

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/28/2010 11:48 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396C100977)

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	24
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	25
3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)	5	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	1
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	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	1
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve	2	0

Technical Review Form

Development 39: 84.396C

Reader #1:

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396C100977)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

The applicant presents an exceptional approach and design to support the academic achievement of each student under their care.

Evidence of an 11 year history of extensive data analysis being used to inform curricular initiatives is integrated into the justification of a need within the applicant's jurisdiction. When evidence of needed curricular reform was identified, the applicant began to make instructional shifts centered around the "academic characteristics of students who are successful in advanced level courses" creating a strong foundational, systemwide culture of using data to inform instructional decisions. When data from their efforts, once analyzed, showed partial success, rather than abandoning their implemented reforms, the applicant built upon their implemented reform efforts modeling how when a cycle of continuous improvement is the expectation, continuous learning from adults and students is the result.

The longstanding, ever deepening, culture of systemic, ongoing, reflective practices and learning clearly support the moral imperative presented by the applicant of providing each child a college-ready curriculum.

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 provides an innovative, creative approach impacting all students' access and preparation for college ready curriculum and advanced courses throughout their K-12 education leading to college admission and success. Extensive and appropriate analysis of data that identifies progress toward meeting the Annual Yearly Progress targets included in the NCLB legislation is used to identify a significant, unmet need within the LEA.

The goals presented by the applicant are grounded in the needs of students as identified through careful analysis of their assessed needs. The applicant identifies 1 critical goal and 3 detailed objectives that represent the essential, foundational elements needed for continued improvement of adults and students alike. Additionally, all activities derived from the goal and objectives are intricately interwoven with the identified project priorities presenting a seamless articulation of what is needed for each student to obtain a college ready, academically stimulating educational experience.

Weaknesses

The applicant describes the inclusion of an "overview professional development video" to give teachers information as an example of the type of multi-media presentations embedded into their project design. (pg 6) Further clarification regarding the delivery model for utilizing the multi-media presentations detailing an approach that is facilitated by an onsite teacher leader is needed to clearly articulate the need for sustained dialogue amongst all teachers and administrators.

Reader's Score: 24

2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)

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

(1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing projects of the size and scope proposed by the eligible applicant.

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths

The applicant provides exceptional evidence of their 11 year journey and past performance in bringing projects of similar size and scope to scale. Extensive and impressive evidence is provided that supports a systemic and pervasive culture within the LEA where, "student achievement will not be predicted by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or language differences." (pg 15) including LEA publications of expectations collaboratively created with multi-stakeholder groups, compacts with employee associations, as well as independent, invited evaluations by esteemed education entities including Harvard, Phi Delta Kappa, and The College Board to uncover the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of adults systemwide and the impact on student achievement.

The applicant also demonstrated a detailed, accurate analysis of AYP data showing sustained evidence of closing of multiple achievement gaps in multiple, benchmark grade levels. Of particular note is an almost 50% reduction of the achievement gap at the 5th grade level in mathematics. In 2003, a 41% point gap between Hispanic students and White students existed. By 2009, even with a 12% point gain by the White subgroup, the Hispanic subgroup achievement gap was 20% points with 76% of this subgroup showing proficiency or higher in mathematics.

Added to this profile is an 18.4% increase from 2004 to 2008 in the percentage of highly qualified teachers working within the LEA. As of December 1, 2008, 93% of the teachers serving students are highly qualified as defined by NCLB legislation as well as 453 teachers who are Nationally Board Certified.

Weaknesses

No weakness 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 applicant identifies the number of students potentially impacted by their project as well as providing start up and scale up cost estimates. The capacity of the applicant to further develop the project and bring it to scale are unquestioned when considering the commitment to continuous improvement clearly documented throughout their application. The inclusion of Pearson as a partner provides for national dissemination possibilities and opportunities.

Weaknesses

The online platform for assessments that is provided by Pearson presents limitations for replication in remote, rural areas where technology access is impacted by access to high-speed Internet connectivity.

