

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/26/2010 6:11 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396C100748)

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	19
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	18
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	8
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 08: 84.396C

Reader #1:

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396C100748)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

IDEA Public Schools presents a proposal for a Learning Center to coordinate efforts for professional development for teachers and principals. This county is very needy, where poverty, and needy students are the majority. The IDEA schools have found successes in implementing change and want to share their learning experiences with another local LEA.

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

Based on data provided by the applicant, Hidalgo County represents a poverty stricken area with low graduation rates and low percentages of residents attending higher education courses. The lack of residents attaining higher education status leads to a small pool of local teacher and school leader talent.

IDEA has shown successes with students in this needy community and has a waiting list for its high performing charter schools.

Teach for America, a prospective partner, recruits, places, and supports a number of teachers in these schools. Other teachers in the organization do not receive the same support.

The applicant seeks funds to support the Rio Grande Valley Center for Teaching and Leading Excellence that will recruit, select, evaluate, reward, train, and retain teachers and school leaders from the two LEAs mentioned in this proposal.

The Learning Center will mimic Teach for America's proven teacher supports such as a Summer Institute and a data-driven coaching model.

The Learning Center will plan for a Teacher Leader Institute as well as training for assistant principals and instructional coaches.

The applicant proposes a partnership with Dr. Tichy to equip principals to be energetic change agents.

The applicant states specific goals and objectives with measurable outcomes.

Weaknesses

The applicant's definition of an experienced teacher is one with strong student performance and two years in the classroom. The applicant did not provide enough detail to justify that two years in the classroom was enough to consider a teacher an experienced teacher. The applicant should have clarified why it considered two years of classroom an experienced teacher and if the turnover rate of teachers had impact on the teachers that were considered experienced.

The applicant did not specify what tool would be used to evaluate teacher rewards based on student performance. Student achievement as a means for teacher rewards based on standardized tests is not a fair as it should be based on Pre-Post test where the data shows growth over time.

The applicant is seeking funds to implement an on-boarding or induction program. This on-boarding or induction program seems like a large amount of work when there are reputable and successful induction programs that can be modeled.

Test scores shared in the experience section show that there may not be as big of a need as portrayed in this section.

Reader's Score: 19

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 IDEA schools were developed based on the need of students. The applicant is looking to change the way the schools create expectations and teach students. Some of the same strategies that made the IDEA schools a success will be used for this Center for Teaching.

Both LEAs show potential for successfully implementing change as student achievement has increased in both districts.

IDEA and PSJA will work together to share ideas, needs, and issues to work

toward supporting students in this very needy community.

Weaknesses

There is significant evidence of the strategies IDEA used to improve student achievement but it is unclear what PSJA has implemented even though they show improvements.

The applicant is not able to share how they have made significant improvements in gaps between students and graduation rates. In fact, their test scores are very good and this is not consistent with the initial need for the project as stated in the beginning.

Reader's Score: 18

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 program will eventually reach 50,365 students.

IDEA is fiscally sound and has sufficient management and personnel to create a successful partnership with PSJA to bring this project to scale.

IDEA will allocate their talented staff and leaders to spearhead this endeavor.

The goal of the Learning Center is to provide mechanisms for good teaching where if proven effective, could be replicated successfully in a variety of settings and populations and even established as a non-profit where districts might purchase their services.

Applicant provides initial costs as well as projections for increased students.

The applicant plans to disseminate information via the Internet and education reform conferences to include case studies, blog posts, journal articles, workshops, trainings, etc.

Weaknesses

It is not clear how the IDEA projects a 95% increase enrollment as well as a 17% increase in enrollment for PSJA. This task in itself is a big job.

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

Due to IDEA's proven strategies supported by increased student achievement, they have been able to enlist strong stakeholder support from individuals, corporations, and foundations locally, regionally, and nationally.

The purpose of the center is to coordinate efforts, resources, and experts in a central location organized by professionals to make the work of professional development affective, efficient, and impact the maximum number of students. Most of what is being proposed at the Center is something that at a much smaller scale is already being accomplished. This is evidence that the applicant has the resources and support to sustain this project.

"IDEA and PSJA will not hesitate to re-allocate resources to a program that is generating student gains."

The applicant also discusses the fact that if this Center proves valuable, they might seek non-profit status and become a service for pay that other LEAs might utilize.

Weaknesses

The applicant might become a service for pay. In these economic times, that may not be a feasible approach to sustainability.

The applicant did not discuss the current status of the teachers and what their perceptions are for the implementation of this professional development.

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

Two professionals, one from IDEA and one from PSJA will run the Center. Having a representative from both LEAs will ensure the needs of both entities are being met.

Project Director and key personnel have the prerequisites needed to

successfully run this program.

Management plan is complete with parties responsible and milestones.

