

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 07/06/2010 9:29 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Reader #1:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	14
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	13
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	_____

Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
(0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points) 2 _____

TOTAL 105 27

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #1:

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20

Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

The applicant's discussion of the research cites two studies that meet the criteria for strong evidence in the Notice Inviting Applications. These include one experimental study at the elementary school level and one quasi-experimental study at the high school level. The quasi-experimental study is a matched comparison group design that was deemed by the What Works Clearinghouse to meet its evidentiary standards with reservations. Those reservations are explained by the applicant and claimed actually to result in an underestimate of the effectiveness of its programs (pp. 19-20). These two studies have large samples -- though of different school grades -- that reflect most of the population that will be studied in the scale-up project.

Several other studies, which do not meet the criteria for strong evidence, are also included in support of the applicant's program. In the aggregate, the studies show that Teach for America has a statistically significant impact on students' mathematics achievement. The magnitude of the impact was generally small to moderate, but the studies nevertheless provide good

evidence that a fast-track program like TFA can produce teachers who are generally as effective or more effective than teachers produced by other pathways, including veteran teachers in some cases.

Weaknesses

The most serious weakness of the research cited is that the two studies are of different school age populations, one K-5 and one high school, meaning that there is evidence from only one of the two studies for each school level. The study on elementary school is a randomized controlled trial, and thus it meets the evidence criteria for that school level as a single study. There is not sufficiently strong evidence provided for the effectiveness of the applicant's program at the high school level, however. And neither of the studies focuses on middle school. Likewise, a strong emphasis in the applicant's scale-up is at the Pre-K-5 level, and while the experimental study cited provides support of the impact of the applicant's program at the elementary level, none of the studies cited in support of the applicant's program provides evidence of effectiveness at the Pre-K level. The studies thus are somewhat deficient in external validity related to the teacher population that be involved in the scale up.

The applicant was only required to adduce studies that support the efficacy of its program and not studies that are less supportive, but the applicant's interpretation of the studies it cites in its support is somewhat selective. Several of the studies actually show that although the impact of TFA teachers in comparison with others is striking -- especially after the first year or two in the classroom -- the overall impact of TFA teachers is somewhat diminished by the fact that two-year TFA "veterans" are generally replaced by novice TFA teachers with no full-time teaching experience because the standard TFA tenure is two years. The impact of novice teachers is generally smaller than that of more experienced TFA teachers, so that the average contribution of a TFA teaching position in a school is lower than that for individual TFA teachers. (See, for example, the Boyd et al. (2009) study cited.) The attrition rate of TFA teachers thus is a weakness of the TFA system -- in terms of impact on student learning, stability of the school culture, and the additional turnover costs.

Finally, although the comparison of effect sizes between Teach for America and other kinds of interventions is interesting, the simple comparison of studies given in the narrative lacks rigor and would require a methodologically sound meta-analysis in order to be interpreted validly.

Reader's Score: 14

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

In determining the experience of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that

(a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -

(i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and

(ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or

(b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.

Strengths

Weaknesses

4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in

other settings.

(5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

(6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.

Strengths

The key research questions for the evaluation are on-target, and answers from the research -- which is directed at the scale-up sites -- should yield important information both about the success of the implementation in the scale-up sites and the impact of the recruited TFA teachers on student achievement as compared to that of their non-TFA counterparts.

The evaluation involves an experimental study with random assignment of students to teachers in the schools in which TFA teachers are present. It is a study of the TFA program at larger scale and will help answer questions about the ability of TFA to retain the quality of its program and replicate the effects of its teachers at a scale that is 50% larger than at present. This also should provide insight about the ability of the TFA program to be expanded even more. The study sample is large, and it appears to be representative of the population of the scale-up study, as a whole.

The study's inclusion of classroom practices, as well as student achievement data, will illuminate the role of specific characteristics of TFA teachers on student performance and teacher effectiveness, as well as provide information to TFA about the success of its professional development efforts.

The fact that the evaluation will include teacher retention outcomes is a strength.

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator with a strong national reputation. Because the staff assigned to the evaluation were not principal researchers for the evaluating organization's previous TFA study (Decker et al., 2004), there should be no concern about researcher bias.

