

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 06/23/2010 5:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396C100105)

Reader #1:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	25
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	23
3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)	5	3
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	7
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	5
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address 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

Technical Review Form

Development 02: 84.396C

Reader #1:

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396C100105)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

The project is modeled on the applicant's successful implementation of their Performance Excellence Model, a national best practice. Goals and objectives indicate that the applicant has engaged in planning that is likely to ensure successful development of the project. Prior successful grant management and a track record of closing the achievement gap between sub-populations of students suggests that the project team is suited to complete this i3 project as described. The project is ambitious and is expected to serve 21,168 students and 1,564 teachers over five years. Dissemination plans, replication potential, and scale-up feasibility of the project are not clearly described.

Note: Strengths and weaknesses comments are numbered according to each selection criterion that is addressed by each comment.

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 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 the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project clearly specified and measurable and linked to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet.

Strengths

1. The project is described as based on the applicant's successful implementation of their "Performance Excellence Model" (PEM), "recognized as a national best practice" (p. 2). The Instructional Facilitators structure has resulted in success and increased achievement for regular students, but the applicant states that three of the structures alone are not working well (p. 3). The applicant appears to have the capacity to identify program weaknesses and implement revisions and/or restructuring to increase the efficacy of a project. The refined and restructured integration and "cross-functionality" of the four structures within the strategy framework may be innovative and may have the potential to produce exceptional outcomes (pp. 2-6). The intent of the project is to expand the PEM to ". . . address a largely unmet need with a focus on high-need students" (pp. 2-3).

2. As listed in Table 2 (pp. 7-9), the three project goals and objectives for each goal are clearly defined and measurable by specific assessments or instruments, and include measurable outcomes linked to priorities. The outcomes are ambitious and have potential to be achieved by the end of the grant period.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 25

2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 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 projects of the size and scope proposed by the eligible applicant.

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths

1. The applicant has experience with grant project implementation and management, as described in six examples of grant projects within the last eight years (pp. 13-14). The six grant projects appear to encompass components of the proposed i3 project (e.g., Response to Intervention). Based on these projects and an assumption that each is implemented with fidelity and successful management, the applicant is likely to be capable of management of a project of the proposed size and scope.
2. Based on data provided, the applicant appears to have significantly closed the achievement gap for all students and shown significant improvement increasing the graduation rate by 20% in eight years. The majority (98%) of teachers are highly qualified, exceeding state standards (pp. 14-15).

Weaknesses

1. As described, the grant projects selected to support the applicant's experience do not have definitive outcome statements of the interim or final success of each project (pp. 13-14).
2. It is unclear if data is contradictory in the percentage of teachers who are highly qualified (98%) as the applicant states that "Pre-test [state] Teacher Evaluation data . . . show that 49% of teachers were either "accomplished" or "distinguished" . . . post-test data found that 80% of our teachers met these standards" (p. 15). Lacking is an explanation how the latter data correlate to the stated 98% highly qualified.

Reader's Score: 23

3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to further develop and bring to scale the proposed project, 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 further develop and bring to scale the proposed practice, strategy, or program, or to work with others (including other partners) to ensure that the proposed practice, strategy, or program can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.

(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 so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths

1. The project will serve 21,168 students and 1,564 teachers over five years. Existing programs support 34-35 of the project schools (p. 19). The project intent is to expand the capacity of existing programs by restructuring the existing framework and integrating existing programs into one project (p. 19). The school district intends to provide in-kind support with personnel, while commitments have been made by private sector partners to contribute funding or in-kind support if the grant is awarded (pp. 19-20).

2. Based on the applicant's prior experience with the Response to Intervention model, the applicant is confident that the project can be further developed and brought to scale (p. 20).

4. The applicant provides a cost estimate per student of the proposed project and for scale-up (p. 20).

5. A comprehensive dissemination strategy is outlined, including presentations at local and national conferences and use of technology venues, such as SKYPE conferencing and web portals (p. 21).

