

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 07/01/2010 4:15 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

**Reader #1:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 Points)	20	20
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	20
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)	10	10
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
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	1
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	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	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	105	74

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 01: 84.396B**

**Reader #1:**

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

The proposed project is excellent on every level. It has clearly defined goals and strategies, a highly qualified director and supporting personnel, and a management plan that will assure the successful completion of the project.

### Selection Criteria

#### 1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 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, and**

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

**(3) The extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence supporting the proposed project, taking into consideration any differences in context.**

**Strengths**

The project is unique in that it addresses the professional development of uncertified and/or provisionally licensed teachers, a group that is often forgotten in activities related to professional development of educators. This uniqueness is also a strength because the state has such a great need for quality science teachers. This project is an investment in this category of teachers and is sure to be a factor in improved student learning.

Another strength of this project is the strategy: Learn, Try, Implement with Feedback and Research. All elements complement each other and provides for numerous and strong opportunities for significant learning and teaching.

The project appears to cast a wide net around educators responsible for student learning and teacher education. To include university education and science faculty addresses the root of the need and is a strength of this project.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 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 moderate**

evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that 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 likelihood that 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 20 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 complex 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

George Mason University is ranked as the "top up and coming school in America", a prestigious rating that confirms a high level of confidence in programs and people. In addition, the University has an exemplary record of funded projects. It is a major research institution with 85 special education partnerships or collaboratives, and an established Center for Restructuring

Education in Science and Technology. Such a record supports the numerous strengths of this project.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**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 well designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) 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.**
- (3) 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.**
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (5) 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 10 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other 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 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, 250,000, and 500,000 students.**

**(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development, expansion, or replication.**

**Strengths**

Affecting 61% of K-12 students in Virginia is significant and therefore an obvious strength of this project. The identified capacity of the University, specifically human and financial resources, and its partners ensures a large number of students will be served throughout the grant period and beyond.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.**

**(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 Validation grant.**

**Strengths**

Matching funds are already assured for implementing the project during the grant period and beyond. VISTA is well established and has been self-sustaining for 13 years.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 complex 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 experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.**

**Strengths**

The team structure and an advisory board is evidence of strong leadership, support, and research. The project's timeline and milestones reflects an ambitious team effort. Key personnel, to include the director, are highly qualified and experienced.

**Weaknesses**

No Weaknesses noted.

**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**

**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**

All parts of the project substantively address this competitive preference.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 1**

**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**

All parts of the project substantively address this competitive preference.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**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**

All parts of the proposal substantively address this competitive preference.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/01/2010 4:15 PM

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 06/29/2010 10:33 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

**Reader #2:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)	15	15
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	14
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
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	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	105	29

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 01: 84.396B**

**Reader #2:**

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

#### Selection Criteria

##### 1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 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, and**

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

**(3) The extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence supporting the proposed project, taking into consideration any differences in context.**

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

**2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 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 moderate evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that 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 likelihood that 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 research cited on the proposed initiative was conducted by investigators who have been acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Education as one of only four research programs that meet US DOE research criteria (p. e11)
- The research cited on professional development for teachers of science and inquiry-based learning is well-organized and relevant.

- The discussion of importance and magnitude is clear and compelling.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 15**

**3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 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 complex 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 well designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) 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.**

**(3) 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.**

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

**(5) 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 applicant identifies an independent evaluator(p. e18).
- The proposed evaluation explicitly assesses scalability, implementation, and outcomes throughout Section D.
- The evaluation of student outcomes will use experimental designs (p. e20).
- Qualitative and quantitative measures will be used.
- Data reporting will occur quarterly to allow for performance feedback (p. e24).

