

Status: Submitted  
 Last Updated: 07/09/2010 4:02 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, -  
 Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

**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	19
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	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
<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 15: 84.396B**

**Reader #1:**

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, - Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

### 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**

TD would like to validate that its Talent Development, whole school reform model, augmented with an early identification system and a SST program provided by Communities in Schools, and diverse teams of 8-20 near peers? AmericCorps members working through city year, will provide resources at a scale sufficient to provide social support, monitoring, in-class and extended day tutoring at scale to keep all students on track to graduation.

TD, based on 15 years experience delivering its whole school reform model, Talent Development, presents its TD- DN model as a method for turning around these troubled schools. TD-DN is the TD model augmented with an early warning system coupled with a multi-tiered student support system to enable high needs high schools to get the right intervention to the right student at the right time at the scale of intensity required.

A school's 50-100 neediest students are identified for intensive support.

Middle school feeder clusters are included to intervene sooner and get a greater cumulative effect.

The school leadership team, a site coordinator (SC), CY and CIS staff meet bi-weekly and the SC and leadership team meet weekly.

**Weaknesses**

There is some potential for disconnects, cultural, philosophical, role, or territorial, with staff working from multiple organizations.

**Reader's Score: 19**

**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**

TD and each of its partners has an extended history of developing, implementing, and scaling-up high impact programs that improve student outcomes for high-needs schools and students. They each have strong program, management, and financial capacity and highly capable staff.

Each organization has an impressive list of accomplishments

### **Weaknesses**

The partnership tenure in this integrated model is relatively new, and regional differences are sure to exist, achieving fidelity may be more challenging, and it will take time to build practice that accommodates this complexity.

**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**

TTD-DN appears to be fully capable of meeting the needs 57,000 students to be included in the study, and they have a well articulated model that is currently operating across the country and in several foreign counties, demonstrating its readiness for replication.

A phased scale-up timeline has been developed that provides time for a year-long preparation and training for each new school and shared learning experiences in existing TD sites for school teams with members from each partnering organization.

An on-site TD Turnaround Manager works with the school administration to oversee and support implementation of all programs and systems.

Cost per student will decrease from \$897-\$606 over the term of the grant as

schools build internal capacity and rely on TD-DN less.

Each partner has an infrastructure in place in each city to expand beyond the scope of the grant as needed.

**Weaknesses**

All the relationships have yet to be tested.

**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**

TD-DN has a diverse funding stream, investments of 11M from Pepsi Cola and in-kind support from number strategic partners.

All TD-DN partners also have significant experience raising money.

Each partner has integrated its core programs into the TD-DN model

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

An organizational chart that fully integrates the working units of all partners nationally and locally is included.

The roles and responsibilities of key staff TD-DN staff, timelines and milestones are documented evidencing a high level of planning.

Key personnel are imminently qualified and have received national recognition for their leadership expertise and accomplishments.

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

None noted

**Weaknesses**

None noted

**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**

TD offers a strong college preparatory curriculum and they provided extensive support to enable students to master it. They also provide mentoring to encourage college enrolment and offer college readiness activities through their Charting for Success program.

**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**

TD offers a robust Response to Intervention model to assure that all students are provided with tailored support to promote the success of each student.

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

None noted

**Weaknesses**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

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Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 07/07/2010 11:24 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, -  
Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

**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	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	9
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	9
<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 Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	1
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>70</b>

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 15: 84.396B**

**Reader #2:**

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, - Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

### 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 design of the proposed project appears well-conceived to meet the documented need, given its combination of whole school reform and individual student support components - in clear response to the research foundations also presented clearly by the applicant. Also clear is the project's 80% graduation goal for high schools and 2/3 off-track reduction goal for middle schools.

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

Each of the partners has an exceptional record of experience, particularly CSOS for implementing complex projects, providing confidence in the partnership's ability to manage the proposed project. Abundant evidence of effectiveness is presented for each project partner individually as well as some early results for the proposed coordinated/enhanced model.

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

The applicant demonstrates strong capacity to reach the projected number of participants during the grant period, given the planning already in progress, scale-up capacity-building work, available infrastructure for launching and managing project activities, and the ability to place hands-on support personnel in each site school. Replication potential is also very strong.