Weaknesses

2. Not evident is a clearly defined explanation of the outcomes from the applicant's presentation of ". . . key components in 13 states . . ." (e.g., what components were presented to what audiences) (p. 20).
3. The feasibility of replication of the entire project, rather than individual components (e.g., RtI) is not clearly explained (p. 20). Although the applicant states that the project can be replicated in diverse communities and settings, on what that premise is based is not explained.
5. The dissemination plan lacks details about the extent and frequency of activities and whether or not the applicant intends to assess the outcomes of the activities in supporting further development or replication within the applicant's state and/or nationwide (p. 21).

Reader's Score: 3

4. 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 from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) to operate the project beyond the length of the Development 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 Development grant.**

Strengths

1. The project is anticipated to be continued through districtwide absorption of costs and continued volunteer tutors. Based on previous experience with similar size and scope projects, the applicant anticipates the project will be sustained beyond the grant period. The maximization and restructuring of resource use is expected to support sustainability (p. 21-22).
2. A number of the components of the project are already in place and operational. The project model is a restructuring of the components with additional resources to increase the efficacy of a cohesive project, rather than continue to implement individual structures. The applicant intends to plan for sustainability throughout the grant project through a 5-step process to periodically assess the project progress and feasibility (p. 22).

Weaknesses

1. Although the applicant states that ongoing costs will be embedded in the school district improvement plans, it is unclear how the district will "absorb costs" beyond the grant period (p. 22). The ambitious project, of which many components are already in place and operational, may require resources and funding that the district is unable to absorb. A realistic and feasible contingency plan is not described.

2. Detailed, explicit steps to assess project sustainability and refine or revise the project throughout the grant period are not evident. The applicant provides an outline of a 5-step process for sustainability of the project; however, the steps are somewhat generic. For example, a specific procedure of how the applicant intends to "take inventory" of current status and progress of the project is not included (p. 22).

Reader's Score: 7

5. 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.

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

Strengths

1. Table 7 highlights project milestones during three key time periods and includes the key person(s) responsible for each project task (pp. 23-24).

2. Based on the Narrative descriptions and resumes of existing key personnel, the project team appears to be highly qualified to implement and complete the project (p. 25; Appendix C). Job descriptions for personnel to be hired are included. The existing key personnel bring a broad range of experience and expertise to the project that is likely to ensure successful outcomes during and at the end of the five year grant period and within budget.

Weaknesses

1. The management plan is broad and does not include specific information

on the project milestones (pp. 23-24). For example, "Design integrated work of four support structures" (p. 23) does not define or explain what that means or how the milestone is determined (e.g., completion of an integrated work plan by grade level or teacher needs specifying the extent of cross-functionality of the four support structures).

Reader's Score: 5

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

Priority is not addressed

Weaknesses

Priority is not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

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

Strengths

Priority is not addressed

Weaknesses

Priority is not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

As described, the project intends to implement a multi-faceted approach to improve the academic outcomes of LEP students, close the achievement gap between regular and special education students, and increase college and career readiness of all students, including special needs and LEP. It appears that the plan will be to align and integrate the implementation of the four key strategies that form the foundation of the grant project to improve teacher quality and thus, improve the achievement of special needs and LEP students.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses are 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

Priority is not addressed

Weaknesses

Priority is not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396C100105)

Reader #2:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	25
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	25
3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)	5	4
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	8
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	7
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address 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

Technical Review Form

Development 02: 84.396C

Reader #2:

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396C100105)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 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 the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project clearly specified and measurable and linked to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet.

Strengths

One of the strengths that the applicant addresses is the blending of the four components (instructional facilitators, instructional technology, response to intervention, and exceptional children) and providing cross-functionality of the support structure to increase teacher effectiveness and improve the academic achievement of their high-need students.

The 3 tiers of increasing intensity is another strength. By starting with the

least aggressive and only increasing the intensity of the interventions when needed, allows a better use of resources (time and people).

