

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 06/23/2010 10:09 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- ,
 - , (U396B100045)

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 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	10
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	_____
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	25

Technical Review Form

Validation 11: 84.396B

Reader #1:

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- , - , (U396B100045)

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

1. The proposal provides the design and outcome details of two-quasi experimental studies (pp. 15-20) examining the proposed intervention. These studies are sufficient for demonstrating moderate evidence that the intervention is likely to have a statistically significant, substantial effect on improving student achievement.

2. The reported effect sizes for the cited studies suggest a strong likelihood

that that the proposed project will improve student achievement and help close achievement gaps.

Weaknesses

This proposal does not contain any weaknesses in Section B.

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

1. The detailed evaluation plans are outlined on pp. 26-30 and indicate the beginnings of a well-designed study. The evaluation plan will focus on 5 research questions relevant to ascertaining the effects of the intervention on teachers' learning and practices (p. 26-27), as well as student achievement. The evaluation includes a matched-comparison design to determine the effects of the intervention (pp. 29). The analyses described on pp. 28-29 (HLM & Regression) also contribute to the design's rigor. The proposed evaluation is rigorous in terms of having sufficient power to demonstrate outcome effects (p. 29-30).

2. The measures for the outcome evaluation (4th grade state science assessments) should provide the information needed to determine progress towards achieving intended outcomes (pp. 29). Training and teachers' practice will be monitored to inform the program implementation, evaluation (pp. 27-28).

3. The measures for the implementation evaluation will provide high-quality data on the key elements and approach to facilitate replication in other settings.

4. The evaluation will be conducted by a team of researchers from Horizon Research, led by Eric Banilower of Horizon Research. The proposal states that 7.5% of the project budget will be set aside for the evaluation.

5. The evaluation will be independent from the project developer and implementer.

Weaknesses

1. The size of the sample for the student achievement evaluation is not indicated. Thus, it is difficult to determine if the results of this aspect of the

evaluation can be generalized to the broader population.

2-3. n/a

4. No CV was provided for Eric Banilower, thus it was impossible to determine his level of expertise for leading the evaluation components. The budget narrative did not include exactly how much money was budgeted for the evaluation, so its adequacy in terms of providing sufficient resources also can not be determined.

5. n/a

Reader's Score: 10

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- ,
- , (U396B100045)

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 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	19
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	9
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 the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	_____
TOTAL	105	69

Technical Review Form

Validation 11: 84.396B

Reader #2:

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- , - , (U396B100045)

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

The focus of the proposal is to implement the scaling of the ASSET Science professional development program by creating regional Professional Development Centers and satellite sites to support the development of teachers' abilities to provide STEM content. One of the strengths of this proposal is the strong independent evaluative results on page e6 that documented that ASSET schools scored consistently higher in science, math and reading than non participating schools.

The comprehensive program design model of the ASSET program allows for greater impact by leveraging the new resources to build a "bridge" to support schools as they complete the SIE (state funded) program. It supports those teachers to full implementation through the "teachers teaching teachers," Lead Teacher Development Pathway and a teacher driven Research and Development cycle described on page e8. The development of these strategies will allow for an expansion of fees-for-service customer system to support continual growth.

The design plan contains strategies, a logic model and project outcomes on pages e10-12 and a description of the process of evaluation using a third-party evaluator.

Weaknesses

None

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 had a business plan supported with a strong funding

stream that was diversified with a range of private and public funding which has supported their growth into a nonprofit that utilizes a fee-for-service fiscal plan. Even more importantly was ASSET's success in growing its membership base by 30%.

The fact that ASSET has already effectively scaled up their infrastructure with the SIE statewide initiative strengthens this proposal since replication of their successful program is at the heart of the new work. ASSET has been recognized for its successful growth but even more important is the results of an independent evaluation which has documented success.