The \$5 million allocated for the evaluation is approximately 8 percent of the total project budget and should be adequate to carry out the work described.

Weaknesses

Although the validity and reliability of student achievement results seems

strong, there is a concern about the reliability of the self-report data from teachers about their classroom practices, attitudes, and expectations (p. 45).

Similarly, although retention outcomes may be valid and reliable measures, there are likely to be confounding variables affecting teacher retention that must be accounted for in the study design but are not discussed in the application.

Somewhat more detailed information that includes a timetable for the evaluation (especially in relationship to the progress of project implementation) and some elaboration of instruments and methods to be used (perhaps in the appendices) would have been useful to affirm the adequacy of the evaluation proposed. This could include some discussion of methodological and logistical challenges for the evaluation and how the evaluator anticipates meeting them.

Reader's Score: 13

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

(1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.

(2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

Weaknesses

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(2) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

Weaknesses

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Competitive Preference

1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on:

- (a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);**
- (b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and**
- (c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;**
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and**
- (c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, including those who are assessed based

on alternate academic achievement standards, or the linguistic and academic needs of limited English proficient students. To meet this priority, applications must provide for the implementation of particular practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve academic outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase college- and career-readiness, including increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

Weaknesses

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to focus on the unique challenges of high-need students in schools within a rural LEA (as defined in this notice) and address the particular challenges faced by students in these schools. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or improve teacher and principal effectiveness in one or more rural LEAs.

Strengths

Weaknesses

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2010 8:03 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Reader #2:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)	15	13
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	15
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	13
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	9
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address	1	1

the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	2
TOTAL	105	63

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #2:

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

- (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,**
- (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.**

Strengths

Schools in high need and rural areas have difficulty recruiting teachers in

mathematics, science, special education, and working with limited English proficient students. This is a service that this applicant can provide. Children in high poverty areas do not always have highly effective teachers and the teachers from Teach for America have proven to raise student performance.

Eleven of the 17 top Race to the Top finalists mentioned the use of Teach for America in meeting their goals. The scale-up is necessary to meet this need as well as the current need for teachers in rural and urban areas with high poverty.

The need for quality teachers and ultimately school leaders continues to require constant recruiting, training, and supporting the new recruits. Teach for American has the experience and skills to fill this gap in providing quality educators for high poverty areas.

To date there has not been another entity that has the framework and mechanisms for providing a large number of high quality professionals that are dedicated to working in high poverty or rural areas.

Teach for America has a very specific set of goals and strategies to reach its outcomes in the timeline specified in its application. The plan to reach 850,000 students by the end of the grant period is supported by a strong recruitment, placement, training/support, measurement of teacher impact on student achievement, and the development of a growing base of alumni to move these individuals into leadership roles.

Twenty regions have expressed an interest in being a part of the Teach for America process and meet the criteria of serving high poverty students.

Teach for America has used its strategies for the past 20 years and has experience in scaling the model to impact more students.

Through the use of regional centers, Teach for America is poised to add new regions or increase existing ones for replication of quality programs.

Weaknesses

The aspect of the proposal regarding increasing the number of Program Directors did not elaborate on how these individuals will be trained in the short amount of time in order to support the growing number of recruits. Increasing the number of college recruiters from 60 to 80 will require depleting some of the alumni and require extensive training. Elaborating on the plan as to how the training would be structured would strengthen the proposal.

The number of projects: "expand and enhance online Teaching and Learning Center"; "develop, refine, and roll out a new approach to measuring and managing effectiveness of teachers"; "more tailored planning and instructional tools"; "provide a full suite of rigorous tests"; etc. appears to be a focus of the application but it was not clear who will be responsible for the work and the timeline associated with each stage. An explanation of how the

development of the above projects will be accomplished in addition to the other aspects of the project would strengthen the proposal.

Reader's Score: 13

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

In determining the experience of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that

(a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -

(i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and

(ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or

(b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.

Strengths

Teach for America has experience in scaling its model from 15 regions to 35 regions(p.27). At the same time this entity has continued to raise funds from partners to achieve growth.

During the past 20 years of growth, Teach for America has refined its model based on lessons learned and has received accolades for its work from numerous sources.

The use of statistical modeling has helped to ensure quality candidates are a part of the applicant pool.