The district has not adopted the model and currently only one of the four components of the model (instructional facilitators) is working to support the teachers, hence 50% of students referred for services not being eligible. The need for the screening and interventions are clear and the proposal makes that need well known.

The project has a clear set of goals and objectives and a plan to achieve the goals and objectives. (page 7 and 8 of 25)

The evaluation system (page 6 of 25) allows the applicant to monitor and track the effectiveness of the teachers and the plan by using a rubric in conjunction with the present state model of evaluation.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 25

2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 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 projects of the size and scope proposed by the eligible applicant.**
- (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

One strength of the applicant is the fact that in the past the applicant has successfully implemented projects similar in size and scope of the requested grant. (page 13)

The applicant provides data to substantiate the claims stated.

The applicant demonstrated their ability to significantly close achievement gaps in 2008-2009 by at least 10% in Reading and Math for all students. In 2002 the applicant district ranked 75th lowest in end of grade reading, but increased to the top 20 in the state. Additionally, the applicant is able to show a decrease in the dropout rate, and increase in attendance, and an increase in the number of teachers that are hold national board certification. Page 14 Table 4

Weaknesses

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 25

3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to further develop and bring to scale the proposed project, 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 further develop and bring to scale the proposed practice, strategy, or program, or to work with others (including other partners) to ensure that the proposed practice, strategy, or program can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.

(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 so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths

The applicant proposes to serve 35 schools, over 21,000 students, and more than 1,500 teachers. The applicant demonstrates that the plan calls to expand the number of instructional facilitators and exceptional children specialist to reach all students as planned.

The applicants current situation serves as a strength because it indicates that the applicant will be able to utilize their existing infrastructure and current personnel to achieve their goals. Their prior experience managing similar projects is further strengthened by several coordinators, a EC director, an associate superintendent of instruction and the director of the leadership academy. Also, the applicant has committed matching funds and in-kind donations from several sources.

The applicants proposal to partner with the NC Department of Public Instruction garners the ability to replicate their idea throughout the state. Using the RTI model further adds to their credibility as the research shows that it is widely accepted impacts student success positively.

The applicant estimates the average cost per student for program implementation is \$237 million and that calculates to \$23.7 million for 100,000 students, \$59.2 million for 250,000 students and \$118.5 million for 500,000 students.

Weaknesses

The application does not provide a detailed outline about the dissemination of information nor the frequency or replication.

Reader's Score: 4

4. 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 from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers'

unions) to operate the project beyond the length of the Development 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 Development grant.

Strengths

One of the applicants strengths are the current resources and support that contribute to the potential sustainability including an executive cabinet that supported pursuing the grant and committed to sustaining the plan long term; a task force of leaders that will continue to develop the sustainability plan; on-going skill-embedded training; and the four core support structures. Additionally, the State Education Agency will support the proposal as well.

Another strength is the applicants four prong approach to the planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work by answering the questions of 1. Where We Are, 2. Where are we going, 3. How will we get there, and 4. a written plan that details the strategies and implementation phases to achieve sustainability.

Weaknesses

The application is unclear how the district will absorb the cost of sustaining the plan beyond the grant period. It also lacks detailed, explicit steps. The process is too vague to be reliable. There is no timeline for sustaining the plan either.

Reader's Score: 8

5. 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.

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

Strengths

Page 23, Table 7 outlines the applicants management plan with three phases, spanning five years, including the persons responsible for implementing and

monitoring the program. The goals and measurable outcomes are clearly defined along with the timeline for implementing each phase. It appears that the plan outlined is strong as each aspect has a specific person or team of persons responsible for overseeing the implementation and completion. The training and experience of the key personnel demonstrate the ability to create, implement, and maintain an effective plan of action. The applicant included very specific job descriptions for each of the key personnel that work directly with the proposal. Additionally, they have specified a position for an Accountability Coordinator and an Independent Program Evaluator (see Appendix C).

