

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 06/30/2010 3:29 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Soquel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

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 15 Points)	15	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	4
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	5
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	_____

Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
(0 or 1 Point)

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

TOTAL 105 9

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #1:

Applicant: Sequel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 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 actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20

Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the 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 is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important 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.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

The applicant briefly summarizes a number of studies that appear to provide relevant support for the Response to Intervention approach that is to be scaled up. One of the studies cited by the author (Coleman, Buysse, and Neitzel, 2006) is a synthesis of studies on RTI that includes nine experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

Weaknesses

None of the studies specifically cited by the applicant appear to be experimental or quasi-experimental, though the synthesis cited (Coleman et al., 2006) did contain studies that had the necessary research designs. There was insufficient detail in the discussion of this synthesis, however, to determine the weight of evidence provided by the studies included. Tilly (2003) and Grimes and Kurns (2003) appear to be summaries of data and, again, not experimental or quasi-experimental studies.

Moreover, RTI is a generic designation for a variety of interventions, including interventions in different academic subjects and aspects of the education process (e.g., behavioral and social elements). It is not at all clear that the research cited supports the particular RTI model -- and the various program components -- the applicant seeks to scale up.

The applicant's discussion of "significance" and "magnitude" misunderstands the technical nature of the response that was expected, though some of this information would likely be gleaned from Coleman et al.

Reader's Score: 4

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 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 large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(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

Weaknesses

4. 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 will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.

(3) 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.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

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

(6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.

Strengths

The applicant's discussion of the project evaluation is thoughtful and clearly focused on the important issues of impact and scale-up. The questions that guide the evaluation are on-target and thorough.

There is clear information about the instruments to be used to measure the impact of the applicant's program and attention to ensuring the reliability of their employment. The instruments appear to be of proven validity and will provide multiple measures of student learning.

Attention is given to the use of the evaluation in assessing fidelity and effectiveness of implementation. There appear to be adequate opportunities to accomplish this.

The applicant states an intention to employ an external evaluator.

Weaknesses

Although the applicant indicates an intention to employ a quasi-experimental design in the evaluation study, the actual study design is never described. This is a serious omission, which makes it impossible to assess the adequacy

of the evaluation proposed.

It is not clear what the relationship is between the sample selected for the evaluation study and the larger population of the scale-up.

The budget for the evaluation is stated to be \$10,000, which seems unlikely to be sufficient for a rigorous evaluation even of a relatively small project such as this one.

The intention to have an external evaluator is noted, but no information is furnished about the individual(s) or organization that will carry out the evaluation.

Reader's Score: 5

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, 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 bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(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 proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, 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, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

Weaknesses

6. 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 to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(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 Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

Weaknesses

7. 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to address the unique learning needs of students with disabilities, including those who are assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards, or the linguistic and academic needs of limited English proficient students. To meet this priority, applications must

provide for the implementation of particular practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve academic outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase college- and career-readiness, including increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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 Last Updated: 07/03/2010 12:05 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Soquel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

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 15 Points)	15	5
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	3
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	3
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	2
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	2
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	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	1

Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
(0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	17

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #2:

Applicant: Soquel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 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 actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

The applicant wants to replicate the practices from one elementary school in the district to the entire district over a five year period. Merging the special

education and general education using RtI is an admirable goal. The fact that the Districts' Governing Board has adopted RtI in the strategic plan indicates support for this model within the district. The plan has a clear set of goals and objectives that are aligned with the District Strategic Plan for systemic change.

Weaknesses

This model is currently being implemented in schools all over the country in varying degrees and using slightly different models. The fact that students need "appropriate research-based interventions; staff needs training; and parents need training to understand assessment results" are all areas that schools across the country are struggling with in the current climate of decreased funding. To strengthen the plan it would have been helpful to provide more specifics on how this model differs from other RtI models being implemented.

