

Status: Submitted  
 Last Updated: 07/08/2010 10:16 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

**Reader #1:**

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

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

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points) | 2   | 2  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | 105 | 74 |

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 18: 84.396B**

**Reader #1:**

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

### 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 proposes an exceptional approach to improving school readiness and reading development in K-3 school children. This is a program that has not been widely adopted and meets the needs to several thousand children across the state.

Applicant relies on a large amount of research to document the need for the project.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 20**

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

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

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

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

**3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)**

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

**(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing complex projects.**

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

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

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

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

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

**Strengths**

The applicant provides detailed documentation regarding its ability to carry out the responsibilities and obligations of a complex research project. The applicant's experience with large research projects is critical given the far-reaching needs the research methodology calls for.

The applicant has provided evidence of its ability to drive instructional practices that drive student achievement.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**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**

Applicant provided an excellent chart indicating the capacity and expertise of the project partners. This is instrumental in identifying how each partner relationship will contribute to the overall project.

The applicant has an aggressive plan to disseminate project findings in order to inform and drive best practices for schools, organizations and policy makers.

#### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

### **6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)**

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

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.

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

#### **Strengths**

Applicant has secured the support of critical stakeholders that will allow for support throughout the duration of the project.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

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

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.**
- (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing complex projects.**
- (3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.**

**Strengths**

The applicant identified key personnel of the project and described, in detail, the responsibilities and duties of that key personnel.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Competitive Preference**

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

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

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

**Strengths**

Applicant addressed preference by designing a program which provides specific learning time to K-3 aged students through an extended school year. This program is specifically geared to improving achievement of young children.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

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

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

**Strengths**

Applicant did not address preference.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

**Strengths**

Applicant addressed preference by providing increased opportunities for learning time for young students. Supporting young children provides the applicant with the opportunity to identify students who have unidentified disabilities or the ability to determine if language acquisition would be a barrier to achievement.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**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**

Applicant addressed preference by identifying school districts that meet the rural eligibility requirements. The services are designed to identify practices that meet the unique needs of students living in rural areas who may not, otherwise, be able to access extended learning time.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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**Status:** Submitted**Last Updated:** 07/08/2010 10:16 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/06/2010 7:30 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

**Reader #2:**

|   | <b>POINTS<br/>POSSIBLE</b> | <b>POINTS<br/>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                         | 16                       |
| 4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)                                       | 15                         | _____                    |
| 5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)                                 | 10                         | 10                       |
| 6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)  | 10                         | 10                       |
| 7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)                            | 10                         | 10                       |
| <b>Competitive Preference</b>   |                            |                          |
| 1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)   | 1                          | 1                        |
| 2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point) | 1                          | 0                        |

|  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point) | 1          | 1         |
| 4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)  | 2          | 1         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>105</b> | <b>67</b> |

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 18: 84.396B**

**Reader #2:**

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

The purpose of this proposal is to validate the New Mexico K-3 Plus extended school year program. The applicants are highly experienced evaluators, and the validation plan is meticulous. The proposal has two objectives, both of which are addressed very well. This proposal assumes that the expansion of the pilot program that is in place in New Mexico will continue with its present success level, while it is studied for replicability.

### Selection Criteria

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

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

**(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program**

that has not already been widely adopted).

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

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

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

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

### **Strengths**

The applicant makes an excellent case for the high need for the project in New Mexico; the proposed project would validate a pilot program that gives high risk K-3 students extra opportunities for learning

The components of the K-3 Plus program, as legislated, are specific, embrace high expectations, and attend to the needs of the whole child. Because of this, the intervention itself has the probability of meeting its goals.

The details of participation in the validation study, all within the restrictions of the K3Plus legislation, have been laid out and agreed upon through MOU's.

The goals and objectives of the K-3 Plus Validation study in the proposal are specific, measurable, and include sustainability and replication plans

The proposal's approach is exceptional in that it examines the program's cost effectiveness and is specifically about tailoring the K-3 expanded school year approach for replication elsewhere

### **Weaknesses**

There was not enough discussion about the payments made to the families for participating in the program

This proposal assumes that the expansion of the pilot program that is in place in New Mexico will continue with its present success level, while it is studied for replicability.

**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**

The applicant, Utah State University's College of Education's Institute for Extended School Year Validation, has extensive experience managing complex projects, the details of which are offered in the proposal. A main focus of their work has been early education projects.