Reader's Score: 4

4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

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

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

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

Strengths

The applicant provides extensive evidence ranging from employee compacts/contracts to the inclusion of curriculum personnel, administrative personnel, and fiscal personnel in the accountability and reporting process. This approach indicates that this project has the broad support of multiple stakeholders, including parents and students, who are involved in its success. Additionally, this multi-stakeholder culture demonstrates that the incorporation of the project purposes is already incorporated into the ongoing work of key personnel.

Weaknesses

No weakness 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 applicant provides evidence of a highly experience group of educators with a wide range of expertise, who are responsible for the project implementation and success. Detailed responsibilities, budgetary support and articulated strategies are included in the plan.

Weaknesses

The timeline provided by the applicant includes strategies by no milestones or target months for implementation to gauge program progress across the multi-year project.

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths

The applicant provides clear evidence and documentation of a project that, "develops critical and creative thinking skills and builds academic success skills required to be a life-long learner" through "cross-curricular connections" that will "unleash the natural curiosity of young children and build the habits that mark the academic mind- persistence, questioning, an collaboration." (pg 1)

Weaknesses

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

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

Strengths

The numerous strengths of this project are encapsulated by a description of what the applicant identifies as providing "Supporting college access and success" provided on page 1 of the application, "using as its basis the results-oriented MCPS accelerated curriculum, backmapped from Advanced Placement and international Baccalaureate standards" delivered to elementary students.

Weaknesses

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 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)

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

Strengths

The applicant includes the incorporation of the "principals of Universal Design for Learning" into all aspects of the project providing for the unique instructional challenges presented by students with disabilities and limited English proficient students. (pg 1)

Weaknesses

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

This priority was not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/30/2010 0:44 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396C100977)

Reader #2:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 Points)	25	25
2. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 25 Points)	25	25
3. E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale (up to 5 Points)	5	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	1
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	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	1

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	80	77

Technical Review Form

Development 39: 84.396C

Reader #2:

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396C100977)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

Project North Star is a creative way increase the rigor and expectations for all students regardless of their race, income, national origin, gender or disability. It will address students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Beginning at the elementary level it is going to create a pipelne of communciation for children all over the world.

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 described the project as an innovative way to increase the graduation rate via backmapping to determine the need to close the achievement gap between elementary and middle school using AP enrollment in high school as a predictor. The applicant will partner with a Pearson,LLC curriculum content specialist to close the gap by writing curriculum designed to infuse art, social studies and science with math and reading to be delivered through OAEIC (Online Elementary Integrated Curriculum). The professional development will be job embedded and archived as a resource. The goals and objectives of the project were clearly stated.

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

Based on an eleven-year process of systemic reform, the applicant learned habits of teachers and students that needed change and as a result partnered with Pearson, LLC, the world's leading publisher of education content and assessment. The project was named North Star to guide students through a lifetime of learning. MCPS has a proven record of implementing complex systemic reforms that result in positive outcomes. Two notable projects, one a system ready trajectory and the development of new professional growth system.

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 number of students proposed to be impacted by the project was provided and the cost per student. The number of teachers and administrators to receive professional development was also provided. As evidenced by the applicant's ability to implement complex systemic reforms demonstrates the district's ability to bring high quality reform to scale. Replication of North Star is feasible because all instruction guides, assessments and professional development will be online.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

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

Since the proposed project is the key to its mission, the applicant and its partners will contribute to sustainability. The district will contribute instructional development expertise and roll-out support. Pearson, LLC partner will contribute assessment and professional development expertise and the promotion of the product in national markets. The board of education has indicated their continued support of the project.

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 applicant described the qualification of the project director and other key personnel and resumes were provided. The management plan was provided.

Weaknesses

While the management plan was provided, there was no evidence of milestone included.

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

North Star will be the next generation elementary instruction using OEIC.