The programmatic design that emphasizes both quantitative and qualitative data analysis paired with their strong and sustained partnerships have led to the development of a strong infrastructure which is ready to expand its service delivery. ASSET has already provided technical assistance to other similar initiatives across the nation as documented on page e24.

Weaknesses

The data on student achievement is very weak and the application could have been strengthened by providing specific data outcomes related to closing the achievement gap.

Reader's Score: 19

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 a detailed plan to scale its operations from 48,000 students to 224,000 by the end of the initiative (page e29). This is feasible based on the history of ASSET and its successful growth with their SIE program initiative and their sustained partnerships representing both public and private funders.

The breakdown of the fiscal costs of service delivery is reasonable for the

level of services provided to the school and teachers as described on page e32.

Weaknesses

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 ASSET program has a history of transitioning from private only funding to a strong funding model that combines public and private funds with fee-for-service strategy to produce a viable funded budget as documented on page e33.

One of the outstanding achievements of the ASSET program is the strong infrastructure of partner organizations that support their work. They have acquired partners with a wide range of interests from workforce development to professional development supporting the ASSET initiative.

Weaknesses

None

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 application contains a management plan with a timeline of operational milestones on page e 37.

One strength of the ASSET application is the fact that the team that manages the project has a range of four to fifteen years of involvement with the initiative and there have been no changes in the major leadership positions since the inception of the organization.

An external evaluation team has been identified that has expertise specifically in science education.

Weaknesses

The management plan was basic and could have been strengthened with the addition of more details included in the design plan listed on pages e10-12 and the ASSET Project Implementation Plan located in Appendix G-4. Combining all these elements into one plan would have increased its adequacy.

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

The basis of the ASSET program is its instructional curriculum and professional development for teachers in grades K-8 so it includes improving teacher's abilities to use inquiry, assessment and notebooking strategies which are proven to improve young children's interest in science.

Weaknesses

None

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

While the application focuses on science and includes some narrative about college entry and success, the evidence does not adequately build a case that their proposed work would meet the requirements of this competitive 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

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

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- ,
- , (U396B100045)

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 20 Points)	20	16
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	7
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	8
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	7
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 the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	54

Technical Review Form

Validation 11: 84.396B

Reader #3:

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- , - , (U396B100045)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

This applicant proposed continuation of a project similar to one it has been successfully managing for 30-45 LEAs over the last 10 plus years and includes ambitious, yet reasonable and cost efficient scale up projections for 48,000 students at an estimated cost of \$465 per student. The applicant shows the organizational capacity to carry out this ambitious scale up and presents a chart showing how program will be staffed at the organizational level with key management staff who have backgrounds and experiences adequate to meet their managerial responsibilities. However, the application presents a case which seems focused on continuing support for a program called SIE in participating schools, rather than implementing the proposed project. In a number of places the applicant refers to SIE and that SIE is receiving state funds. Yet it does not draw enough of a distinction between how or whether the state support for SIE and the support requested from the i3 program grant will be combined, leveraged, or operate in tandem. It should show the safeguards being put in place to insure the funds will not be commingled inappropriately. Additionally, the applicant does not provide detail as to exactly how it or its partners will promote sustainability and does not address the question of how the organization will incorporate project activities in its repertoire of programs after the grant period. Finally, although the

application presents an overview description of key program components and an outline of project implementation activities, it does not include some key components such as benchmarks, specific persons responsible for activities, and key activities such as facilities acquisition and hiring.

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 applicant indicates that proposed program is research based and standards aligned and that there is also evidence of program effectiveness. (pp 2, 15-20).

The applicant presents an overview description of key program components and an outline of project implementation activities with time frames. (pp 10, Appendix G).

Weaknesses

The application presents a needs statement that seems focused on the continuation of support for SIE in the participating schools rather than the implementation of the proposed project and it does not draw enough of a distinction between ASSET and SIE and how the two are connected

programmatically, financially and administratively. (pp 7-9).

The applicant does not provide a clear description of how the program components represent an exceptional approach to the needs described on page 9.

