

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 06/27/2010 4:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396C100661)

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	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	10
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	8
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	_____

Technical Review Form

Development 23: 84.396C

Reader #1:

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396C100661)

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 application states that there has been success in raising student achievement among students, while some subgroups still lag behind. Some of these students are found in the special needs subgroup. When at risk factors were studied, it was found that 34% (11600 students) of the students fall into at least one category. There is clearly an unmet need.

The need for a data system that focuses on a personalized learning plan for

each student is seen as a valuable plan. The goals, objectives and outcomes are aligned and measurable, adding to the viability of the program.

The proposal is commendable in its exceptional approach to continual raising of the bar for all students, in addition to significant gains to date.

Weaknesses

None 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

The application states that this district has committed itself to employing technology throughout the district. Technology is available in both the instructional and the administrative areas and seems to be readily available, which reflects the pervaseness of the technology plan.

In addition, it is a district where many students are achieving, since it has

made AYP in 2009 and it has an 87% graduation rate.

This project will bridge the gap between having data available for teacher use and supporting teachers in formulating a plan to use the data in a meaningful manner that impacts student achievement. The district has made a decision to move the process to a higher level and push the use of data to a higher level. The district has closed the achievement gap between subgroups as shown by an increase in graduation rates.

The focus of this grant is one that is often difficult to achieve - that is, the use of available data to impact student achievement directly. The district has submitted a proposal that addresses that very difficult but necessary task in a comprehensive manner.

Weaknesses

None noted.

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 application states that the district has worked with the Center for Leadership and School Reform to develop a continuous improvement model. Another partner will develop the integrated data system that is needed for this project. A local University will assist in the external research study.

The number of students to be impacted and the cost was included in the application.

The cost is scale up is included.

Dissemination will take place through professional organizations, as well as state and federal agencies.

The project is designed to be used with the entire district, so scaling up at the district level will not be needed.

The details for this section support the proposal well.

Weaknesses

The evaluation of outcomes will provide significant direction for other school districts in the nation that choose to follow this model; however, the application provides only one comment regarding replication on p.21.

A full discussion of the possibility of replicating this project successfully is not provided. Since this district has a reputation for high student achievement, it should leverage that position to share this important initiative with similar districts.

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 application states that funds will be generated from private funding, in-kind resources and other support to assure continuation of this project.

The previous commitment to the use of data in this district is an advantage and would be a positive element in the continuation of this project.

The application notes the use of a train the trainer model and online follow-up. This process will also support the sustainability of the project.

Weaknesses

None noted.

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

The application provides a management plan. A specific timeline is provided with deadlines for accomplishing each task noted.

The staff, including the project director, include an appropriate mix of staff with expertise in academics and technology, which are important elements that directly relate to the goals of this proposal.

Weaknesses

There is a concern that the first task in the plan is the securing of partners for

private match and research. If that fails to happen, it seems that other steps will not follow. This plan needs to be expanded in order to insure successful implementation.

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

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/29/2010 6:03 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396C100661)

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	22
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	21
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	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0

Technical Review Form

Development 23: 84.396C

Reader #2:

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396C100661)

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

Building a data base on student preferences and profiled needs will be helpful in guiding pedagogy and interventions.

Goals, outcomes and effects are clearly laid out on page 7.

The approach is exceptional and state-of-the-art. I expect that this type of data analysis is the future direction of education.

The population needs are well established.

Weaknesses

The timeline is useful but not sufficient.

This is a challenging data base to build and will require state-of-the art design which only comes with top flight software design. The project does not highlight the challenges with building such a data base and raises concerns about how clear these draw backs are, how the technology will be proven, and, whether the designers are sufficiently skilled and committed for the long haul.

Reader's Score: 22

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 project anticipates covering virgin territory in the design of the data base proposed.

They have been making significant strides in building a data rich and technology savvy district.

K-8 grading and reporting system is a good example of the advanced work they have accomplishing. P12

System wide plans in the past have been implemented that indicate they can accomplish plans such as this.

Data shows evidence of improvements in API scores and on California's standardized tests.

Data on pre and post student variables such as interest in applying to college showed progress.

Weaknesses

More disaggregated data would be helpful in understanding the trends in student performance.

Reader's Score: 21

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

Infinite Campus reaches over 4.5 million students with its current applications. All products created in this project will be available to Infinite Campus' clientele.

The external partners will support the development and scaling of the project.

The resources are easily transferable to other sites after this project.

Projected costs for scaling up the project are clearly articulated.

As a technology leader, the district feels confident in its ability to deliver the proposed outcomes.

Weaknesses

Limited detail is offered on the actual activity that would extend and bring the project to scale. In particular, the dissemination of the information and products is limited to the description of a list of organizations and the client list of Infinite Campus. The mechanics of this dissemination could be clearer.

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

Prior uses of data demonstrate a commitment to moving forward with data.

Use of train-the trainer model will support sustainability. P.6

The marketplace concept should create a useful resource for gathering and disseminating information.

The willingness of partners to share in-kind resources will support the long term sustaining of the program.