Teach for America has also reduced the cost of recruiting teachers over the years which will assist in accomplishing the goals of this proposal.

Fifty percent of the teachers achieve significant gains with students from high poverty in urban or rural settings.

Three external studies were provided that demonstrated that Teach for America teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than other teachers. (p.41)

In the research studies cited, Teach for America teachers were as effective as or more effective than certified teachers at all grade levels. This effectiveness is measured with students in high poverty areas that enter the classroom at the 14th percentile on average.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 15

4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.**
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.**
- (2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.**
- (3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated**

success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

The goal of this application is to reach 850,000 students and prepare 13,000 teachers to work with high poverty students in urban/rural areas across America. Teach for America has documented its growth and exceeded goals set for a five year period by 10% (p.50). In addition, during the second five year plan, they again exceeded the goals set.

The regional centers established by Teach for America are central to the success of this scale-up project. The use of advisory boards in each region provides for local implementation of the plan, as well as ongoing support of the project. The chairs of these boards then sit on the National Council. This provides for oversight as well as ongoing communication for success of the project.

The founder of Teach for America will be the Project Director for this grant. She will be assisted by an individual who has excellent credentials and has been responsible for the oversight of the current multi-year growth plan. His background and experience in other organizations have provided him with the skills to support this effort.

Teach for American has shown its ability to increase its revenue by 20% per year for the last 10 years. The diversification of donors assures the revenue stream will continue whether certain markets decline or level off in terms of funding.

The revenue-generating history of Teach for America substantiates the statement that this group has "sufficient revenue to launch the I3 grant" (p. 54).

Teach for America has replicated its model on a smaller scale for the past 20 years. The framework the applicant utilizes from the home office provides support, coaching, fund raising, and sharing of best practices. This model is clear, concise, and has been used in past growth areas of the nonprofit.

Satisfaction with the work of Teach for American has been at 97% across all regions. The continual need and support by the LEAs indicates that the level of satisfaction is high.

There is no start up costs for this application as the model will be expanded

through the regional concept to new sites.
The costs for the levels of students reached in the application shows an increase in cost for the three distinct categories. The rationale for the increase is that the applicant included inflationary costs to the totals. Operating costs are at or below the national average for non-profits and the applicant has received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator for eight years in a row(p.56).
The plan for disseminating the information on this grant is far-reaching. The work the applicant does in 50 of the highest need urban/rural areas will be proof of the success of the project and shared on a daily basis.
The variety of dissemination activities include one-on -one meetings with LEAs; websites; personal testimony (alumni); meeting with 71 schools of education; presentations at national meetings; and providing key findings to policy makers and leaders in the community.

Weaknesses

The applicant clearly states that a constraint will be hiring new staff within the organization. Although the applicant states it has a large alumni force, a response regarding the knowledge and skills of the alumni to fill these positions would strengthen the application.
The applicant states that the alumni will provide most of the hiring needs but calls to question what the plan will be for the positions not filled. Addressing this area would strengthen the application.
Ease of use was not addressed in the application for teacher training or the model implemented at the region level.

Reader's Score: 13

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(2) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

Teach for America is following the model used in the past: secure funding for a multi-year plan and use this money to attract other funding sources. This strategy has worked well in the past for the TFA organization and is the substance of the plan.

The four step plan for sustainability involves diversification at the regional level; open new sites with new funding opportunities; obtain new foundation/corporation support; and continue to pursue federal support.

The Sponsor a Teacher campaign has grown in the last 5 years and seems to be a positive revenue source. In addition, Teach for America has some well-known foundations contributing to the effort, e.g., Walton Foundation, Broad Foundation, and Arnold Foundation(p.62).

Partnerships with LEAs have continued to grow and only once has the TFA organization removed a LEA from the program.

Fees from districts and states have grown annually since the inception of the program.

Teach for America utilizes contracts and professional services agreements to cement the funding based on services rendered.

Colleges and universities support the model and serve as advocates and spokespersons for ongoing growth of the project.

Weaknesses

The reliance on federal funding for one aspect of sustainability may prove to be an issue in difficult economic times. A description of alternate funding should the federal dollars be redirected would be a positive aspect of the application.

Reader's Score: 10

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and

conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

Monthly monitoring by the Project Director and senior staff will provide for oversight and opportunity to make changes at any juncture.