The applicant does not present a clear link between the two new PD centers proposed and how the project strategies will ensure that rural teachers will get the training they offer or that establishing them will positively impact students. (pp 11-15).

Reader's Score: 16

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 application indicates that the applicant has been successfully managing a similar project that involves one PD center like the one proposed for 30-45 LEAs over the last 10 plus years on page 21.

Weaknesses

Other than this particular experience and a statement that the organization has been in business since 1994, the applicant does not show other instances of implementing and managing complex projects successfully. (pp 21-26).

Other than a small study described on pages 14-20, the applicant does not address the positive impact its programs have had reducing an achievement gap. (pp 21-26.)

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 presents hard projections that the program will be scaled up for 9600 students per year, or 48,000 in five years, and speculates that it might reach as many as 224,000 students by 2015 at an estimated cost of approximately \$465 per student. This seems reasonable and cost effective. (pp 30, Budget Narrative).

The applicant shows the organizational capacity to carry out this ambitious scale up 31, Appendix G. Applicant presents what appears to be an effective strategy to assign site based scale up responsibilities to TBA site based field staff. (p 31).

Weaknesses

The application does not include position descriptions, qualification statements, or criteria for hiring these critical TBA positions. (pp 31, Appendix G, Appendix C).

The larger regional and national scale up strategy seems to rely on unsecured and uncommitted grant money and there is no description of who the applicant expects to secure the money from or specifically how this money will be secured. (pp 32-33).

Reader's Score: 7

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 established a plan for transitioning the project activities to participating LEAs and has successfully implemented such a plan with other projects. (p 34).

The applicant is enlisting a variety of partners to promote sustainability. (pp 35-36).

Weaknesses

The application does not provide detail as to exactly how the partners will promote sustainability or what are the expected outcomes of this promotion. (pp 35-36).

The applicant does not address the question of how the organization will incorporate project activities in its repertoire of programs. (pp 34-36).

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 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 applicant presents a chart showing how program will be staffed at the organizational level and naming the key management staff. These staff members have adequate background and experience to meet their managerial responsibilities. (pp 37-38, Appendix C).

The application identifies an evaluator who also has the background and experience to meet his responsibilities. (pp 37-38, Appendix C.)

Weaknesses

The management plan is presented in two parts: one presents a list of staff and their general responsibilities; the other shows a timeline for program development and center development activities. The applicant does not provide enough detail as regards how the general responsibilities specifically interface with the program and center development responsibilities. Further, the program and center development management plan is missing key components such as benchmarks and specific persons responsible for activities as well as and elaborations of key activities such as curriculum development, facilities acquisition and hiring. (pp 36- 39).

Reader's Score: 7

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

The application indicates a major focus of its business plan is to expand the curriculum to include a pre K program. (p 3).

Weaknesses

It is unclear why the applicant will wait to carry out this expansion until two years into the project. (p 3).

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

The applicant includes a number of citations and references to studies supporting project goals, one of which is college access. (pp 4-5, Appendix H).

Weaknesses

The applicant does not adequately demonstrate how the studies cited show that college access and success apply to the specific project strategies or that these strategies will produce these important effects. (pp 4-5, Appendix H).

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

Did not address

Weaknesses

Did not address

Reader's Score: 0

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

None identified.

Weaknesses

In listing possible sites for project implementation activities, the applicant shows their locations, but does not include any indicators that show which are rural and in fact, two listed are suburban locations (pp 6, 30-31, Appendix G).

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/30/2010 9:44 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/23/2010 3:50 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- ,
- , (U396B100045)

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 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	12
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	_____
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 Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	_____
TOTAL	105	27

Technical Review Form

Validation 11: 84.396B

Reader #4:

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- , - , (U396B100045)

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

Two qualifying studies were discussed in appropriate detail. When available, effect sizes found in those studies were presented for magnitude of past effects. Outcomes of these previous studies are similar to outcomes in the present study and therefore were appropriate and well presented evidence for the study being proposed. A power analysis was conducted and a minimum detectable effect size is proposed. The MDES selected was

informed by past research and the sample size proposed is justified by the power analysis that was conducted. This is a very strong section that addresses all facets of this section.