Weaknesses

The management plan is too broad and lacking in specificity. It needs to define the milestones. (Page 23-24)

Reader's Score: 7

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Not addressed

Weaknesses

Not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths

Priority not addressed

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

The applicant adequately addresses the two groups, students with disabilities and the LEP population, by utilizing researched based strategies including Response to Intervention and Professional Learning Communities. The narrative clearly outlines the plan to provide support to teachers and students

through inclusive models, collaboration and coordinating the IEPs of the students with disabilities. Also, their previous work shows that they are prepared and equipped to continue closing the achievement gap and increase the number of students graduating in both sub-groups.

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

Priority not addressed

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/29/2010 2:48 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396C100105)

Reader #3:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	25
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	25
3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)	5	4
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	8
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	5
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address 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

Technical Review Form

Development 02: 84.396C

Reader #3:

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396C100105)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

Grant is well written and well organized.
It is specific and detailed.

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 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 the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project clearly specified and measurable and linked to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet.

Strengths

This grant is based on research-based strategies that will support teachers and principals and incorporate e1 response to Intervention and Professional

Learning Communities which will improve the academic achievement of students with disabilities and English language learners. Teachers will incorporate special education interventions into the regular classroom. Extensive evaluation and research is reported in page e3 is ongoing to meet the needs of the students, it incorporates rubric, observations, with inner-rated reliability and teacher evaluations, e5. Students are supported using Response to Intervention. The district has experience with grants of this size. They will support new staff after the grant is over e22.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 25

2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 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 projects of the size and scope proposed by the eligible applicant.**
- (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 district implementation of Performance Model earned the National

Institute of Standards and Technology award in 2008. Page e11, a main component of this model is raising achievement and closing gaps.

Iredell-Statesville has improved graduation rate of LEP by 29% and with students with disabilities by 19% as reported in page e1.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 25

3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to further develop and bring to scale the proposed project, 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 further develop and bring to scale the proposed practice, strategy, or program, or to work with others (including other partners) to ensure that the proposed practice, strategy, or program can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.**
- (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 so as to support further development or replication.**

Strengths

Eligible and qualified personnel are already working to implement the grant. Additional staff, if needed, will be incorporated into the district after the grant ends.

The grant will serve 35 schools, 21,168 students and 1,564 teachers.

The cost to reach 100,000 students would be \$23.7 million,

250,000, students would cost \$59.2 million,

and to reach 500,000 it would be \$118.5 million.

The project will be presented at conferences and other venues across the nation.

The district has made considerable effort to meet the needs of its diverse population and in particular those with disabilities and English language learners. Numerous grants and awards e13 have helped Iredell-Statesville outperform other districts in the state.

Weaknesses

The dissemination process although mentioned is not detailed.

Reader's Score: 4

4. 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 from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) to operate the project beyond the length of the Development 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 Development grant.

Strengths

There is evidence of partners support to meet the demands of the implementation e20.

There are different phases to implement the program.

Weaknesses

It is not specified how the program will continue to be implemented after the grant ends. However, it was mentioned the staff will be incorporated into the

district.

Reader's Score: 8

5. 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.

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

Strengths

The management plan is organized in different phases which outline the milestones and shared responsibilities. The personnel identified are qualified.

The management plan incorporates responsibilities and milestones.

Weaknesses

The evaluation group needs to be described beyond the years of experience, and in relation as to how they are going to conduct the evaluation or what method they will use.

It is not clear in the application, who is responsible for each of the objectives and phases of the program.

Reader's Score: 5

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 did not address

Weaknesses

Applicant did not address

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

Applicant did not address

Weaknesses

Applicant did not address

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 grant was written with this priority in mind. Meeting the unique needs of Limited English Proficient students and of students with disabilities are the major goals of this grant. This innovative research-based plan will implement numerous strategies such as Professional Learning Communities, and Response to Intervention to improve the academic achievement of these students.