**Weaknesses**

- District and university leaders, who will receive networking support, are not included in the evaluation.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other 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 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, 250,000, and 500,000 students.**

**(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development, expansion, or 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, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.**

**(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 Validation 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 complex 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 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:** 06/29/2010 10:33 AM

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 07/01/2010 10:02 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

**Reader #3:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)	15	14
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	14
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
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	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	105	28

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 01: 84.396B**

**Reader #3:**

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

#### Selection Criteria

##### 1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 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, and**

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

**(3) The extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence supporting the proposed project, taking into consideration any differences in context.**

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

**2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 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 moderate evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that 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 likelihood that 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**

Both the elementary and secondary professional development programs are supported by studies with high internal validity and moderate external, with the secondary program having slightly higher validity due to the use of random assignment in determining the treatment condition and a longer time span of investigation. The awards and recognition for the prior research supports the applicant's assertion that this research is rigorous. The magnitude of the effects varies according to the prior study described, but is of sufficient magnitude to be considered important and substantial. There

should also be sufficient power for effects of this magnitude to be evident in a project with this proposed sample size.

#### **Weaknesses**

There is no prior research supporting the training and networking activities for the district and university leaders.

**Reader's Score: 14**

### **3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 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 complex 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 well designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) 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.**

**(3) 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.**

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

**(5) 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 proposed evaluation is rigorous and well designed, with the evaluators having thought through the appropriate level of random assignment and its implications. The evaluation's goal to include both implementation and outcome data will help to inform the program design and thus provide performance feedback. The use of SRI as the evaluator will ensure a rigorous and independent evaluation, as they are very experienced in this area. The proposed collaboration with the University of Virginia indicates the evaluators have thought through the forms of expertise they will need to do the observations.

**Weaknesses**

As funds are also being requested for professional development and training of district and university leaders, the evaluation should also address those activities.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other 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 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, 250,000, and 500,000 students.**

**(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development, expansion, or 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, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.**

**(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 Validation 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 complex 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 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:** 07/01/2010 10:02 AM

Status: Submitted  
 Last Updated: 07/01/2010 5:31 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

**Reader #4:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 Points)	20	20
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	15
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)	10	10
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
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	1
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	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	105	67

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 01: 84.396B**

**Reader #4:**

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

#### Selection Criteria

##### 1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 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, and**

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

**(3) The extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence supporting the proposed project, taking into consideration any differences in context.**

**Strengths**

This project is focused upon the demonstrated need of raising the competency level of science teachers at two levels:

- Elementary faculty are trained to comprehend and employ inquiry - based scientific teaching and learning methods.
- At the secondary level, provide training and certification to raise the skills level of high school teachers.

Developing teachers who can effectively teach science at the elementary and secondary level, this project addresses a largely un met need for high need students in low performing schools. Through summer institutes and targeted school populations, the project reaches high risks student with unique learning needs.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted in this section.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 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 moderate evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that 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 likelihood that 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 20 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 complex 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 applicant has developed an outstanding track record relative to K-12 teaching and learning innovations in the area of science and technology. CREST (the science and technology center) has spawned and supported a number of programs that have been incorporated within VA schools. In addition their research has had an impact on policies and programs nationally.

**Weaknesses**

The applicant failed to identify specific instances where their work has had a direct impact upon raising student achievement levels. On page e18, it was suggested that detailed results could be found in Section B, however, specific references to actual impact on student achievement, attainment or retention are not given.

**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 well designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) 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.**
- (3) 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.**
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (5) 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 10 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other 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 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, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development, expansion, or replication.

**Strengths**

The applicant has the qualified staff and management infrastructure to bring this project to scale. The applicant's dissemination plan was very well organized and insured outreach to a very broad, diverse and important audience.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.

(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 Validation grant.

### **Strengths**

The applicant demonstrated that they have the personnel and financial resources to assure the sustainability of this project. In addition the presence of matching funds suggests tangible partnership commitment that includes a strong investment in the project's success. The applicant also demonstrated long standing working relationships with other universities, LEAs and state agencies.

### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted in this section.

