

Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 06/29/2010 5:19 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396C100641)

**Reader #1:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	15
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	12
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	5
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	7
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0

## Technical Review Form

**Development 56: 84.396C**

**Reader #1:**

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396C100641)

### 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

The proposal indicates the applicant will address the unmet academic needs of Hispanic and ELL students with a focus on STEM.

The proposal links language skills and mathematics by looking vertically

across grade levels.

### **Weaknesses**

The data presented in Table 2 on page 3 would have been more useful if achievement gap data was included for the white population, the non-LEP, and the non-free/reduced lunch eligible students in the school.

Initially this proposal discusses focusing on the needs of Hispanic and ELL students, but it does not seem to be carried through in the description of the project. It would be useful to know what is innovative about the STEM program components in high school that will help Hispanic and ELL students be more successful and increase their achievement.

It was difficult to follow all the pieces included in this project; a graphic might have helped. Also, the text jumped back and forth between what students would be doing and what teachers would be doing independent of students. For example, page 3 to 4 talks about the elementary to middle to high school components of the program, but jumps to teacher work including professional development and technology tools teachers will use.

The bottom of page 4 the proposal makes a statement about teachers applying 'technology resources as tools to increase student achievement'. Since technology does not increase student achievement, applicant might want to think about how a reader interprets statements such as this.

The proposal needs to list measurable goals. Some of the outcome statements could have been goals. Many of the goal statements should have been objectives/actions for achieving the goals.

The proposal focused on products, not the process of data-driven decision making. The description of the program suggests previously built assessments, possibly from a commercial vendor, will be used to measure student progress. Best practices would suggest the teachers need to build those assessments to align to the instruction and state standards.

**Reader's Score: 15**

### **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**

Initial informal data shared in the proposal suggests the applicant has seen some success. Since it was over such a short time period that would not allow for the full impact of the elementary program to be experienced in the middle and high school programs; thus, they might expect to see more success.

**Weaknesses**

The proposal needs to present all the data for gap analysis (Table 2).

The reader would like more information on the STEM certificate; it would be useful want to know if it is more rigorous than a high school diploma.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**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 appears to be prepared to provide services to 3,800 students, including 2,345 Hispanic students.

Applicant has not identified any barriers to implementation of the project.

#### **Weaknesses**

The proposal lacks a lot of detail about scaling-up to more students or schools.

A limited plan is outlined for dissemination of results of the project.

**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**

Due to STEM, the applicant has the involvement of business partners as well as a local university to help support the ongoing work.

The applicant appears to be able to consistently generate funding for innovative programs.

### **Weaknesses**

Grant monies are being used to support middle school and high school work. There is no information regarding a plan if outside funding is not available.

**Reader's Score: 5**

## **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 applicant has a leadership team in place to carry out the project.

The proposal suggests coordination between different existing programs to leverage work.

A timeline was provided to help identify milestones and persons responsible for the work.

### **Weaknesses**

The project personnel do not seem to have strong STEM backgrounds. This may be a barrier when working on refining impact of work.

**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

Weaknesses

Proposal does not provide innovative practices for early learning of children.

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

Weaknesses

Proposal does not suggest innovative practices for college and career

readiness.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

Proposal does not provide innovative practices for addressing the unique learning needs of students with disabilities and limited English Proficient Students.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

Project does not provide innovative practices for rural schools.



**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 06/29/2010 5:19 PM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2010 6:01 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396C100641)

**Reader #2:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	24
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	5
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference</b>		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	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	2	0

Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

**TOTAL** 80

75

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## Technical Review Form

**Development 56: 84.396C**

**Reader #2:**

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396C100641)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

Saint Vrain Valley School District is proposing a project that uses an exceptional approach to a multi-faceted comprehensive strategy that should effectively and efficiently address the unmet requirements for targeted high-need students, specifically Hispanic and ELL students, at Skyline High School and the related feeder schools. The proposed strategy is to provide students with a replicable sequence of focused interventions to reduce the achievement gap and to make significant improvements.

### 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**

The applicant has designed a system that, first, brings supports and an augmented school year for elementary students to build a literacy foundation. Second, the system then shifts focus to Mathematics in middle school, using math labs and an augmented school year. Third, at the high school level they provide students with a science focus through a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics track which will provide students with an alternative in high school.