Weaknesses

The applicant is proposing to increase the number of students in its Charter School, incorporate a district into its professional development, and add new partners. It is not clear that there are enough resources, personnel, and time to accomplish this task.

There were no specifics on the skills the Teacher Development Coordinator and the Leadership Development coordinator had.

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

No direct impact on early learning for students.

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

No support for college prep classes.

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

Language learners and students with disabilities will be impacted by this Learning Center but the grant does not directly address this issue.

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

No evidence of rural LEAs.

Reader's Score: 0

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2010 0:49 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396C100748)

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	20
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	3
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	6
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	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 08: 84.396C

Reader #2:

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396C100748)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

The applicant intends to address the human capital situation in two districts within a low income high needs area of Texas where it adjoins the Mexican border. The districts have low achievement and higher turnover rates. The applicant intends to pair with Teach for America in terms of recruiting and placing teachers and providing staff development for teachers and administrators. The applicant indicates that while it operates its own system of charter public schools, it does not have a scale up strategy of its own and will use this project to develop one. The project intends to increase student achievement as well as teacher retention, and also to eliminate teachers/administrators who do not perform sufficiently. The applicant's design is of high quality and it has access to some of the nation's experts in human capital management. The reader's positive view of these aspects of the project is tempered, however, by other factors described below.

The TAKS results presented in the chart on p. 16 appear to indicate that the district's overall achievement in all curriculum areas is not significantly depressed. The lowest average is 67% in Science, with ranges of 85% in Reading/ELA, 92% in writing, 76% in math, and 88% in social studies. These result appear to contradict the high needs status of the districts as described in the narrative. Further, the district has 11 schools with "exemplary" status and 15 "recognized" and has doubled the number of exemplary campuses in one year alone. Nine schools were named as "Best in the State" by Texas Monthly Magazine based on a study done by the National Center for Educational Accountability. It is difficult to reconcile this information with the stated high needs bordering on desperate status of the districts as presented in the early part of the narrative.

Since the applicant operates its own system of charter public schools and also has a large waiting list plus plans of its own to increase more than 100% in the next five years, it is difficult to see that the applicant has capacity to both do that in its own behalf and also manage and operate a similar project on a much larger scale involving two school districts with large enrollments. Further, the applicant indicates it will look at nurturing additional relationships with other districts in the valley. (p. 27)It is not clear that the applicant would not be overextended and would be able to be successful at all three of these complex and intensive endeavors simultaneously.

The voices of teachers and others who would be most directly involved in and affected by the project are not represented within the narrative.

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 intends to address the human capital situation in two districts within a low income high needs area of Texas where it adjoins the Mexican border. The districts have low achievement and higher turnover rates. The applicant intends to pair with Teach for America in terms of recruiting and placing teachers and providing staff development for teachers and administrators. The applicant indicates that while it operates its own system of charter public schools, it does not have a scale up strategy of its own and will use this project to develop one. The project intends to increase student achievement as well as teacher retention, and also to eliminate teachers/administrators who do not perform sufficiently.

Weaknesses

While the applicant indicates it will take advantage of TFA and others for its project design, it also intends to develop what seems to be an induction model (identified here as "onboarding," an undefined term which the reader presumes refers to an induction phase). There are existing high quality induction models for teachers, including but not limited to California's highly successful Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA), the New Teacher Project's model, and Connecticut's portfolio assessment model. The project could benefit from these proven nationally applicable models instead of expending resources on creating an additional model. Since California's student population is closely related to that of Texas, that model and/or the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project model might potentially be a good fit.

Given that TFA is basically a two-year commitment from participants, and given the high needs status of the region as a whole as a residential community for living, it is not clear that providing additional new teacher support in and of itself would be sufficient to improve retention rates. The applicant indicates it would address teacher compensation, and also remove ineffective staff, but these matters are locally bargained and subject to contractual arrangements.

It appears that the applicant's own turnover rate at 16% is actually higher than the districts' rate at 12%. (p. 4)

Reader's Score: 20

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 currently operates charter schools with approximately 5,500 students and has a waiting list. The applicant's approach is derived from the International Baccalaureate model which emphasizes high expectations, small school size, partnership with parents, and an extended school day and year. (p. 15)100% of its three graduating classes went on to college and 97% persist.

Weaknesses

The TAKS results presented in the chart on p. 16 appear to indicate that the district's overall achievement in all curriculum areas is not significantly depressed. The lowest average is 67% in Science, with ranges of 85% in Reading/ELA, 92% in writing, 76% in math, and 88% in social studies. These results appear to contradict the high needs status of the districts as described in the narrative. Further, the district has 11 schools with "exemplary" status and 15 "recognized" and has doubled the number of exemplary campuses in one year alone. Nine schools were named as "Best in the State" by Texas Monthly Magazine based on a study done by the National Center for Educational Accountability. It is difficult to reconcile this information with the stated high needs bordering on desperate status of the districts as presented in the early part of the narrative.