A management plan has been developed for each team to follow, monitor, and budget appropriately for in the process.

Technology is utilized for ease of use and budgetary reasons. The data "dashboards" for recruitment, the online application process, and online support assist in capitalizing on the effective use of funding.

The management plan includes objectives, owner, responsibilities, milestones, and specific timelines.

All of the members of the senior leadership team have experience either in the organization or outside TFA regarding scaling up of projects.

The senior management team includes individuals with strengths in varying areas aligned to the application which contributes to the quality and breadth of knowledge necessary to implementation of the project.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. is the group responsible for the evaluation. The project director has extensive experience in serving as the Principal Investigator and currently serves on 3 research projects funded by the federal government.

The Deputy Project Director for the evaluation has experience as a Project Director and Co-Principal Investigator. He is currently serving on 4 research projects in an evaluative capacity.

The survey researcher has worked in this field for 20 years and has worked on 7 studies as the survey researcher. Currently she is involved in two major research studies as a survey researcher.

Weaknesses

The management plan lists the names of individuals responsible for the completion of specific aspects of the project. Providing the titles as well as the names allows for an understanding of the role versus the individual listed.

Reader's Score: 9

Competitive Preference

1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve

educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on:

- (a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);**
- (b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and**
- (c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.**

Strengths

Teach for America creates a community of learners in the early childhood programs through collaboration of pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades by clustering their TFA teachers in the same or feeder schools.

Weaknesses

The data compared TFA early childhood cohort (4 year olds) with Head Start and indicated that letter recognition and letter word knowledge scores were higher for TFA. Comparing a program with teachers who have a college degree and extensive training by TFA with teachers in Head Start is not as strong as comparing TFA with preschools using certified teachers. The focus of the information provided in this section was on preschool and would be strengthened by references to the primary grades as well.

Reader's Score: 0

2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;**
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and**
- (c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, including those who are assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards, or the linguistic and academic needs of limited English proficient students. To meet this priority, applications must provide for the implementation of particular practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve academic outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase college- and career-readiness, including increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

Teach for America is increasing the number of teachers in special education and LEP at a time when the shortages in these areas are increasing. The 10% level of TFA teachers in special education is a start in providing quality educators in these classrooms versus long term substitutes.

Impacting 24,000 special education students and 13,000 LEP students is a phenomenal aspect of this application.

The percent of special education students who experienced significant gains was almost at 50%.

The number of LEP students who showed significant gains with second year teachers was 62.5% which is due primarily to the support provided these teachers by TFA.

Weaknesses

The mention of "specialized tools for tracking individual student progress" would be strengthened by listing the specific tools(p.83).

Reader's Score: 1

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to focus on the unique challenges of high-need students in schools within a rural LEA (as defined in

this notice) and address the particular challenges faced by students in these schools. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or improve teacher and principal effectiveness in one or more rural LEAs.

Strengths

Currently 590 TFA teachers work in rural LEAs and another 180 work with Native populations. This number would increase to 1000 with i3 funding. TFA provides a much needed service to rural areas where attracting quality candidates, providing professional development, and developing leaders has historically been a challenge. The two studies listed provide support for the impact TFA corps members had in rural communities on student achievement.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2010 8:03 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/02/2010 8:58 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Reader #3:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)	15	14
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	15
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	14
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	1
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address	1	1

the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	2
TOTAL	105	67

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #3:

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

(1): The need for every child to have an effective teacher is critical. Teach for America focuses on the highest-need students in this country.

(2): This proposal has specified a clear set of goals and strategies to scale up the applicant's current efforts to expand significantly.

(a): The approach defined in this application is a unique combination of methodology, experience, and capacity to build the numbers of effective teachers and leaders in our schools.

(b) Teach for America puts an emphasis on the importance of teaching and there is an expectation based on past performance, that it will reach the identified goals and objectives.

Weaknesses

(1): No weakness identified with respect to this factor.

(2): While TFA provides teachers to schools that have great difficulty finding effective teachers, a concern is the two- year commitment of the corps member.

Reader's Score: 14

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

In determining the experience of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that

(a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -

(i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and

(ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or

(b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.