In addition, the project seeks to facilitate the evaluation, analysis, and use of student achievement and student growth data by teachers to inform the improvement of student achievement and student growth, as well as teacher, principal, school, or LEA performance. The project will provide necessary classroom information technology tools, professional development, time, peer mentorships, and collaborative opportunities for teachers. It will provide 400 students with a 35 half-day augmented school year for English Language Arts, and provide 550 middle school students with an enriched mathematics RtI program, an augmented school year, as well as provide 400 students with an alternative path to graduation through a STEM certificate program.

Goals, objectives, and outcomes for this project are provided by the applicant that seems reasonable and measurable. For example: Goal 1: Encourage and facilitate the evaluation, analysis, and use of student achievement or student growth data by teachers to inform decision-making and improve student achievement, student growth, or teacher, principal, school, or LEA performance and productivity.

Objective 1: Provide 3,800 students and their teachers with an instructional improvement system that supports data-driven instruction.

Outcome 1.1: Reduce the Hispanic drop-out rate by 20%.

Outcome 1.2: Increase the graduation rate for Hispanic and ELL students by 5%.

The applicant further support this project by pointing out that their research on mathematics supports the need for a foundation of language arts to understand symbols and problems, and that poor language skills correlate with poor math skills, especially for English Language Learners. The applicant also states that Mathematics is an essential foundation to Science. Therefore, it seems as if the project will fundamentally focus on improving a district-wide language arts achievement gap.

Also, the project will use peer mentoring as a form of technology professional development for teachers. Such an approach should be effective

and efficient for such a project.

The combined effects of this rather comprehensive program could have an outstanding impact on closing achievement gaps, producing significant improvements, decreasing dropout rates, increase graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment rates for Hispanic and ELL Students.

Moreover, the data from formative assessments will provide teachers with information about student performance on selected content standards that can then be used to modify instruction.

### **Weaknesses**

More details ought to be provided on how the declared outcomes will be achieved, and all related goals, objectives, and outcomes should be aligned closely and written succinctly.

The project procedures must ensure that any data the educators receive must be collaboratively discussed and massaged to render it highly effective.

**Reader's Score: 24**

## **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**

Saint Vrain Valley School District has built a considerable private and public sector coalition to support the creation of a STEM Academy at Skyline High School. Grants are presently being implemented successfully and seem to provide the appropriate leverage to create a Skyline High School STEM Academy.

The applicant claims that the middle school and high school mathematics interventions have resulted in reducing Algebra I failures from 38% to 9%.

### **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 proposed project would reach 3,800 students. These students include 2,345 students who are Hispanic and 1,648 who are English Language Learners.

Since the director of the program has 35 years of experience in the field of education to include teacher and administrator, has supervised up to 82 staff members, and managed a \$10 million budget, then the capacity is there to reach the proposed number of students listed for the project.

The project seems replicable in any K-12 system which serves a high proportion of English Language Learners.

The program seems to be a rather unique, logical, and effective use of resources that are usually present in most school districts. Thus, the potential to replicate that project would be high.

Since the first year of the proposed project will be the third and last year of funding from the Colorado Department of Education for a middle school Mathematics RtI component, the applicant seems to have the expertise necessary to successfully carry out the proposed project.

**Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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**

St. Vrain's Valley School District successfully manages a \$190 million

budget. The school district has great success related to completing innovative programs. Their STEM Academy has already received grant and foundation supports totaling more than \$800,000 from various public and private sources. Their middle school Mathematics RtI component program currently receives \$400,000 per year from the Colorado Department of Education. The district will continue to seek support for their programs from a variety of benefactors. For the most part, this project will be managed internally by the experts that have been grown through an existing human capital development design.

### **Weaknesses**

**Reader's Score: 10**

### **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**

St. Vrain's will establish a Grant Leadership Team to lead, coordinate, control, and monitor the implementation of the grant. The team will consist of the Project Director, the STEM Academy Director, and the DLC coordinator, the Success for Every Students Program Director, and the Principal, as well as, representatives from the six schools involved in the project. The project will also include an independent evaluator. The applicant also provided a management plan.

The project managers seem to be qualified, certified, and experienced with a diverse enough background to carry out the project successfully. For example: Ms. Regina Renaldi will serve as the project director. Ms. Renaldi holds a Master of Science Education: Policies, Foundations, and Administration and is licensed in the state of Colorado and Oregon as a School Administrator. She has 23 years teaching experience and 12 years



administrative experience to include seven years as an elementary and intermediate school principal.

**Weaknesses**

**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**

Priority Not Addressed.