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 indicates it has increased its own schools' enrollment from 896 to 5,493 between 2005 and 2009. The districts' enrollments have also been growing about 3% per year. The projected per-pupil cost per year would be \$49.56 at the end of year 4 of the project as the project would affect all of the students in the target districts. (p. 25)

The applicant indicates it would dedicate a senior leader to this project who would take over as the Director of the center. The leadership team will include a TFA representative also.

The dissemination plan includes documentation via the internet and at education reform conferences plus potentially nurturing additional relationships with local districts and spinning off the center as a non-profit service provider. (p. 27)

Weaknesses

Since the applicant operates its own system of charter public schools and also has a large waiting list plus plans of its own to increase more than 100% in the next five years, it is difficult to see that the applicant has capacity to both do that in its own behalf and also manage and operate a similar project on a much larger scale involving two school districts with large enrollments. Further, the applicant indicates it will look at nurturing additional relationships with other districts in the valley. (p. 27) It is not clear that the applicant would not be overextended and would be able to be successful at all three of these complex and intensive endeavors simultaneously.

The applicant recognizes a potential significant difficulty in replicating this

project on a larger scale is that it involves working with existing high quality national organizations with reputations for excellence and that replicator sites would need access to enough high quality coaches and trainers on a sustained basis. (p. 29) The applicant acknowledges that it is very difficult for individual schools and districts to recruit and retain significant numbers of talented trainers and coaches, particularly districts located in high needs or undesirable geographic areas. (p. 29)

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

The applicant indicates it has raised \$27 million from investors and other foundation sources. (p. 29)

Weaknesses

It is not clear what the district management and teachers think of the planned project, or the level of support from these stakeholders. Given that the project will rely on coaching strategies, intensive support requiring teacher leadership, and identification of ineffective teachers and administrators, it would have been important for the voices of these affected participants to be known.

Reader's Score: 6

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 will establish a center consisting of four full time staff members. (p. 30)The center director will be an executive from IDEA and a former district teacher and thus will be familiar with both entities.

A table of management activities is provided indicating timeline, responsible parties, and milestones. The level of detail is minimally sufficient to understand how the project will operate.

Weaknesses

The qualifications for the Teacher Development Coordinator and the Leadership Development Coordinator are not provided.

The activities chart indicated a milestone as "Support contracts, and baseline systems complete." It is not clear what "contracts" are being referred to, as no contracts were discussed in the narrative, or what the "baseline systems" are.

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

This priority is not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

This priority is not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

This priority is 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

This priority is not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2010 0:49 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2010 6:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396C100748)

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	22
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	5
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	9
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 08: 84.396C

Reader #3:

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396C100748)

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

<p>IDEA Public Schools, a high performing charter management organization and Pharr-San Juan Alamo (PSJA), a large innovative public independent school district, will work in concert with Teach for America and Dr. Noel Tichy (NYC Leadership Academy) to create an end to end human capital pipeline based on proven, yet innovative methods. Public education in the Valley is under undeniable pressure to serve an expanding high need student population with an extremely limited educator pool. TFA will share proven</p>

tools and processes for effective teacher recruitment and selection. TFA will share its data driven coaching model. The CMO will create the Teacher Leader Institute to meet the instructional and leadership needs to support IDEA and PSJA. The Center will work with TFA to adopt the Outcomes-Causes-Solutions training model. There are 5 clear and comprehensive goals stated.

Weaknesses

There are a variety of other teacher induction and mentoring resources that might prove to be a better "match" for this project besides Teach for America.

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

IDEA enrolls almost 5,500 students on campuses in 6 communities throughout the Rio Grande Valley. It provides a high quality, focused approach to teaching and learning that is derived from an International

Baccalaureate model. It has an extended day and school year. It focuses on students' individualized performance goals. The flagship IDEA campus has graduated three classes of seniors, 100% who enrolled in a 4 year college or university. For the 2009-2010 school year, the TEA labeled 11 PSJA campuses with an Exemplary status and 15 as Recognized.

Weaknesses

With the high accolades and exceptional data that IDEA has shared, it is questionable as to whether there is sufficient need for this project.

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 Center will directly impact 1,198 teachers and promising leaders over the project period. The impact of the program will reach 50,365 students as well. IDEA is a fiscally sound and responsible LEA with sufficient management capability. IDEA's established partnerships with PSJA and TFA's Rio Grande Valley Regional staff give this grant initiative a solid foundation to implement the project and achieve the intended results and outcomes in four years. There is a table that shows the per student estimates for the proposal at scale. The Center will seek to build internal capacity with each district partner over time.