Strengths

(1): Teach for America's application demonstrates its 20 year history and capacity to manage rapid growth. There are 7,300 teachers in 35 regions providing instruction to the most high-need populations. TFA corps members are top students in their content area recruited as exceptional graduates. The process for selecting candidates has been studied for 20 years to identify participants who have had the most success in advancing student achievement. Selection criteria have been developed based on qualities found to be predictive of success in teaching in low-income communities.

TFA applications have increased from 4,000 to 46,000. The evidence is clear that TFA has demonstrated the past performance to implement large, complex, high quality, and rapidly growing projects.

(2b):The applicant focuses on a college graduate population that has high content knowledge that can translate into effective classroom practice for the most needy students and schools. These high-need schools may never be able to attract the level of professional that Teach for America can bring to high poverty and particularly rural areas.

(b)TFA's measurement system has developed metrics for defining progress toward narrowing the achievement gap. Most TFA corps members achieve the equivalent gain of one year for each of their students. Ongoing reviews attest to increases in student achievement, effective teaching, and retention with partnering LEAs.

Weaknesses

(1): No weakness noted

Reader's Score: 15

4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

(5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

(6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

(1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.

(2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

(1): Teach for America's plan is engineered for scale-up and will grow from 450,000 students in 2009-2010 to 850,000 students and 13,500 TFA teachers in 2014-15, with a trajectory to reach 1 million high-need youth in 2016-17.

(2): TFA demonstrated the capacity to scale-up and to address urban, rural, and charter schools in the most high-need areas (page e52). The TFA CEO Wendy Kopp founded TFA 20 years ago and Matt

Kramer, TFA president have surrounded themselves with a senior management team which is responsible for TFA's performance. Their roles are dedicated to TFA along with a governing board chaired by Aspen Institute CEO Walter Isaacson. TFA has grown its annual operating budget to \$149 million in 2009. One hundred and forty-eight LEAs have signed agreements with TFA.

(3): The application presents a clearly defined process to replicate in rural, urban and charter school settings. Each region has an executive director and program staff. The program model ensures replication with fidelity across high-need urban and rural communities.

(4): The applicant's estimate of costs is well-defined broken down by specific areas. The cost per student is \$458 with \$485 million dollar budget to achieve the proposed goal of 1 million students.

(5): A clearly defined process for broad dissemination includes: alumni, web site, the book Teaching as Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap, and a footprint that crosses 200 LEAs presents a TFA's ability to disseminate information to support replication.

Weaknesses

(1): No weakness noted.

(2): No weakness noted

(3): The ability, with fidelity, to meet all of the goals and objectives over time with only a two-year commitment of corps members is a concern.

(4): No weakness noted

(5): No weakness noted

Reader's Score: 14

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from

stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(2) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

(1): TFA raised \$114 million in 2009 and has in place a solid process to open and finance new sites beyond the scope of the Scale-Up grant. It is clear that the program will be sustained beyond the length of the Scale-Up grant and could have far reaching implications for teacher education nationally and internationally.

(2): TFA has documented its ability to transcend the traditional teacher education process with good success as demonstrated in the proposal. While not yet embraced by the teacher unions, the state agencies are looking at the potential for its underachieving and high-needs schools. Establishing partnerships with college presidents, deans of education, LEAs, and others strengthens the work and builds a solid working relationship. In addition to the multitude of other partnerships that have been developed or are in the planning stages, continued financing assures continuity of design. The long term commitment from stakeholders has grown and deepened over the last 20 years.

Like the Peace Corps, TFA as a national service model holds interesting promise to fill classrooms with effective teachers in the most rural and poor schools. A purposeful fundraising and financial plan is in place.

Weaknesses

(1): No weakness noted with regard to this factor.

(2): No weakness noted with regard to this factor.

Reader's Score: 10

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

(1): The well-developed management plan covers every aspect of the design clearly and succinctly. Table 10 on page e71 delineates each role and who is responsible to meet goals, timelines, and tasks related to sustainability and scalability.

(2): Wendy Kopp, CEO and Founder has spent 20 years polishing the work and growing the program with a careful eye for detail and quality learning. The qualifications of all personnel are well documented with years of commitment and excellence to TFA.