There is significant stakeholder support that should help the program stay active after funding.

Weaknesses

Limited detail is offered on the actual activity that would sustain the project.

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

1) General project planning can be gleaned from the implementation schedule on page 5.

There are intended outcomes and measurements for EngageMe on page 8.

2) The skill level and experience of primary staff is significant and demonstrates their involvement in similar initiatives.

Responsibilities of each partner are articulated in detail on page 21.

Weaknesses

P. 4 does offer some background and information about the role of Infinite Campus but it is unclear of their capacity to drive the technology design proposed. More on their bona fides is required.

Timelines and benchmarks are required to better understand the flow of the project.

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

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

Priority not addressed.

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

Priority not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2010 5:59 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396C100661)

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	10
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	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 23: 84.396C

Reader #3:

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396C100661)

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 application seeks to provide a centralized database consisting of student demographic and academic data, and a searchable bank of lessons (Learning Marketplace) that the teacher can use to target students' weaknesses. The project will serve approximately 34,500 students in 35 schools. (abstract; p 3)

The application provides current (2008-09) disaggregate data for students with disabilities, those who are economically disadvantaged and Hispanic students to indicate the need for this project. (p 3) For example, 13.3% of the ED population in grades 1-8 failed to meet the passing standard in math on the state's standardized test; 23% of SWD and 12.2% of the Hispanic population also failed to meet this standard. (p 3) Of these populations, only 52.9% of the economically disadvantaged, 54.1% of the SWD and 72.7% of the Hispanic students graduated contributing to the overall graduation rate of 87.6% for the district. (p 3)

The application states that their SMS provider will extend the capabilities of the already existing program to provide teachers with the ability to make predictive decisions in addition to corrective decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning. (pp 4, 5) Activities/lessons in the Learning Marketplace will be aligned with Common Core State Standards in math and English language arts and aligned to the courses taught by teachers. (p 5)

Goals include increasing student achievement, decreasing the dropout rate and increasing graduation rates. (p 7) Intended outcomes and measurable effects are clearly linked to the stated goals and include access to appropriate real time student data, needs [data] driven instruction, student activities and resources matched with performance levels, targeted professional development to support mastery of standards, standards alignment and a user friendly interface for teachers, administrators and students. (p 7) Measurable effects are stated in achievable, quantitative terms. For example, "a decrease in the number of students grades 6-12 who have 4+ indicators of high need by 10% by the end of year 5 in all subgroups and in total." (p 7)

The application provides thorough information explaining how they will address the unmet academic needs of students including those traditionally considered "high risk" because of socio-economic or minority status. Goals and objectives are clearly linked, and outcomes are measurable.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses 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

The project demonstrates the ability to significantly increase student achievement. For example, the applicant, Forsyth County Schools, has demonstrated success in implementing the use of technology to communicate and engage the local community, improve the delivery of services and the quality of education in public schools. The district has received 19 state accountability awards in the past year and has achieved AYP goals. Custom applications have been created to supplement data analysis for the purpose of increasing student achievement, and the district has contracted with the state to foster innovation through a reprieve from state laws and SBOE rules while holding teachers and students to even higher accountability measures. The district has instituted a k-8 standards-based grading and reporting system, offers a virtual school, a non-traditional charter high school, evening school and expanded opportunities for students to earn high school and middle school credits. (p 12)

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

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 application addresses the number of students to be reached by the proposed project and provides information to bring the project to scale.

For example, the application proposes to reach 34,500 students through the project at a cost of \$4,738,500. (p 20) A partner match will develop the fully integrated data system. Total cost per pupil is estimated at \$18.00, \$8.00 of which is already budgeted for licensing of the SMS. (p 21) Projected costs for 100,000 students is \$800,000 per year, 250,000 students-\$2,000,000 and 500,000 students is \$4,000,000. (p 21)

The applicant's partner and SMS provider will incorporate the proposed system into its core product, thereby making it available to all of their customers at no additional charge. (p 20)

This information indicates the applicant and the partners have worked together to develop a viable plan for bringing the project to scale.

Weaknesses

The application does not specifically describe the manner in which the project and project outcomes will be disseminated. For example, it is unclear as to whether "affiliation with" and "additional mechanisms" include publications, speaking engagements and/or information made available via the Internet. (p 21) A stronger application would have included specific venues, such as speaking engagements, national conferences, published journal articles, etc., for disseminating project processes and outcomes.

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 project includes a clear plan for sustaining the project after the funding period. For example, the applicant, Forsyth County Schools, will pursue in-kind resources and private funding to ensure the sustainability of the project. (p 21) Stakeholders, including those previously identified and the Board of Education are committed to standards based learning and have expressed their support for the project. (p 22)

The SMS provider and partner have pledged support and a commitment to incorporate the Learning Marketplace and other components into the existing student management software.

Train-the-Trainer models will be implemented to ensure all users receive direct instruction, and online training modules will be made available for on-demand access. (p 6)

These activities and strategies should be sufficient for sustaining the project beyond the length of the funding period.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

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

The application includes a management plan adequate for achieving the objectives of the proposed project and will employ the services of personnel with the qualifications and experience necessary to implement and develop project initiatives.