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

Applicant did not address

Weaknesses

Applicant did not address

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/29/2010 2:48 PM

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/24/2010 3:38 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396D100105)

Reader #1:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Evaluation Criteria		
1. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 10 Points)	10	10
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	12
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	22
TOTAL	25	22

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 07: 84.396D

Reader #1:

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396D100105)

1. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 10 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including reported practice, theoretical considerations, and the significance and magnitude of any 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 are research-based findings or reasonable hypotheses that support the proposed project, including related research in education and other sectors.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has been attempted previously, albeit on a limited scale or in a limited setting, with promising results that suggest that more formal and systematic study is warranted.

(3) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the 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.

Strengths

This proposal will coordinate two key educational strategies, RTI and PLC, by building an interconnected, well-staffed, support system to improve teacher quality. The research that is cited on RTI and PLC is current. The researchers involved in the cited studies are well-known and respected for their contributions to the field on teacher professional development and school change (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Marzano, Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University).

Over the past several years, the district has focused on improvement through the implementation of various research-based professional development and instructional support models such as the Performance Excellence Model (2003), Smaller Learning Communities(2002), Professional Learning Communities(2005) and RTI(2009). The quality of implementation of the Performance Excellence Model is verified by the district's receipt of the Baldrige National Quality Award.

Each of these models was implemented with extensive planning by providing training, practice, and coaching. At the same time, positive changes in key indicators (percent proficient, reducing achievement gap) were noted. The changes are hypothesized to be related to the implemented models. Given the research showing the positive relationship between teacher quality and student achievement, it is likely that their hypothesis is highly probable.

The implementation of the proposed combined models and support structure is expected to strengthen the positive impact on teachers and students in the district. Given the small to medium size of the district (21,000 students) and the relatively small proportions of ELLs (6%), students with disabilities (11%), and students with low SES, the likelihood of success for the targeted, high-needs students is high.

Weaknesses

None Noted

Reader's Score: 10

2. 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 are appropriate to the size and scope of the proposed project.**
- (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 to facilitate further development, 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.**

Strengths

The evaluation design includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection that will be triangulated to provide depth of understanding for interpretation and recommendations. The metrics include standardized test scores for reading, math, and End of Course assessments over time. The set of qualitative instruments is comprehensive, including interviews, focus groups, open-ended survey questions, observations and meeting minutes. The first two of the three research questions posited are process-oriented and explicitly target fidelity of implementation and the documentation of such. The data will serve to springboard discussions of challenges and support decision-making for mid-course corrections.

The plan for data collection includes multiple administrations of various instruments over time. The quarterly meetings and user-friendly reports will facilitate discussion of program process across stakeholders.

There is a comprehensive description of the ways in which the project will be documented to produce guidelines for future replication. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of the four support structures, job descriptions of the key project staff and the characteristics of the sample will be documented and revised as needed.

Weaknesses

Graduation and drop out rates need to be operationally defined prior to data collection. The use of standardized definitions will be helpful for future program replication.

The use of a Fidelity Index will coordinate the wealth of qualitative information collected. A more detailed description of the source of the instrument or how it will be developed and validated is needed.

Although measureable goals are established for student achievement, the analyses to be applied are unclear. Page 17 indicates that "data from quantitative sources will be analyzed using descriptive statistics" and "effect sizes will be computed between groups" In the next sentence, quantitative data are described as the "Fidelity Index, surveys, administrative records, EVAAS, teacher evaluations, and growth plans." Analyzing "between groups" implies two groups but there is no discussion of group assignment to indicate the presence of a control. T-tests and chi-squares are cited as procedures to be used. These statistics are typically less robust than analyses such as Analysis of Variance and may not be the best to expose the effect. It will be important to consider the unexplained variance due to the interdependence of the variables within a survey, for example.

Since there will be a staggered implementation of the pilot schools, the inclusion of comparison groups would be possible and would add to the value of the design.

Although the evaluator costs are sufficient for year one, the costs may need to increase as the number of participating schools increase. The number of evaluator hours estimated is low at 50 hours per month given the volume of qualitative data collection included in the plan.