(3): The three evaluators have significant experience with large scale program review and teacher quality. Their experiences combine research, teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Weaknesses

2. No weakness noted regarding this factor.

3. No weakness noted regarding this factor.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference

1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on:

(a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and

cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);
(b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and
(c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths

Pages e79 to e81 articulate a clear picture of steps TFA has addressed to meet this preference.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted regarding this preference.

Reader's Score: 1

2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and
- (c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.

Strengths

Weaknesses

The applicant did not address this preference.

Reader's Score: 0

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, including those who are assessed based

on alternate academic achievement standards, or the linguistic and academic needs of limited English proficient students. To meet this priority, applications must provide for the implementation of particular practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve academic outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase college- and career-readiness, including increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

TFA focuses on the needs of children with disabilities and limited English proficiency students. There are 880 Corps members working as special education teachers and 295 working as LEP teachers in under-resourced schools that struggle to find qualified teachers.

Specific strategies are applied that include goal setting, real life applications, using assessment to guide instruction, differentiating instruction, applying modifications and accommodations, as well as investing in parents and their learning.

Weaknesses

TFA has supplied a critical need to the most needy areas, however, a concern is the length of time corps members remain in the school and steps taken to assure continuity of learning as corps members change.

Reader's Score: 1

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to focus on the unique challenges of high-need students in schools within a rural LEA (as defined in this notice) and address the particular challenges faced by students in these schools. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or improve teacher and principal effectiveness in one or more rural LEAs.

Strengths

TFA is dedicated to attracting exceptional corps members to work in rural areas that have extreme difficulty finding effective teachers to fill classrooms and learning environments.

In 2009-2010, 590 corps members taught in 6 rural sites.

Areas that are difficult to fill that corps members serve include special education, science, math, and technology. They also provide good solid professional development to in-service teachers to increase the professional development in the schools.

High quality lesson plans are provided for the whole school in rural areas.

Weaknesses

The only area that can be defined as a weakness would be the changes in corps members after their two-year commitment is up. However, it appears, there is a commitment to the site and therefore the transition is scheduled and accounted.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/02/2010 8:58 AM

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/06/2010 11:57 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Reader #4:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	14
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	15
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address	1	_____

the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	_____
TOTAL	105	29

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #4:

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

- (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,**
- (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

There are two studies that present strong evidence that meet the WWC criteria. One was experimental and one was quasi-experimental study that met the WWC Standards of reporting positive effect sizes. One of the studies (elementary level) represented an experimental design that yielded an effect size of low to moderate size of .15 (page 16), when comparing Teach for America teachers' student achievement to non-Teach for America students. The effect size increased to .26 (moderate) when only the math achievement scores were compared for the two groups. The studies also indicated the amount of growth in months or the equivalent in reducing class size (pages 16-17). Students were randomly assigned to classes before the beginning of the school year in which the study was conducted to ensure equivalent classes for comparisons. The study was a two-stage study, with the first stage in one region and the full-scale study done in six regions on the east coast, west coast, the southeast and southwest regions of the country; this diversity of geographic regions lends itself to greater generalizability

(page 18). Evidence is presented that indicates that many educational studies do not generate effect sizes this large (page 25-27).

The quasi-experimental study conducted at the high school level found strong results and effect sizes of .10 and .18 across eight subjects and for science respectively. The findings were similar to the experimental studies. This study was conducted and then updated with similar results. The study met the WWC standards with reservations.

Another study of one middle school in New York City, schools in Louisiana, and North Carolina reported statistically significant findings or findings similar to the experimental and other studies that TFA teachers' impact was greater relative to all other teachers. Other studies of alternative teacher preparation have found TFA teachers are among the strongest teachers in this group (pages 20-23).

Studies presented indicate the TFA scale-up would have an important impact on improving student achievement for at risk minority students and students from low-income homes.