The goals listed are the same goals that all districts are struggling with at this time: closing the achievement gap; providing professional development for teachers; and improving parental communication. To strengthen this grant application, it would be helpful to understanding how this project is unique. One of the objectives is that 75% of the students receiving interventions will have made greater than a year's growth using the districts multiple measures(p.5). The research indicates that students who are struggling need to make 1.5 years of growth in a year. It would have strengthened the application to have stated the growth expectation to be 1.5 years or greater and to have specified the consistent measures to be used to determine effectiveness.

The goal of ELL advancing one level on the CELDT is listed as an objective but it is not clear if this is each year or at the end of the grant period. No mention is made of achievement on the state assessment over the five year period for ELL students.

Objective 3.1 indicates that 100% of students receiving interventions will receive information on the student's goals. This is something schools already provide to parents so to strengthen the application one might want to make this objective stronger.

The plan lists research-based practices that are culturally responsive and are being used in the classrooms, but no clarification is provided as to what the instruction is, making it difficult to understand this strategy.

Progress monitoring is listed as a strategy to be used during instruction and interventions. No mention is made of the instruments to be used to monitor progress. It also mentions collecting clearly defined data on a frequent basis. To strengthen this strategy, it would be helpful to specify the data and how frequently is defined.

The plan mentions that the district will develop a plan to increase unity of

the staff regarding the RtI model which indicates that perhaps there is not significant buy-in from staff. To strengthen this area it would be helpful to have documentation of staff support as well as timelines for implementation.

Reader's Score: 5

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the 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 is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important 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.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 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 large, complex,

and rapidly growing projects.

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths

One school has begun to close the achievement gap for special education students over a four year period.
The applicant states that they only hire teachers and principals who are highly qualified by the State of California.
Grade 5 ELA students outperformed comparison groups in the county and the state of California.

Weaknesses

The applicant does not have any experience implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing practices.
Soquel Union Elementary School District does not have high school students and states that they cannot address this issue in the application. It would strengthen the application to track the students who exited the elementary district and graduated from the high school district.

Reader's Score: 3

4. 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 will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed

quasi-experimental study.

(2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.

(3) 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.

(4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

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

(6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, 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 bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(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 proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, 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, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

The applicant has the capacity to reach the 10,000 students projected at the end of the project.
The applicant plans to work with out-of-district partners in the scale up state-wide. The partners are California State University of Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz County of Education; the New Teacher Project, and other local non-profits.

Weaknesses

The application lists other partners but provides no documentation or letters of support regarding their participation. To strengthen the application it would be helpful to have letters of support from educational partners and local non-profits.
It is difficult to determine if the assistance of partners will support the project to scale on a State level. The number of administrators in the district performing a number of duties is limited.
Community based organizations and agencies will assist in carrying out the project after the grant timeframe. This statement is made on p. 32 and it would be strengthened if mention of the agencies/organizations were known to the reader. Even stronger would be letters of support from these individuals.
The proposed programs demonstrated success is in one prek-5 campus in Santa Cruz, California. In order to demonstrate success in multiple settings, evidence of this model's success could be included in the application.
No per pupil costs were included in the proposal; therefore the applicant did not meet the intent of the application to estimate costs of serving 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students. This would need to be included to meet the criteria of the application.
The budget is difficult to interpret for several reasons. First, the budget reflects the addition of one .5 Intervention Teacher at \$38,000 per year. It is not clear if currently there are 3.5 intervention teachers such that each school will have 1 for the project or the budget is \$38,000 x 2 full time teachers. Clarification of the budget would be helpful.
The dissemination plan is not specific and speaks in generalities such as "presentations at professional meetings MIGHT include . . .[emphasis added]"(p.35). There is also a mention of contribution to the dissemination

through written articles for professional journals. The number of articles to be submitted is not specified. It would be helpful to set a number of articles to be written to assure that the target is met.
Supplies are listed on the budget for the first 3 years but no cost estimates are listed. If the district is providing the supplies then a statement to that effect would help clarify the budget.

Reader's Score: 3

6. 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 to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(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 Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

The District does include in the budget the ability to maintain the project after year 5 with local funds. By providing ongoing professional development, the teachers will be trained by the end of the 5 year timeline.