Partnering with Pearson on a one-of-a-kind research based project is super. The natural curiosity of children begins at Kindergarten. They will be able to explore it from a global perspective.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses note.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

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

Strengths

The project included the development of a unique college-ready elementary school. The project began preparing students for college by making them aware of careers industry as early as kindergarten.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 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)

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

Since there is a high ELL population, this project will assist students with learning vocabulary and understand English which allow for better communication. In addition, technology is the key the success of the project.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Applicant did not address.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/30/2010 0:44 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/24/2010 6:43 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396C100977)

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	5
4. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	10
5. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	10
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	1
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	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	1

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	80	78

Technical Review Form

Development 39: 84.396C

Reader #3:

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396C100977)

Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement

Montgomery County Public Schools in partnership with Pearson LLC proposes a project called North Star that will produce a curriculum and an online professional community that will guide elementary students toward college readiness. It is based on sound research with the capacity to complete the project in three years. Prior research has shown that Montgomery County Schools have improved student achievement and closed the achievement between racial/ethnic groups and the poor. The curriculum will be available nationally when completed. This is an excellent project.

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

Montgomery County Public School will partner with Pearson LLC to realign its elementary curriculum and student assessments to further improve student achievement and close achievement gaps among racial groups. The need is clear to better prepare students for college or the work place. There is one goal. Increase the number of high school graduates and eliminate the achievement gap among racial/ethnic groups and the poor. Three objectives are cited for these projects. The objectives paraphrased are, (1) develop a K-5 curriculum in cooperation with Pearson LLC in core subjects that can be adopted nationally utilizing online learning communities, (2) create the online learning community. (3) increase the number of underrepresented students performing at advanced levels. Research by the project proponent supports the creation of the North Star curriculum.

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

Montgomery County Schools has an enviable track record of implementing curricula revisions to meet changing student needs. The project cites three major initiatives in Montgomery County School District that produced significant achievement gains for all students and produced achievement gains that substantially reduced the achievement gap between Whites and Asians compared to Hispanic and Blacks. The district is tied for first place in the nation among the fifty largest districts in the percentage of students graduating.

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

Strategies are written that indicate the project will be brought to scale on-time and within budget. Both Montgomery County and Pearson LL have committed additional funding to ensure the project is completed properly. The grant money will be used to hire special personnel to develop, implement, scale-up and evaluate the project. The project is replicable in that the curriculum will be developed and will be online. Per student costs of the project are included. Information about the project will be disseminated broadly through many avenues.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

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

It is clear the project is sustainable through the three year funding period and beyond. Pearson LLC, through the North Star product has proven to support passing AP/IB and STEM courses that prepare students for college. A strong commitment and financial resources from both Montgomery County and Pearson LLC contribute to the sustainability.

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 management plan is designed to meet the project objectives on time and within budget. Experienced and well trained staffs from Montgomery County and Pearson LLC are to manage the project. Montgomery County Public Schools in partnership with Pearson LLC proposes a project called North Star that will produce a curriculum and an online professional community that will guide elementary students toward college readiness. It is based on sound research with the capacity to complete the project in three years. Prior research has shown that Montgomery County Schools have improved student achievement and closed the achievement between racial/ethnic groups and the poor. The curriculum will be available nationally when completed.

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

This project focuses on student readiness for college eventually, but in the short term on improving achievement in core subjects. Goals, objectives, activities, milestones and measurable outcomes are included. A standards based curriculum will be developed for elementary grades beginning with kindergarten.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

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

Strengths

The online professional learning communities initiative supports activities at the elementary grades that will affect college readiness.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 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)

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 needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners are addressed in this project. Achievement, college readiness, and high school graduation are all a part of this endeavor.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

Priority not addressed

Weaknesses

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/24/2010 6:43 PM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/26/2010 1:25 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396D100977)

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	6
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	11
TOTAL	25	11

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 03: 84.396D

Reader #1:

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396D100977)

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 research cited is relevant and supports the significance of possible effects of the proposed program to be implemented. The research that the program is based upon has both internal and external validity.

Weaknesses

More information about the student populations of both the control and treatment schools needs to be included in the studies cited. It is unclear if the priority populations will be addressed from the research discussed, since the population demographics are not defined. Although college readiness is a long term goal it is unclear how the research for the project cited is relative to support the scope of this 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 evaluation plan is thorough and included in the timeline for the scope of work for the duration of the project. The method to be used is clearly described and how the analysis will be conducted is included in this description. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and analyzed. The plan includes both summative and formative reports; therefore the data will be used to guide improvements for the duration of the project.