Weaknesses

The North Carolina study, although discussed in terms of positive findings for TFA, seemed contradictory when discussing the 99 separate comparisons of non-traditional pathways to teaching with teachers from traditional pathways. The non-traditionally prepared teachers had a greater impact on student achievement on 8 of the 99 analyses, and the TFA teachers performed the best on five of those eight analyses. This was not as strong an endorsement of greater effectiveness of TFA teachers when compared to the other studies presented. There were no statistical significance levels or effect sizes reported for the North Carolina study or the New York City middle school study. The evidence provided does not address all the grade levels proposed in the scale up process. Middle schools are not addressed in the research provided and although the experimental study addresses elementary school it does not discuss the Pre-K level specifically. This lack of research on the proposed grade levels raises questions about external validity regarding teachers who may be recruited during the scale up process. The statement regarding effect sizes of the research on TFA compared to other educational studies does not make their evidence stronger without further rigorous statistical comparisons made between the effects of such studies.

Reader's Score: 14

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

In determining the experience of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that

(a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -

(i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and

(ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or

(b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.

Strengths

Weaknesses

4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in

other settings.

(5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

(6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.

Strengths

The evaluator, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. has proposed a multiyear experimental design where students will be randomly assigned to TFA teachers and non-TFA teachers to determine the differences in student achievement. The individual students will be the unit of analysis which creates a stronger outcome and eliminates potential error based on clusters as the unit of analysis.

The sample sizes for students and schools were selected to ensure a statistically significant effect size of .15, which is similar to the studies presented in section B (page 45). Qualitative data regarding teacher attitudes, practice and expectations will also be collected to provide a context for the student achievement findings and to provide feedback on performance (page 45). They will also assess the difference in effectiveness of TFA teachers who joined during scale up phase and those teachers who are veterans of TFA. This information will be used to determine the impact of modifications made to the TFA model as it is scaled up. This evaluation will provide a larger sample size than previous studies (page 46).

The evaluation will provide specific information on the scaled up program's progress the implementation process, teacher characteristics, retention rate of teachers, and placement regionally and by grade level. This type of information can inform replication and implementation of the model.

The evaluation will be conducted by an organization with the resources and 30 year reputation for conducting such an evaluation. The project includes an allocation of \$5 million dollars which is sufficient to implement this rigorous study. Their involvement throughout the length of the grant will build on previous research and evaluation studies in related areas and on the TFA corps (pages 49-50). The company has conducted and is in the process of conducting a related large scale multiyear analysis of alternative certification programs on achievement scores (page 1).

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 15

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.**
- (2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.**
- (3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.**
- (4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.**
- (5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the**

project's long-term success.

(2) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

Weaknesses

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Competitive Preference

1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on:

(a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);

(b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and

(c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths

Weaknesses

2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;**
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and**
- (c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, including those who are assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards, or the linguistic and academic needs of limited English proficient students. To meet this priority, applications must provide for the implementation of particular practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve academic outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase college- and career-readiness, including increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

Weaknesses

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to focus on the unique challenges of high-need students in schools within a rural LEA (as defined in

this notice) and address the particular challenges faced by students in these schools. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or improve teacher and principal effectiveness in one or more rural LEAs.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/06/2010 11:57 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/03/2010 6:11 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Reader #5:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)	15	15
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	15
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	12
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	8
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address	1	1

the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	1
TOTAL	105	62

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #5:

Applicant: Teach For America -- , - , (U396A100015)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

The Teach for America proposal request scale-up funds to accelerate the pace to add more TFA-prepared teachers to many high needs schools around the country. Building on previous successful experience, including data on student achievement gains, the proposal presents a solid case for the funds requested.

The application is extremely strong- goals and objectives are laid out in concrete, specific detail, and the applicant builds the grant proposal around extremely positive previous results. The strength of this proposal is the level of specificity and the quality of the management team to scale-up to reach schools nation-wide.

It is a very impressive proposal to help education in the country.

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

Teach for America is an organization with a great deal of credibility for the work being done to upgrade and improve the teaching profession via an alternative approach. The proposed project is to expand the applicant's teaching corps in the US by more than 80% by 2014. The need for such an effort is well laid out in the proposal and the approach to expand by 80% represents an exceptional approach to the grant priorities.

The proposal has very clear goals and objectives with expected outcomes, aligned with an explicit strategy that is comprehensive in nature. The overall proposal is credible and based on the TFA model that has worked successfully in the past.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 15

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of

the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

In determining the experience of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that

(a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -

(i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and

(ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or

(b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.