Weaknesses

The application did not include support from stakeholders other than listing some potential candidates. It is difficult to determine if the support by stakeholders will ensure ongoing implementation of the plan. Since local funding is providing the support for the long-term implementation, it would help to specify the source of the local funds as well as provide a contingency plan given the ongoing shortage of funding for schools in California.

Reader's Score: 2

7. 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

The plan for this application is detailed for the five years of the grant. Specific responsibilities are listed for each year of the grant. The Project Coordinator is involved in the project 50% of the time and 50% in special education as the Director. At the end of the 4th year, this person will phase out as the Project Director but will remain as the Special Education Director. This allows for providing the project memory but not requiring any additional funding.

Weaknesses

Although specific responsibilities are listed, the responsible parties are always the same five individuals. It is not clear who will be responsible for which activity. The project plan does not include timelines by months, or milestones. It would be helpful to designate duties by individuals and include some milestones in the plan.

Although the dissemination plans indicates speaking at professional meetings and writing journal articles, there is no mention of these activities in the management plan.

The Campus Kids Connection, Inc. Director is listed as key personnel but is not listed as having any responsibilities on the management chart. This position is listed as In-Kind funding but it is unclear as to how this role relates to the project. Clarification on this matter would be helpful to the application.

In reviewing the resumes of the key personnel, it is not clear that anyone on the team has managed large, complex, and rapidly growing projects. The Project Manager has conducted small research projects at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

The application indicates that a program evaluator will be hired who has an

advance degree and has experience in educational research. A resume is included for a Wendy K. Hurst who has some experience in project management but does not have any external evaluation experience. Inclusion of a professional company or group of individuals who are well versed in large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies would strengthen this application. It would also help to provide clarity on the resumes and what roles the individuals will play in the application.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

The application seeks to involve the preschool agency with the elementary schools to provide a seamless array of services preK-8. Services in the early learning arena will be strengthened by the grant as students needing early intervention will be identified through this project.

Weaknesses

None found.

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

Weaknesses

Not addressed as a priority by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

The plan seeks to meld the general education plan with that of the special education and ELL models to create a seamless system of support. This is commendable as it is cost effective and focuses on students regardless of the label and students are viewed as individuals with needs.

Weaknesses

None found.

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

Not addressed as a priority by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2010 12:05 PM

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 07/02/2010 9:48 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Soquel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

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 15 Points)	15	7
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	3
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	3
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	2
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	2
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	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	1

Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
(0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	19

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #3:

Applicant: Sequel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 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 actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

1. RTI addresses an unmet need in schools and is an approach that is encouraged in IDEA 2004. Goals, objectives and strategies were built into
--

the model's design.

2. The goals and objectives presented provide strategies to achieve the work described within the school district. Increases in student scores over time spoke to RTI's effectiveness.

Weaknesses

1. The proposed strategy has been widely adopted by many states to address the needs of students and particularly high need students. Therefore, while there is a need the process is a commonly used strategy in school districts. This program has been widely adopted in schools.

2. This criterion was minimally met and strategies are not explicitly defined. Goals, objectives, and outcomes describe the work within the school district to increase student achievement. RTI is a strategy currently employed in many districts/states across the country.

Reader's Score: 7

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the 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 is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important 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.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase

college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 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 large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(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

2. Assessment data was presented which indicates increases in student achievement.

Weaknesses

1. The applicant did not present sufficient evidence of its capacity to implement large complex projects.

2. Data related to overall achievement was specific only to the school and did not translate to increases in high school graduation (page e22).

Reader's Score: 3

4. 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 will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.**
- (3) 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.**
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, 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 bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.**
- (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 proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, 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, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

2. There was local commitment listed to sustain the project after the grant period ended.

Weaknesses

1. Page e29 states that the proposal will serve 10,000 students.

2. The proposed capacity, as a local school district, is not sufficient to scale-up to model expectations nor did the district demonstrate its past performance to manage and bring to scale the scope such a project. Stakeholders and partnerships to support this initiative were not listed.