The University has also been involved in numerous early education improvement initiatives

**Weaknesses**

Although the applicant has been involved in numerous early education improvement initiatives with many LEA's, it does not offer any achievement data on any of them

The applicant does not offer achievement data on the partner LEA's in New Mexico

**Reader's Score: 16**

**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 purpose of the proposal is to determine if the project can be brought to scale statewide

The specific capacity of each official partner to collaborate in the validation project is detailed within the proposal

The pilot has determined that the various parts of the program work well, and families report high levels of user satisfaction and ease of use

The applicant has a plan to broadly disseminate the results of the validation study to districts, the legislature, to other states, nationally, and to assist in replicating the program statewide

#### **Weaknesses**

None Found

**Reader's Score: 10**

#### **6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)**

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

**(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.**

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

#### **Strengths**

The applicant has significant stakeholder support, as demonstrated through letters in the appendices, including from the state union, the Governor, the legislature, the NM DOE, and other policy makers and community leaders.

They have letters of agreement in place from all partners, which supports sustainability of the project

The whole purpose of the proposal is to determine if K-3 Plus will be sustainable in New Mexico

Applicant states on page 32 that New Mexico has pledged to continue the

project beyond the grant period

**Weaknesses**

None Found

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

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

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.**
- (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing complex projects.**
- (3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.**

**Strengths**

The management plan is meticulous, and includes timelines and responsible personnel for each goal and objective

The project director and key project personnel are highly qualified and have high levels of expertise in the validation work described in the proposal

**Weaknesses**

None Found

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Competitive Preference**

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

**We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement**

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

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

**Strengths**

The focus of the proposed initiative is students in grades K-3, and improving each aspect of this priority

**Weaknesses**

None Found

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

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

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

**Strengths**

This priority is not addressed

**Weaknesses**

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

**Strengths**

Significant numbers of ELL and SpEd students will be served by the proposed initiative

**Weaknesses**

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

**Strengths**

One of the partner districts is defined as rural, and there will be differentiated summer activities for the 450 rural students over the life of the grant.

**Weaknesses**

Only one of the targeted districts in the basic proposal is rural, therefore full points are not awarded for this competitive preference priority,

**Reader's Score: 1**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/06/2010 7:30 PM

[show names](#)

[show group subtotals](#)

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/07/2010 2:26 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

**Reader #3:**

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

|  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address 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>28</b> |

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 18: 84.396B**

**Reader #3:**

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

### Selection Criteria

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

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

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

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

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

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

proposed project.

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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

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

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

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

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

**Strengths**

The applicant lists on page 10 of the application four studies that meet the requirement of moderate evidence that an extended school year on student achievement.

The effect sizes of the described studies ranged from small to moderate, suggesting that the intervention may have a impact on student achievement.

### **Weaknesses**

The applicant does not address findings of research that suggest that early learning gains do not persist through to higher grades. Also, the differences between the proposed intervention and those measured in the described studies are not specified.

**Reader's Score: 14**

### **3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)**

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

- (1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing complex projects.**
- (2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that -**
  - (a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -**
    - (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and**
    - (ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or**
  - (b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.**

### **Strengths**

### **Weaknesses**

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

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

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or well designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

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

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

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

#### **Strengths**

The applicant describes a sophisticated, highly rigorous, well-designed experimental study that measures fidelity of implementation of the program as well as student outcomes. This mixed methods study will allow for assessment of progress towards goals, sufficient information about key elements to facilitate replication, sufficient resources, and an independent evaluation of the proposed program.

#### **Weaknesses**

The methods of evaluation will collect information about implementation and outcomes. However, it is unclear how the project stakeholders will be informed through periodic reporting about the program's progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

**Reader's Score: 14**

### **5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 10 Points)**

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

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

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

**(3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student**

populations. Evidence of this ability includes the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

#### **6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)**

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

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

### **Competitive Preference**

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

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/07/2010 2:26 PM

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Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 07/07/2010 11:53 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

**Reader #4:**

|   | <b>POINTS<br/>POSSIBLE</b> | <b>POINTS<br/>SCORED</b> |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Summary Statement</b>  |                            |                          |
| 1. Summary Statement  | N/A                        | N/A                      |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>   |                            |                          |
| 1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 20 Points)                  | 20                         | _____                    |
| 2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 15 Points)   | 15                         | 15                       |
| 3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)                                    | 20                         | _____                    |
| 4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)                                       | 15                         | 15                       |
| 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>30</b> |

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## Technical Review Form

**Validation 18: 84.396B**

**Reader #4:**

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

### Selection Criteria

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

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

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

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

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

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

proposed project.

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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

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

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

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

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

**Strengths**

The applicant describes several high quality studies with moderate evidence of positive student outcomes, including internal and external validity, in support of its proposed program. The studies reviewed were either experimental or quasi-experimental designs. The applicant's discussion of the reviewed studies addressed differences in sample population compared to the population in the proposed program. In doing so, the applicant

demonstrated awareness of the strengths and potential weaknesses in the research. The weaknesses discussed do not reduce the strength of the evidence in support of the proposed program, but, rather, demonstrate the applicant's clear knowledge of the research base.