**Weaknesses**

Priority 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 proposed project will reach up to 3,800 students. These students include 2,345 students who are Hispanic and 1,648 who are English Language Learners. Moreover, the applicant maintains that, since the current data shows definite gaps related to their Hispanic students, this project as well as other aspects of the educational process will be focused on the Hispanic and the ELL student population.

**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:** 06/28/2010 6:01 PM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/29/2010 1:13 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396C100641)

**Reader #3:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	15
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	20
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	3
5. 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	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	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve	2	0

Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)

**TOTAL** 80

50

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## Technical Review Form

**Development 56: 84.396C**

**Reader #3:**

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396C100641)

### Summary Statement

#### 1. Summary Statement

After the panel discussion it is agreed the scores will remain as submitted.

### 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

The applicant proposes to serve Skyline HS and the 6 feeder schools which

will serve over 3800 students predominately Hispanic. The applicant proposes closing the achievement gap for the Hispanic students who have a dropout rate 85% higher than other populations. The project will focus on content areas, language arts, math and a school of choice model that will focus on STEM and will provide college prep and transition partnered with local colleges. Additionally, instructional time will be increased to include summer. Data driven decision making and information technology is innovative and critical to student improvement.

The applicant provided an excellent comprehensive needs overview of the proposed area to be served. It provided a thorough understanding of the demographics, location, population to be served and educational needs. The proposed project will address an unmet need for high need students and is not a practice where all the proposed components are implemented exclusively.

The applicant provided an excellent comprehensive objectives, goals and measurable outcomes that directly correlate to the proposed project. This information also provided a thorough understanding of the applicants experience and strategies for meeting the proposed project goals.

### **Weaknesses**

The project plan did not address a parent involvement component or a strategy to address non academic barriers such as social service needs. These most often are barriers that impede educational success and are needs that should most often be met by the school. This could be the implementation of an adult advocate to mentor the student through unexpected issues. Technology does not improve student achievement on its own; the applicant needs to address how the technology will do so.

There is not an indication that the district has the deep understanding of the process needed to successfully apply the data driven decision making to make a difference on what they are doing.

The proposed goals, objectives and outcomes are not consistent; some of the outcomes should be goals or objectives. The way they are written appears as if the applicant does not have an understanding of goals and outcomes.

The applicant did not provide data on all of the subgroups to determine the size of the gap that the applicant is trying to close.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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 applicant has extensive experience managing grants that support the proposed project. They have established a public-private partnership to support the creation of the STEM Academy which demonstrates confidence in the applicant from the community and support in their performance. Additionally they receive federal funding to support the STEM Academy.

The experience in research and implementing data driven projects is evident with the results of the STEM Academy, reducing Algebra failures from 38% to 9%. (Pages 12,13)

**Weaknesses**

The success is in individual components but not vertically as they moved across different programs. The vertical alignment is not addressed as they move from language to math across school levels.

**Reader's Score: 20**

### **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 serving 3800 students at 7 schools, their current experience in implementing other school reform efforts supports their capacity to meet the required number of students to be served and to effectively manage the program through the stated strategies.

The applicant provided an excellent detail overview of the projected costs to include costs to reach additional students. However, cost per student for was not included and therefore, partial point will be awarded.

The applicant will develop a web site for i3 project to share project information and evaluation results. Additionally, peer reviewed journals, newsletters, evaluations will be disseminated.



### **Weaknesses**

The applicant proposes a project that can be replicated to serve the same populations or adapted as needed, however, the plan lacks clarity and specifics on how to replicate it for various populations.

**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**

The applicant is a school district that has extensive experience managing \$190 million budget and securing funds for The STEM Academy receives \$800,000 from 14 different public private funders. Funders include the Colorado DOE, CU Department of Engineering and National Science Foundation.

The proposed model will benefit from the evaluation and findings and can easily continue the project purposes.

### **Weaknesses**

The applicant does not address a detailed plan for how the project will be funded beyond the grant period.

**Reader's Score: 3**

### **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 applicant developed an excellent management plan that is comprehensive with the inclusion of objectives, milestones, tasks, and timeline. They propose the establishment of an i3 Grant Leadership Team that will include the Principal from all six schools to coordinate, manage, and monitor the implementation of the project. (Page 20-25)

The credentials and experience of some of the management team members are excellent and will provide the leadership necessary for the project.