Weaknesses

NONE

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

IDEA has raised \$27 million from investors and has a number of proposals pending. It has funding from the Gates Foundation, Title 2 and Title 1 that currently supports leadership and teacher training. IDEA and PSJA will not hesitate to re-allocate resources to a program that is generating significant student gains. IDEA has strong stakeholder support from individuals, corporations and foundations locally, regionally and nationally.

Weaknesses

NONE

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

IDEA and PSJA have created a project management plan to ensure the activities are completed with a high level of quality and in a timely fashion. The application fully states the responsibilities and qualifications of the key personnel. Their resumes are included in the appendices. There is a timeline and milestones for the first year of the project.

Weaknesses

Although there is no requirement for a timeline and milestones for subsequent years in the life of the grant, with such a massive project, it would seem relevant to include this information.

Reader's Score: 9

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths

Not Addressed

Weaknesses

Not Addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths

Not Addressed

Weaknesses

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

Not Addressed

Weaknesses

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

Not Addressed

Weaknesses

Not Addressed

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2010 6:15 PM

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396D100748)

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	6
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	14
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	20
TOTAL	25	20

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 06: 84.396D

Reader #1:

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396D100748)

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 applicant provides two hypotheses for the proposed project on p. 11 and 13. In addition, the research supporting these hypotheses is provided on p. 11-13.

The combination of the research provided on the specific facets of the proposed intervention, as well as the collaboration of Teach For America and Dr. Noel Tichy, suggest that, if funded, the proposed project likely will meet the goals stated on pp. 9-10 and have a positive impact on student achievement.

Weaknesses

The applicant states on p. 8 that the proposed intervention has not been widely adopted.

The proposal could be strengthened by specifying the expected student achievement results.

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 methods of evaluation are appropriate to the size and scope of the project. The evaluation will use a randomized control trial, with students randomly assigned to teachers participating or not participating in either of the two interventions (p. 17). The sample of teachers assigned to NTI training will be 120 in Year I, and 240 in Years 2 and 3 (n=600). Fifty teachers will receive ILI training for each of the five years of the project, for a total n of 300. Control teachers will be blocked on school, grade, and subject (p. 180). The evaluation will rely on both HLM and survival analysis of teacher turnover and retention (pp. 20-21). The power analysis detailed on p. 21-22 demonstrates that this design is suitable for detecting the likely effects of the intervention.

The methods of evaluation include surveys, focus groups, interviews, and secondary analysis of 24,000 students in two districts (pp. 18-19). These methods will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, as well as permit assessment of progress toward achieving the intended outcomes.

The evaluation will include qualitative data (training observations, site visits, interviews, document reviews, and case studies) to help provide information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development and replication (p. 20).

The evaluation will be led by Viki Young of SRI (p. 23). Xin Wei will be in charge of the quantitative data analysis. Their CVs demonstrate their respective areas of expertise. Rachel Howell and Angela Luck will be in charge of the qualitative research (p. 23). The total evaluation budget is \$1,076,749 and seems sufficient to carry out the evaluation plan.

Weaknesses

No CVs were provide for Howell and Luck, and thus it is difficult to judge whether they have sufficient experience to take the lead on the qualitative evaluations.

Reader's Score: 14

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

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/23/2010 3:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396D100748)

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	13
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	19
TOTAL	25	19

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 06: 84.396D

Reader #2:

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , - , (U396D100748)

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 applicant describes research-based findings supporting the proposed project on p. 10-11.
On p. 12, the applicant briefly describes improved academic outcomes as a result of implementing one of the proposed components of the planned intervention.

Weaknesses

On p. 12, the description of reported effectiveness produced by implementing a component of the proposed interventions any numerical values, e.g. percentage increase or effect size.
The applicant does not specifically address how the project if funded would elicit a positive effect on student achievement or growth.

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

On p. 16-17, the applicant proposes quantitative and qualitative methods for the proposed project. The qualitative methodological aspect is appropriate for a development study. Research questions and outcome measures are well defined. Data analyses, including power analysis, are well thought out and described on p. 19-21.

The question of periodic assessment and performance feedback is briefly addressed on p. 21-22.

Sufficient detail in reporting for further work is addressed as the report will follow WWC guidelines (p. 22).

Sufficiency of resources is addressed.

Weaknesses

It is questionable whether the researchers would have complete freedom in randomly assigning students to new vs. old teachers within each school. The method section would have been strengthened if the applicant described how they will assure complete random assignment within each school.

On p. 21-22, the description of periodic assessment and performance feedback lacks detail. It is not clear what kind of data will be presented formatively, to whom, and how "usefulness" of the program will be evaluated based on that data.

Reader's Score: 13

Status: Submitted

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