Strengths

The past performance of the applicant in implementing large, complex, and a rapidly growing project is evidenced by the growth of TFA, both in numbers of placements of teachers and the fundraising that is required. This clear demonstration of the ability to manage and implement growth is a strong

component of this application.

Student achievement under TFA teachers consistently outperforms traditional teachers, and thus meets the requirement of C (2)(b). Numerous charts and examples of comparison studies are provided to document historical data on the improvement of student achievement, closing of the achievement gap and improvement of college readiness and placement of high quality teachers.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 15

4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.**
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

(1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.

(2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

The number of students proposed to be reached totals 850,000 (an increase of 400,000 students over existing numbers) , and the number of new TFA teachers will grow to meet student projections. A total of 148 LEAs will partner with TFA , including urban, rural and charter districts and schools. The capacity of TFA is well documented based on a 20-year track record of growth and success, and the quality and credibility of leadership and the management team. One strategy proposed to ensure there are enough quality personnel to bring the project to scale is to tap the alumni force, which currently provides over 50% of staff. This growing group of TFA educators will help staff and manage the expansion proposed in this grant request.

The cost per student will range from \$356 to \$430 over the life of the grant. The request is for \$50 million and the budget lays out specific details as to how the funds would be used to grow the TFA teaching corps. Finally, the TFA organization has received a four-star rating for fiscal efficiency (from Charity Navigator) for eight years in a row. Fiscal management is clearly a strength of the organization. Dissemination strategies in the proposal are clear, comprehensive and credible, with numerous contacts, organizations and a support infrastructure cited to share the project's outcomes with a wide range of state and national sources.

Weaknesses

The discussion in the application about replication does not address factor E (3)- Little information is provided about the feasibility of the project to be replicated by others and in other settings.

Reader's Score: 12

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(2) The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant and any other partners at the end of the Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

The applicant has laid out a multi-step approach to secure the necessary resources to sustain the project after the grant period ends. These sources of revenue include the federal government, regional campaigns and support, individual and corporate fund raising, and foundation gifts. TFA points out that the success to date has been based primarily on these previously mentioned resources, and additional efforts to expand support attest to sustainability efforts.

Weaknesses

Information to address factor (2) does not adequately discuss planning for the incorporation of project purposes and activities. Instead a synopsis of what will happen as a result of the grant is the focus of this discussion. Further information is clearly needed in this area.

One additional area of concern is the strong reliance of TFA on federal funding.

Reader's Score: 8

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

The management plan is very clear in terms of budget, defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones.

The applicant appears to have developed a strong evaluation component, based on previous experiences with evaluation of the existing TFA program. The external evaluator appears credible, based on conducting similar evaluation protocols for other organizations. The overall evaluation plan is well defined and will provide information on TFA success in raising student achievement in high needs schools.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference

1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on:

- (a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);**
- (b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and**
- (c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

The applicant did not adequately address this competitive preference, as the focus of the TFA model is to develop K12 teachers for high needs students.

Reader's Score: 0

2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;**
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and**

(c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.

Strengths

Weaknesses

The applicant did not address this competitive preference in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, including those who are assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards, or the linguistic and academic needs of limited English proficient students. To meet this priority, applications must provide for the implementation of particular practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve academic outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase college- and career-readiness, including increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

Students with disabilities and LEP students are a part of the high-needs focus of TFA, and there was evidence of the applicant's work and understanding of the unique challenges of these special needs students. The TFA model is designed to provide teachers in high needs areas, including most schools with LEP or special education students.

Weaknesses

While serving high needs LEP and special education students in many schools, there is little, if any, information provided in the proposal that discusses innovative strategies and practices designed to meet the unique needs of these high-needs students.

Reader's Score: 1

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to focus on the

unique challenges of high-need students in schools within a rural LEA (as defined in this notice) and address the particular challenges faced by students in these schools. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or improve teacher and principal effectiveness in one or more rural LEAs.

Strengths

Rural LEAs were mentioned, and there was evidence of the applicant's work and understanding of the unique challenges of rural students. The TFA model is designed to provide teachers in high needs areas, including many areas that are rural in nature.

Weaknesses

While serving high needs students in rural areas is a part of the model, there is little, if any, information provided in the proposal that discusses innovative strategies and practices designed to meet the unique needs of students in rural areas.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2010 6:11 PM