A timeline (pp 5-7) was included in the application and responsible parties have been identified (pp 5-7; 22) The application states that in-kind resources and private funding will ensure the project is completed on time and will continue beyond the budget period. (p 21)

Key personnel appear to have the education and expertise necessary to manage the proposed project. For example, the Project Director has 19 years in education as a classroom teacher, school administrator, curriculum leader and school improvement director for the state department of education. (p 23) The Chief Technology and Information Officer previously served the State Department of Education where he managed a budget of \$150,000 million to build and implement the state's education technology initiatives. (p 24) This individual will support the Project Director in the day-to-day management of program operations. (p 24)

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

The application did not address this priority.

Weaknesses

The application did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths

The application did not address this priority.

Weaknesses

The application did not address this priority.

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 application did not address this priority.

Weaknesses

The application did not address this priority.

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

The application did not address this priority.

Weaknesses

The application did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2010 5:59 PM

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/21/2010 6:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396D100661)

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	5
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	14
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	19
TOTAL	25	19

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 09: 84.396D

Reader #1:

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396D100661)

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

The proposal offers an explicit, reasonable hypothesis on page e7 about the impact of personalized learning experiences on student outcomes. This hypothesis is testable given the experimental research design. The hypothesis appears to coincide with departmental priorities, as specified on page e8.

There is research evidence to support the utility of individualized instruction based on student differences, as cited on page e8.

There is research evidence to support the utility of formative assessment, as cited on page e9.

Weaknesses

The applicant does not explicitly demonstrate that the proposed project will have positive impacts on student learning. There is some evidence of positive effects from the individualized instruction and formative assessment pieces, as mentioned above, but little else. There is no estimate of magnitudes of impacts.

The particular combination of intervention components has not been tried before, or at least such attempts were not mentioned in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 5

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 randomized nature of the evaluation will allow for unbiased estimates of the impact of the intervention. The staggered design allows for impact estimates in Year 1 while not limiting the intervention to certain randomly selected schools in the long run.

Growth curve modeling is an appropriate methodology to examine achievement trajectories as a result of the experiment. The applicant correctly points out the clustered nature of the data and seems to understand the need for HLM to account for clustering.

Implementation fidelity will be measured and included in the model, which addresses factor 2 of the key factors. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods for examining implementation, there will be a richer description of the intervention on the ground. The evaluators will also feed back the implementation data to allow for program improvement.

The attention to multiple student outcome measures, including short term and long term outcomes, will allow for the examination of the persistence of impacts on students.

Weaknesses

Power analyses indicate the sample size is adequate to detect effects of .22

standard deviations. However, given that the lack of presentation of sample sizes in the previous section, it is unclear if effect sizes of .22 standard deviations should be expected.

Reader's Score: 14

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/21/2010 6:57 PM

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/22/2010 7:20 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396D100661)

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	6
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	15
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	21
TOTAL	25	21

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 09: 84.396D

Reader #2:

Applicant: Forsyth County Schools -- , - , (U396D100661)

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

The proposers have provided a traditional literature review that argues for the creation of a personalized learning system based on citations about the national need for such a system. They provide evidence that the three underlying concepts around which the intervention is built are reasonably well supported by research, i.e., 1) personalized learner plan addressing high needs, 2) formative assessment. and 3) mastery of standards-aligned activities and resources. The proposed intervention builds on and extends services that are in place. It is clear from the review that there is well-reasoned hypothesis that merits further research.

Weaknesses

The proposers indicate that prior research shows that formative assessment can produce effect sizes of .4 to .7. They argue that having all three components should give a larger effect. The argument is weak and would be strengthened by tying the proposed intervention more closely to work that estimates effect sizes.

Proposers indicate that the intervention as presently configured has not been tried. While the components of the intervention have supportive evidence . results from a limited pilot would have strengthened the proposal. The proposers have not made a convincing argument that is reasonable to

assume that their intervention will achieve the effect sizes achieved in previous research.

Reader's Score: 6

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 proposers have developed an evaluation plan that used a time lagged design to form comparison groups. They will use growth curve analyses to answer questions related to achievement. They have conducted power analyses to determine sample size and will be able to detect an effect size of .22. The study design is strong because it includes comparison groups and will be able to make relatively strong causal conclusions.

The proposers describe a process evaluation that includes tracking implementation using a variety of data sources interviews, focus groups, artifacts, and surveys. Given the criteria that there must be ample implementation data and sufficient information about the elements of the intervention to facilitate further development and replication, this aspect of the proposal is strong.

The qualifications of participants and their allotment of \$810,000 to conduct the evaluation suggest that there will adequate resources to conduct the evaluation. It is clear that the evaluator has been closely involved in the process and on p. 20 they indicate that Dr. Michael Spector has wide experience with federal grants and that the Program Evaluation Group has a long track record of conducting rigorous program evaluation research.

Weaknesses

none

Reader's Score: 15

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/22/2010 7:20 PM