**Weaknesses**

Questions remain about managing the coordinated design effort in every site desiring replication, entailing the availability and continuing coordination of each and all of the partner resources for deployment in those areas. Capacity for providing that continued coordination should be discussed further.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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 and its partners clearly demonstrate adequacy of resources for continuing the project beyond the grant period - both financially and through the building of coalitions and stakeholder support based on realized value (described in detail). There also exists high potential for continuing to integrate the project design into the ongoing work of each member of the partnership (as well as in the collective mission of the three as they work together collectively and collaboratively).

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

Identified project staff are all superbly qualified and the project's management plan appears adequate to achieve all objectives.

**Weaknesses**

Timelines and descriptions of personnel duties do not provide clear detail about specific responsibilities for achieving objectives and milestones of progress.

**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 applicant did not address this competitive preference.

**Weaknesses**

The applicant did not address this competitive preference.

**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 program's three component/partners all clearly support college access and success.

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

Use of Response to Intervention in the proposed program is a best-practice approach to addressing the special learning needs of students with disabilities and LEP students.

**Weaknesses**

None 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**

The applicant did not address this competitive preference.

**Weaknesses**

The applicant did not address this competitive preference.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/07/2010 11:24 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/07/2010 2:18 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, -  
Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

**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	12
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	13
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 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	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>25</b>

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 15: 84.396B**

**Reader #3:**

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, - Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

### 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**

Strengths: The proposal draws upon a number of excellent studies that have been conducted on the Talent Development (TD) program, including a comparative interrupted time series analysis study with Philadelphia high schools and middle schools conducted by MDRC (2005), using a matched comparison group. Increases were found in such areas as credits earned, promotion rates, attendance rates during the first year in high schools.

Promising findings with statistically significant results were also presented from other studies, including a study of TD's Math Acceleration Lab (involving an ample sample size of 985 underperforming students in grades 5-9), and a study of their literacy program comparing 3 types of support (PD workshops, lesson materials, expert coaching vs. no coaching vs. no materials nor coaching), with observed gains significantly greater with "full literacy program". The research also provides evidence of program effectiveness from other TD studies, looking at their early warning indicators of drop-out risk, and middle grades literacy and math programs.

Additional research evidence of program effectiveness is also presented for partner organizations CIS (5-year school-level quasi-experimental study conducted by ICF International, comparing 602 CIS schools with 602 matched comparison schools) and for City Year.

### **Weaknesses**

Weaknesses: A number of the studies were focused on a single city, raising issues of external validity. Several studies also did not indicate important details of research design and findings such as sample size, process of random assignment, or statistical levels of significance for findings.

**Reader's Score: 12**

### **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**

Strengths: The evaluation utilizes a strong experimental research design, with appropriate primary targets on the project's "ABC" (attendance, behavior and course failure/success) of successive cohorts of students, as well as achievement and graduation outcomes.

Sampling is of appropriate size, through the recruitment of 80 low performing secondary schools in 14 school districts (40 MS and 40 HS), and randomization occurring within school levels and within districts.

Furthermore, the study has a good focus on cohorts and groups of students receiving the intervention over time, by appropriately tracking three successive longitudinal cohorts of 6th grades and 9th graders. The evaluators have through a careful procedure to determine effect size, and appropriate needed sample size.

The evaluation has a number of other strong features to its research design, such as including multiple measures pertaining to academic outcomes, using separate outcomes as well as an "on-track" composite measure in its

analysis, considering mediating variables (e.g., student engagement with school and learning). The proposal astutely acknowledges the complexity in multi-state projects, with variable examinations in place. Comprehensive plans for conducting a thorough implementation/process evaluation, and case studies of 2-4 school districts are also strong features of its research design.

The proposal has set aside ample resources for evaluation (\$5M total; 16% of budget) and the work will be conducted by two highly experienced research groups (MRDC, in partnership with ICF.) To its credit, the proposal has stated that it will set aside \$100K of foundation money to complete analyses, since the evaluation work will extend beyond the 3 grant period. The parsing of evaluation work between the two organizations (MRDC handling the randomized experiments and ICF directing the implementation study) is clear and appropriate.