Weaknesses

Not applicable

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

An independent and qualified evaluator has been selected. Research questions pertaining to the evaluation are clearly articulated and match the goals/objectives of the project. The research questions will also provide meaningful results. Also, a matched control group is proposed using propensity score matching as well as use of Hierarchical Linear Modeling which will account for the nested nature of the data: both represent a well designed evaluation that will provide meaningful and useful results at the end of the grant award.

Weaknesses

One proposed outcome is not discussed or defined. This proposal states teacher effectiveness as a mid-term outcome (and it is also alluded to in contextual factors portion of research question 4) but does not define it. Neither does the proposal state how effectiveness will be measured or propose to investigate effectiveness as a mediator to student achievement effects.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2010 3:50 PM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/10/2010 6:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- ,
- , (U396B100045)

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 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	18
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	8
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	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)	1	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	68

Technical Review Form

Validation 11: 84.396B

Reader #5:

Applicant: ASSET Inc. (Achieving Student Success through Excellence in Teaching) -- ,
 - , (U396B100045)

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

ASSET's main focus is to improve teaching and learning in the domain of science (page e7). However, only one third of the school districts are taking advantage of the ASSET initiative. ASSET would like to expand the initiative. The funds from the Innovation will be used to establish Regional PD Centers and Satellite Sites that will allow teachers and administrators to have access to All the ASSET's professional development. ASSET's five approaches are listed on page e9. Each national model is listed as well as the innovative approach to implement the program. ASSET satellite sites will offer research-based model to the teachers as well as the administrators. ASSET's short-term, mid-term and long-term outcomes are listed on page e12 and the main focus is to increase teacher effectiveness and to improve student achievement. Page e13 shows that ASSET innovation program will touch all the students including high need student.

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

ASSET was selected in 2006 to design, implement and manage Pennsylvania's statewide science? It's Elementary (page e20) because of its past performance by growing its member base by 30% in three years. For example teachers were allow to spend more time in a course (2 days instead of 1) to better feel comfortable with course content and delivery method (page e21). Therefore, teachers will be able to improve students' academic

achievement. For that qualitative and quantitative data will be collected using a Data collection process and Program assessment (page e22).

Weaknesses

Data on graduation rate and improvement on student achievement is not included in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 18

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

Page e29 stated that the estimated number of students to be part of the ASSET program is 224,000 students by 2015. ASSET will have access to various resources throughout his partnership with several agencies (page e29). The ASSET Inc organizational chart is in appendix G-6 to show that ASSET will have the qualified personnel to implement and manage the project and page e30 listed the other key personnel who will be part of the project implementation.

Pages e32 and e33 indicated the start-up cost, the operating cost as well as the cost to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Weaknesses

ASSET will be publishing articles and share the result with the nation education community as stated on page e32. However, the replication of the project with another variety of student population is not clearly addressed in the application.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Pages e34 and e35 indicated that ASSET has the support of educational agencies through community partnership and volunteers. Because of its sustainability ASSET was able to convert the program to a fee-for service membership at the end of the initial grant.

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 key personnel for this project that constitute the management team has already been successful with the organization's Elementary project with a minimum of 4 to 15 years of experience (page e36). The table on page e36 has listed the role, name and responsibility of the management team for the project and the resume of the leadership team are located in appendix G-6. Pages e37 and e38 have listed the project timeline by year as well as the milestones for each year.

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

Early elementary teachers will have access to professional development that will provide to them the teaching strategies they should use to address the needs of young students (page 3)

Weaknesses

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

ASSET will be using inquiry-based learning that will prepare the students for college and life long careers (page 4).

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

Weaknesses

Reader's Score: 0

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

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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