**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 complex 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 experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.**

### **Strengths**

Management plan is well designed with well qualified staff and faculty in key positions. In addition, the Advisory Board membership will represent the perspectives of stakeholders and potential project participants.

### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted in this section.

**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 addressed upper elementary grades but, the program does not have an early learning component.

**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**

Improving the quality of science teaching at the secondary level should have an impact on developing students who are better prepared to enter college.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 1**

**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**

The summer institutes will target the unique learning needs of students with disabilities.

**Weaknesses**

**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**

**Weaknesses**

The applicant did not address this competitive priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/01/2010 5:31 PM

Status: Submitted  
 Last Updated: 07/05/2010 10:32 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

**Reader #5:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 Points)	20	20
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)	15	0
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	20
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)	10	10
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
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	1
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	105	73

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 01: 84.396B**

**Reader #5:**

**Applicant:** George Mason University -- , - , (U396B100039)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

#### Selection Criteria

##### 1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 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, and**

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

**(3) The extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence supporting the proposed project, taking into consideration any differences in context.**

**Strengths**

One of the strengths of the applicant is its approach to professional development. The two-tier model (elementary and secondary), Learn, Try, Implement with feedback and research, will provide targeted support that is grade level specific. This targeted approach of professional development eliminates the "one size fits all" ideology. The applicant's incorporation of the "just-in-time support" and "big picture" research into the teaching coursework as well as the in-class coaches is an innovative and exceptional approach to addressing the student achievement problem. Further, the applicant's focus on shifting from factual fluency to conceptual understanding.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 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 moderate evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that 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 likelihood that 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**

**Reader's Score: 0**

### **3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 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 complex 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 applicant has successfully implemented complex projects that have produced statistically significant gains in teacher instruction and student achievement as indicated on pages 12-15. In addition, the applicant's experience with more than 800 sponsored projects for more than \$100 million further demonstrates the applicant's involvement with complex projects.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

#### **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 well designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) 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.**
- (3) 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.**
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (5) 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 10 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other 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 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, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further development, expansion, or replication.

#### **Strengths**

One strength of the proposed project is its potential to affect more than 60% of the K-12 students in Virginia. In addition, the applicant demonstrates that it has the support of several university entities, successful partnerships with fully accredited schools as well as the State department of education, which will provide the bridge necessary to bring the project to scale on a state level. Moreover the applicant details a list of activities that will ensure that information about the project is widely disseminated to a variety of entities, including those that could offer future support.

#### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

### **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, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.

(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 Validation grant.

#### **Strengths**

The applicant has secured the necessary matching funds as well as a

commitment from the stakeholders. This indicates buy-in and will lend itself to sustainability once grant- funding ends. Another strength lies in the support provided by the entities that conduct the professional development for teachers. The fact that existing labs and other resources will be used further demonstrates the involvement of stakeholders.

#### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 complex 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 experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.**

#### **Strengths**

A strength of the management plan is the inclusion of clearly defined teams who will carry out the project. The applicant has assembled qualified individuals with experience on research projects, having either been a PI or Co-PI. The timeline also indicates that the applicant will spend time initially, getting the components of the project in place to ensure successful implementation.

#### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses noted.

**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

No indication that this priority is addressed.

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

The applicant will provide advising for parents of children who attend the summer camps. Through the proposed project's activities, students will also be providing with information regarding the skills and knowledge required

for college.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 1**

**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**

The applicant has included a LEP specialist for science and a special education teacher to help address the needs of students with disabilities and LEP students. Courses have been modified to include a focus on students with disabilities and LEP students as well.

**Weaknesses**

**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**

The applicant has indicated a concise plan to address the needs of rural LEAs. The inclusion of the rural site coordinator as well as the blended approach of "face-to-face" meetings and distance learning will adequately address the needs of teachers in rural LEAs.

**Weaknesses**

While the applicant provides information on how the needs of teachers in rural settings will be met, the applicant doesn't indicate how the unique needs of the students will be met.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/05/2010 10:32 AM