#### **Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

### **3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 20 Points)**

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

- (1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing complex projects.**
- (2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that -**
  - (a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -**
    - (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and**
    - (ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or**
  - (b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.**

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

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

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

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or well designed quasi-experimental study.**

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

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

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

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

**Strengths**

The applicant proposes a well-designed randomized experiment across multiple sites. The applicant is aware that including multiple sites ensures that site specific factors, such as teacher quality and classroom size, may influence the treatment effect, and addresses this issue by estimating the average treatment effect across sites and variance of the effect. The design is strengthened by reported high levels of re-enrollment which reduces the likely that attrition will affect the research. If there is attrition, the applicant has plans to recruit a second cohort of students. The evaluators have extensive expertise and experience to carry out the plan.

**Weaknesses**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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 11:53 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/06/2010 2:51 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

**Reader #5:**

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

|  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point) | 1          | 1         |
| 4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)  | 2          | 1         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>105</b> | <b>71</b> |

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## **Technical Review Form**

**Validation 18: 84.396B**

**Reader #5:**

**Applicant:** Utah State University -- Center for Persons with Disabilities, - Center for Persons with Disabilities, (U396B100267)

### **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 applicant proposes a randomized control validation study of an extended school year intervention in grades K-3 that is currently operating in New Mexico. The project is an exceptional approach to improving outcomes for high risk elementary students, including ELL and students with IEPs. The K-3 Plus program is exceptional because the design includes additional time in school with smaller classes, professional development for teachers, parental involvement, recruiting highly qualified teachers and the provision of in-school support services such as meals and transportation. By including all the research-based important elements of successful early childhood and early elementary education into one program, the goals should be met. The applicant has set two goals with explicit supporting strategies in 4 school districts thus narrowing the test universe to a manageable size to control for differences in implementation but large enough to allow for diversity in population and some local variation. An important aspect of this study will be a cost benefit analysis of the intervention that will provide policy makers, educators, and communities real data to use when making decisions about school programs. Given the current interest in maximizing the public investment in education, it is critical to know the impact of intense services in the early grades.

**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

The eligible applicant (Utah State University) and the 4 implementing school districts have experience in implementing and evaluating complex

projects.

The applicant has worked directly with many districts to implement and evaluate literacy projects that have shown positive impacts on student achievement. (p. 13-17) Of particular note is a project with the partnering districts in this project that tested the impact of a state funded pre-K program the results of which showed significant positive results on measures of language, literacy, and mathematics. An additional project with these districts focused on the implementation of the Early Reading First program which showed gains in reading achievement.

The applicant has experience in conducting these complex studies at the state and local level. In addition, they have conducted the preliminary analysis of the early implementation of the program.

#### **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 strategy and capacity to bring the project scale is linked to the results of the validation study. During the study, approximately 10% of the target population will be served. If the project is shown to raise achievement and be cost-effective, it will be scaled-up across the state eventually serving 25,000 to 38,000 students.

The applicant has established a group of project partners who will be part of the capacity and scale-up effort. For example, the New Mexico Office of Educational Accountability specializes in disseminating evidence-based educational findings, the state level Public Education Department (SEA) works with other state education agencies to share best practices, and the partnering districts have the capacity to work with other schools and districts to help them implement the project.

The partner districts and state education agency will be the lead on bringing

the project to scale at the state level as well as the regional and national level with support from the applicant. (p.e24)

Dissemination at the state level will focus on state policymakers to secure funding to expand the program. At the national level, the applicant and the district personnel will target audiences as diverse as educational researchers, preschool parents, and every constituency in between.

#### **Weaknesses**

none noted

**Reader's Score: 10**

#### **6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)**

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

**(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that it has the resources, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.**

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

#### **Strengths**

The applicant clearly demonstrates it has the support from key stakeholders at the state and local level including state government and education leaders. The state level presidents of the both the American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association support the project. The applicant has conducted focus groups to make sure that rank and file teachers have also become strong supporters when they saw the results. At the policy level, the Governor and state legislature are awaiting the results of the study to make evidenced based decisions on the program. To support these claims, the applicant cites a previous program that received on-going state funding based on positive results.

The bottom line on sustainability is dependent on the results of this study which is as it should be.

#### **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**

The key personnel are well qualified to undertake this study possessing the training and experience to manage the complex project.  
The management timeline is detailed and complete and will enable the applicant and the four district partners to operate the program on-time and within budget.  
The evaluator is well-qualified.

#### **Weaknesses**

Since the implementation of the project is a full partner with the evaluation component, more information on the separation of the two to ensure reliability and objectivity is needed to judge the adequacy of the plan.

**Reader's Score: 8**

### **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**

This is the focus of the project which, if successful, will result in improved outcomes for children, improved developmental milestones, and better transitions.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

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

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

**Strengths**

Priority not addressed

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

**Strengths**

This an integral aspect of the project with learning opportunities provided to ELL and students with IEPs.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

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

**Strengths**

The project will work in one rural district out of the four target districts.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 1**

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