Weaknesses

The analysis is not clearly defined so the study cannot be replicated. The independent variables are not clearly defined. It is unclear how the underrepresented students will be included in the evaluation plan, which is the objective of the project- to increase the numbers of students. The budget does not clearly represent all components of the evaluation plan.

Reader's Score: 6

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/26/2010 1:25 PM

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/26/2010 10:14 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396D100977)

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	4
2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	4
<i>SUB TOTAL</i>	25	8
TOTAL	25	8

Technical Review Form

Development Tier 2 Panel 03: 84.396D

Reader #2:

Applicant: Montgomery County Public Schools -- ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs - ,Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (U396D100977)

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

There was a listing of studies provided as evidence in support of North Star in STEM subjects.

Weaknesses

The applicant does not provide sufficient research-based evidence or reasonable hypotheses that support the proposed North Star project in reading. For example, the one quasi-experimental study that provided results of student North Star success in reading did not provide adequate information to conclude the significance of the results. There is no information about the research design, including sample size, type of analyses performed; length of curriculum implementation; the schools/students included; baseline scores, components of the curriculum, etc. to make the claim that the North Star curriculum will increase the likelihood that students will score at the advanced levels.

There are no results reported for the success of any previously tested project similar to the proposed project.

The applicant does not provide research-based evidence of the feasibility of online professional development and/or components of PD that show if and/or how PD is translated into practice. Thus, objective #2 does not have a reasonable hypothesis that supports the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 4

2. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors.

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the size and scope of the proposed project.

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

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

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

Strengths

The applicant provided information about the statistical analyses that will be performed.

Case Studies will be used to supplement findings.

Weaknesses

The applicant proposes a quasi-experimental study; however there is no detailed information about the design (ie. use of treatment control, pre-test/post-test etc.); therefore the methods of evaluation may not be appropriate for the size and scope of the proposed project.

There is no information about targeting a specific priority student population of interest for this grant application. For example, the applicant does not provide a definition or information for the underrepresented students and districts that will be considered for their proposed project. It is uncertain

what high-needs students the applicant proposes to target. Therefore, without sufficient information about the underrepresented students, the proposed project does not facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

The applicant does not supply information about the key elements/components of PD and curriculum that make for proposed improvements in teacher practices and student achievement, thus it is unclear if the project can be replicated or tested in other settings.

The strategies for objective 1-3 (attachment G), appear to be inconsistent with the development/ roll-out of a K-5 curriculum. For example, the K-5 curriculum will be in development in Year 1 for MCPS, therefore, it is unclear how the proposed field testing of the OEIC in 5 partner schools in Year 1 will occur. This inconsistency is not appropriate replication.

Project evaluation, interim progress reports, and final grant evaluation reports for the programs in the partner schools are proposed to occur in Years 1 & 2. The summation of final results within the first two years of a five year program does not provide for high quality implementation data, performance feedback and/or permit appropriate/accurate periodic assessments of progress toward achieving intended outcomes to increase percentages of traditionally underrepresented students performing at advanced levels along the Seven Keys to College Readiness.

Although an implementation guide will be developed for district and school leaders in partner schools, there appears to be no online learning community that supports professional development for teachers at the partner schools. Equivalent programs will not be implemented within MCPS and partner schools; therefore, student outcomes in the partner schools will be inherently different from MCPS schools. This inconsistency does not allow for appropriate replication and/or evaluation outcomes.

The methods of evaluation (as proposed in the scope of work) are not sufficient strategies to conclude if the proposed program may be associated with student outcomes. For example, the applicant only provides analyses of student characteristics and outcomes, however there are no correlational analyses conducted for program inputs (ie. PD components, curriculum components) that may be related to student outcomes.

The timeline of activities and budget ends in Year 3 of a 5-Year project; therefore, the project plan includes an inappropriate use of funds and activities to carry out an effective evaluation.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/26/2010 10:14 AM