### **Weaknesses**

Weaknesses: Evaluators will examine high school achievement data "to the extent that it is available" and "depending on the policies in place in our study states at the time of analysis". While acknowledging the complexities that multi-state interventions introduce to gathering comparable student achievement data, it does not appear sufficiently rigorous to rely primarily on attendance, course failure/success, and grade promotion as the sole sources of student academic outcomes. The proposed evaluation would have been stronger if it had included a scenario that at least assured an examination of a sub-set of states for cross-state analysis of student test scores.

**Reader's Score: 13**

### **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:** 07/07/2010 2:18 PM

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 06/28/2010 3:22 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, -  
Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

**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	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)	15	10
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	13
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 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	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>23</b>

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 15: 84.396B**

**Reader #4:**

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, - Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

### 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**

Studies are presented that deal with a variety of variables which the program attempts to impact. These include credits earned, promotion rates, attendance rates and academic achievement measured by more than one test. The inclusion of studies looking at multiple program facets is helpful. Those for which appropriate data are presented indicate small to moderate effects.

One study looked at 540 students from treatment schools compared to 604 students from matched comparison middle schools not using the program. The study found that treatment students were "significantly and substantially" more successful." One piece of data showed that students in the project middle schools were 55% more likely to graduate.

### **Weaknesses**

Additional detail is needed about each of the studies presented. For example, one quasi experimental study looked at effect size after 6 years of program implementation. While this longitudinal view is extremely informative to the program, it is not clear what was done to control for shifts in student population over the years. If the school matching was done at the beginning of the study, it is possible that due to administrative changes and other social changes, that the schools no longer resembled each other at the end of the study.

Terms such as "significantly" and "substantially" are used to indicate changes in students due to the program. The study descriptions would benefit from greater detailed data presentations.

**Reader's Score: 10**

### **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 evaluation will be conducted by an independent firm with experience in large-scale, random assignment studies.

The design recognizes that schools in the control group might be implementing other valuable programs. The impact study will analyze program effects compared to the effects of other programs.

This will be a cohort analysis. To assure that all cohorts are followed a designated time period, additional private funds have been secured (p.27) to continue the study beyond the grant period. This approach will provide informative longitudinal data.

The evaluation will include a number of indicators including achievement test scores, attendance, behavior, course passing, suspension and promotion. Use of multiple variables will provide strong evidence.

Qualitative information will be collected at the school level. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted with key staff from the various organizations involved in the program. It is recommended that this aspect of the study be used to analyze the successes and challenges of using this multi-organizational approach to improving conditions for students.

### **Weaknesses**

The sample will be drawn from 80 schools with 40 being treatment and 40 being control. The number of students per school will be 100 per grade at middle school and 350 per grade at high school. Since randomization will be done at the school level within district, it is possible that selected schools will not have a student population of sufficient size to form the sample groups. It is recommended that procedures to address this be included in the design.

Sample sizes can be considerably reduced by student mobility, school closures, school reorganizations, etc. For example, if half of the treatment schools are middle schools, then that number is 20. With 100 students per grade, there will be 6000 students in the treatment group to start. The type of districts to be served by the program are often subject to "shrinkage" with schools being closed for economic reasons. Selection of additional schools at the beginning of the study is recommended.

To this reader it is unclear from the program description and the description of the evaluation design that there will be sufficient human resources to serve all of the students in the treatment schools. This issue needs consideration.

**Reader's Score: 13**

### **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:** 06/28/2010 3:22 PM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2010 4:34 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, -  
Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

**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	18
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	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
<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 Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	1
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>63</b>

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## **Technical Review Form**

**Validation 15: 84.396B**

**Reader #5:**

**Applicant:** Johns Hopkins University -- Center for Social Organization of Schools, - Center for Social Organization of Schools, (U396B100257)

### **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**

Applicant supports the need for the project based on patterns of disengagement beginning at the middle school level where minority students lose instruction time because of disproportionately high dropout or suspension rates. They either never make it to high school or are disinterested from achieving full potential.

Applicant proposes school reform and student support model that is geared to turning around of high schools with low graduation rates, and their feeder middle schools. The TD DN is designed to enable ALL students to graduate HS prepared for college or career.

TD-DN model includes City Corps near peer staff/volunteers who will work with students and teachers to facilitate intervention and counseling based on early warning indicators.

#### **Weaknesses**

City Corps presence and support strategy could cause some alienation between CY and students. CY members are asked to greet each student every day, and to call families/parents when students are absent. It is unclear if CY members will be prepared to respond in the off chance that the call uncovers other life issues at play outside of truancy.