Reader's Score: 12

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/24/2010 3:38 PM

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/23/2010 9:40 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396D100105)

Reader #2:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Evaluation Criteria		
1. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 10 Points)	10	9
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	11
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	20
TOTAL	25	20

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 07: 84.396D

Reader #2:

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools -- , - , (U396D100105)

1. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 10 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including reported practice, theoretical considerations, and the significance and magnitude of any 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 are research-based findings or reasonable hypotheses that support the proposed project, including related research in education and other sectors.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has been attempted previously, albeit on a limited scale or in a limited setting, with promising results that suggest that more formal and systematic study is warranted.

(3) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the 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.

Strengths

STRENGTHS: The proposal responds to Absolute Priority One and provides previous findings on the COMPASS research which is based on the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards which is the gold standard for educational research. The proposed model extends previous research by including professional development coaching (p.12). It integrates the Plan-Do-Study-Act framework to include data based decisions to promote project fidelity and potential for outcome achievement. The proposal includes a logic model which clearly delineates the theory of change and aligns with the goals, objectives and outcomes described on page 7. The project hypothesis is presented on page 10 and is supported by professional development research, performance-based teacher evaluation, response to intervention research and professional learning community's research results (p.10-11). Previous project attempts that demonstrate promising results are highlighted with the Performance Excellence Model, and the individual effect sizes of each of the proposed project components in Table 3 (p.12) warrant more formal study so project effectiveness can be verified. The extension of the research with a more systematic design has the potential for determining the impact on student achievement that the current research infers. The proposal recognizes the potential barriers to implementing professional development and proposes to integrate solutions to these barriers in the project if funded (p.12) which should strengthen the evidence and increase the likelihood for success.

Weaknesses

WEAKNESSES: The four tenets of the model's relevant research are described thoroughly on pages 10-11 to support the project, but narrative that ties up the four pillars and directly links them to the potential for replicable success in the proposed project is needed. Perhaps the applicant should add two to three sentences on page 11 that summarizes and highlights what is known in the research and how it will be used together to develop the proposed model.

Reader's Score: 9

2. 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 are appropriate to the size and scope of the proposed project.**
- (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 to facilitate further development, 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.**

Strengths

STRENGTHS: The proposal discusses the logic model to support the hypothesis and align the project activities. Three evaluation questions (p.16) align the evaluation plan with the hypotheses. Both process and outcome evaluation components are discussed. A mixed methods approach will be used to collect data to test the hypothesis and address the evaluation questions (p.16) which will support documentation of the key project components to further facilitate development and testing. The methods for data collection, analysis and reporting are described on page 17 as are the measurement tools, some of which are standardized and well respected in educational research such as EVAAS. Quarterly meetings to discuss evaluation findings and continuous quality improvement feedback loops are built into the evaluation model. The Fidelity Index will be used to provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach so the project components can be further developed and tested in other settings. The

evaluation will include the use of web-based data collection methods to increase the efficiency of data collection. The evaluation is funded at 10% of the project budget which appears to be sufficient for the size and scope of the evaluation plan as described. The job descriptions provide the roles and responsibilities of the project staff and how they will work with the evaluation team (Appendix C) which appear to be sufficient for data collection, analysis and reporting to support implementation and determine project effectiveness.

Weaknesses

WEAKNESSES: Much of the evaluator's experience is in social work and not in education as evidenced in the resume on page 7-9 of Appendix C. The evaluation appears to be based on a one group pre/post test model which is not a very strong model to determine project effectiveness. The proposal would be improved by including a comparison group with which the group receiving the intervention will be compared on the quantitative measures. It would also be possible to use the baseline data collected to compare growth with a time series or regression discontinuity design which would strengthen the evaluation model. Much more discussion is needed regarding the research design for the evaluation. In particular, on page 17 it is stated that effect sizes will be computed between groups but the groups are not defined. Likewise, although the quantitative measures are listed, the psychometric properties of the measures are not discussed. It is therefore difficult to determine the validity and reliability of the instrumentation and which will impact the generalizability of project.

Reader's Score: 11

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/23/2010 9:40 AM