**Weaknesses**

The plan did not include staff with science, math engineering experience as involved to some capacity in the development and implementation of the STEM section of the proposed project. The applicant does not have staff that has extensive STEM background which is crucial to the full implementation of the project.

**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**

**Weaknesses**

Priority 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**

**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**

**Weaknesses**

Priority not addressed.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

Priority not addressed.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 06/29/2010 1:13 PM

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Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 07/23/2010 10:05 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396D100641)

**Reader #1:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>		
1. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 10 Points)	10	7
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	3
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	25	10

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## Technical Review Form

**Development Tier 2 Panel 06: 84.396D**

**Reader #1:**

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396D100641)

**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**

On pp. 9-10 the applicant provides the hypotheses for the proposed intervention.

On pp. 11-12, the applicant states that two previous interventions have resulted in improved student achievement outcomes.

#### **Weaknesses**

Limited research is presented on pp. 9-11 in support of the proposed intervention, thus it is difficult to judge if the hypotheses are reasonable.

The applicant does not provide sufficient details about the effects on p. 12 and their link to any anticipated effects, which makes it difficult to judge the intervention's potential impact.

**Reader's Score: 7**

## **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 applicant states on p. 14 that the evaluation will use a regression discontinuity design (RDD). This is a potentially useful method of evaluation for the project.

The summative evaluation will include the results of the state's student assessment program (p. 15).

The evaluation will be funded at \$43,400/year, which may be sufficient if the only evaluation activity is analyzing the data for the RDD.

#### **Weaknesses**

The suitability of an RDD cannot be assessed due to a lack of information about the evaluation's specifics. For example, further clarification is needed whether Skyline High and its two feeder middle schools are receiving the treatment because they are below or above the cutoff scores. In addition, no information is provided about the size of the two samples, as well as the exact research questions to be addressed.

No additional measures are mentioned, thus it is difficult to know whether the evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data, performance feedback and sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project.

It is difficult to know if \$43,400 per year is adequate without having a more detailed evaluation plan.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/23/2010 10:05 PM



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Status: Submitted  
Last Updated: 07/23/2010 3:20 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396D100641)

**Reader #2:**

	<b>POINTS POSSIBLE</b>	<b>POINTS SCORED</b>
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>		
1. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 10 Points)	10	7
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	6
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	25	13

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## Technical Review Form

**Development Tier 2 Panel 06: 84.396D**

**Reader #2:**

**Applicant:** Saint Vrain Valley School District -- Priority Schools, - Priority Schools,  
(U396D100641)

**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**

Applicant provides research-based findings and reasonable hypotheses for their series of proposed interventions. For example, applicant provides evidence for the relationship between language and math skills in ELL students (p. 8) and data-driven decision making (p. 9).

On p. 10, the applicant demonstrates by percentage differences the effectiveness of a portion of the proposed intervention at elementary level and middle/high-school levels.

On p. 10-11, the applicant describes ways by which the proposed intervention will have a positive effect on closing the achievement gap for Hispanic students.

#### **Weaknesses**

The applicant does not provide any detail on the initial study, i.e. research design, whose results they are citing on p. 10.

A clearer description of estimated positive effect of the proposed intervention on outcomes would have strengthened this section, i.e. what type of achievement will be positively affected and at what grade level.

**Reader's Score: 7**

## 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

Regression discontinuity design is an appropriate choice for the proposed project.  
The applicant addresses the question of periodic assessment and performance feedback.  
The evaluation as described by applicant would provide sufficient information for further work.

### Weaknesses

On p. 13, the applicant makes a case for assigning schools, rather than individual students, based on their cut-off scores to control and experimental groups. From the description of the design on p. 13 it appears that those schools that have 65, 90 or 80% of ELL and Hispanic students scoring below a cut-off point in reading, math and science respectively, will be assigned to the control group. It is not clear why the applicant would assign schools that score below the cut-off point to the control rather than experimental group. In addition, as regression discontinuity design requires a larger sample size than an RCT, it is not clear whether the applicant will have enough power to detect an effect with schools being the unit of analysis. It is not clear from the description of formative evaluation on p. 14-15 what kind of data and will be shared and with whom.  
Neither the outcome measures, nor the analyses are described in the narrative.  
From the narrative on p. 4, it appears that the Data-Driven Decision Making system is part of the treatment (program). The control group therefore would

not have as many data points for periodic assessment to compare to the experimental group.  
The budget is not sufficient for a complete evaluation.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/23/2010 3:20 PM