They will also follow a target group of students to their classes and help with counseling or intervention as needed. Some students may not react well to this part of the model and may actually challenge the CY authority. In addition, it may cause a poorly performing student to be embarrassed at being singled out for attention.

It is also a little unclear about how the early warning indicators are to be employed. The included graphic displays a record of absences and grades which operate together as the trigger. However, it is unclear at what point the student begins to receive assistance, how long they remain in that mode, and what the consequences are (if any) for not participating in the corrective actions.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**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**

CY and CIS staff share an impressive wealth of experience in their individual areas of expertise as well as in collaboration with each other. Both have experience in expanding their sites, increasing the numbers of persons whose lives they impact, and working with diverse groups of persons.

In collaboration executing TD DN model, they achieved significant success in target area schools in turning around negative behaviors, increasing attendance rates, and increasing student's academic scores.

#### **Weaknesses**

While the applicant reports on these levels of success, none of these projects appear to be overly complex.

As I understand the narrative, the TD-DN model pools the resources of CY and CIS to enact a model of mentorship, instruction and near-peer counseling. This will be a fairly complex coordination of services and personnel required to achieve successful outcomes at the target area schools.

CY and CIS each demonstrate a great level of expertise in managing projects based on their core competencies of volunteer talent and alternative schooling. Each agency has expanded to multiple locations serving diverse communities based on each agency's original mission, which each is credited with doing very well.

It will definitely be more challenging when both agencies are asked to blend these competencies together to enact the TD-DN model over the grant period. Chains of command will be meshed, management plans will be adjusted and measurement of program outcomes may require strict attention to account for conflicts of interest or perceived duplication of reporting

(expectations or outcomes).

**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**

Applicant has defined the number of students to be reached during the grant period 57,000 students in 60 schools to be scaled up with a batch of 20 rolled out in year two, another batch of 20 in year 3 and the final batch of 20 rolled out in the final 2 years of the grant period.

The applicant has the expertise in trained staff to manage the expansions and cost is moderately priced at \$606 per student. As the schools grow their infrastructure, on-site costs will decrease and a scale to 500,000 students will incur a cost of \$479 per student. Program will benefit from additional funding through Title 1, school improvement grants, and private funding. Both funding and talent will be in place to continue the replication of the program after the grant ends.

Integral/innovative parts of the information dissemination program include video testimony and a national visitors program to proactively administrators and policy makers. Plan includes other traditional outlets such as conferences, web sites and publications.

#### **Weaknesses**

TD DN installations need a year of training for each new school added. That must mean that there will be 20 trainings in place concurrently.

Although applicant has previously stated that each new school requires a year of training prior to executing the program, hence the beginning of the

roll out during the grant period begins in year 2. However, they note that staff will be in place after the grant period to facilitate addition of other schools.

**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**

Applicant has, with their partnerships with CIS and TD educated and experienced staff to sustain the model after the grant period.

Applicant has a four pronged approach that facilitates the growth of resources and partnerships that will help to sustain and grow the program.

Applicant has built strategic partnerships which will generate financial and in-kind contributions to sustain the program after the grant period such as pro bono services and free software licenses from Deloitte Consulting and School Loop respectively.

TD DN has positioned itself as a model with high ROI which will encourage continued implementation.

Applicant is also very experienced in their fund raising efforts and has built strong relationships with private and public sector organizations that will help to achieve continuous funding for this project.

##### **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**

Management plan is very detailed and outlines requisite milestones as well as succinct achievement, evaluation and communication mechanisms. Organizational chart also clearly defines operating positions and their relationships in the administrative chain.

Key personnel are educated and experienced to manage the plan.

Independent evaluator is identified as MDRC directed by company Vice President Dr. Fred Doolittle.

**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**

No response to this competitive preference priority.

**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**

This program is designed to increase the student's likelihood of post-secondary success. It is also designed to expose the student to college preparedness activities like FAFSA workshops, prep tests and college application preparation.

**Weaknesses**

None

**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**

Program is designed to pay attention to LEP students through coaching, providing teachers with professional development and planning between subject area and special education teachers.

**Weaknesses**

None

**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**

No response to this competitive preference priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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