes. (Page 39)

The tools and resources developed for the institutes include videos and online resources that may be used by Corp Members as well as other organizations and local schools. This will provide for easy access and sustainability for the processes that find success. (Page 39)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant includes a dissemination plan for this proposed project that includes both internal and external networks, it is not clear how and what products will be shared with the public beyond the schools and programs served in the TFA network. (Page 42)

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/idoctrviewer/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 quasi-experimental evaluation will be administered by an outside evaluator that will ensure objectivity. This evaluation process will include a comparative interrupted time series design to ensure that outcomes are appropriately measured.

The evaluation plan includes quantitative measures of evaluation including teacher logs and survey data. The evaluation plan also includes qualitative measures such as the type and amount of training provided and retention data. These evaluation efforts will provide for a comprehensive summative picture of the project outcomes. (Page 50)

The evaluation plan includes performance feedback throughout the project and periodic assessment of progress of the Corp Members in their training sessions. This feedback will ensure continuous improvement toward project goals. (Pages 54-56)

Weaknesses:

The quasi-experimental evaluation will not include matched samples and therefore will not meet What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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 clearly identifies the priority that the project will have on addressing the increasing number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM and provide them with opportunities for high-quality preparation.

(Page 11)

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:

The proposed project addresses the supporting of high-need students throughout the project proposal including Rural Learners, English Learners, and student living in poverty. (Pages 3 and 27)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 4

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