3. RTI has been replicated across the nation with varying levels of success. The project has not presented evidence of its ability to replicate this model in multiple settings as proposed by the applicant.

4. Budget estimates to reach the number of students projected by the criterion were not provided.

5. The applicant did not propose an approach to broadly disseminate information to support replication. Much of the approach has been documented by the National RTI Center.

Reader's Score: 3

6. 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 to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(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 Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

2. There was evidence that the applicant would incorporate the strategies into day to day practice at the close of the grant period.

Weaknesses

1. No significant evidence was presented that the applicant has resources to operate the proposal beyond the project duration. The applicant stated that the Scale-Up funds served as "seed money" and thereafter the program would continue based on what had happened during the grant period. There was no evidence of long term commitment by stakeholders.

Reader's Score: 2

7. 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

1. The management plan provided a description of plans to achieve the objectives.

Weaknesses

1. Tasks related to scalability were not defined.
2. The proposed project personnel have limited time dedicated to the proposal and evidence of managing large complex projects was not evident.
3. Qualifications of the evaluator were discussed but the independent evaluator was not identified.

Reader's Score: 2

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

1. The applicant addressed the priority for improving early childhood outcomes by employing the strategies designed in RTI to meet the needs of children, methods for evaluating developmental milestones with outcome measures and collaborations and transitions.

Weaknesses

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

Weaknesses

The applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

The applicant addressed this priority.

Weaknesses

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

The applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/02/2010 9:48 AM

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 07/06/2010 11:57 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Soquel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Reader #4:

	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 15 Points)	15	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	3
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	3
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	_____

Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
(0 or 1 Point)

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

TOTAL 105 6

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #4:

Applicant: Sequel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 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 actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20

Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the 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 is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important 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.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

The descriptive studies provided indicate the proposed Response to Intervention (RtI) system may have some impact on increasing student achievement and lowering the number of students referred to Special Education (pages 12-14). Although the studies are not strong experimental or quasi-experimental studies, the anecdotal data does provide some basic findings that might indicate the RtI process may be helpful in improving student achievement (page 13-Tilly study).

Weaknesses

Although the applicant stated it found 14 studies that met the i3 selection criteria, the three studies presented provide no description of the research designs used and none of the designs were experimental or quasi-experimental. They were descriptive studies. There was no random assignment of subjects to control or treatment groups. The first study was

conducted at only one elementary site (page 13). Another portion of the study which summarized survey results was based on between 5-8 percent of the school assessment teams in the district (page 14). This extremely low response rate calls into question these descriptive results. There was no mention of comparison groups of non RtI schools or matched students.

Reader's Score: 3

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 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 large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(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

Weaknesses

4. 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 will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

- (2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.**
- (3) 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.**
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.**

Strengths

The proposed evaluation plan states it will be a quasi-experimental study with a matched comparison group (pages 23-24). The applicant will hire an external evaluator and create an evaluation team (page 24). Comparisons will be made with district and state outcomes and be disaggregated by identified subgroups, grade level, time in the program, and language proficiency (page 26). The applicant identifies evaluation project objectives (page 26).

Weaknesses

The overall evaluation plan as presented is very weak. There are no details provided regarding the quasi-experimental design (page 23) or the analysis (page 28) that will be used on the collected data. There is no random assignment of subjects or matched groups used for comparison purposes. The proposal does not describe how the samples from North Carolina and California will be selected. There was no discussion of using current assessment and evaluation tools. No description was provided of Guskey Levels of Professional Development evaluation criteria or components which will be used to evaluate the professional development provided to teachers. Although this proposal focuses on special needs students, there is no discussion of how these populations will be addressed in the evaluation. The description of the qualitative methods that would be used for tracking implementation of the program will not provide sufficient information on program progress or implementation. There is no mechanism discussed for continuous feedback and program improvement. In addition,

there are not enough resources (\$10,000 is budgeted for evaluation) to support a rigorous evaluation (page 28). The evaluation proposal does not indicate that sufficient information will be collected about the key elements of the program and its progress to help others replicate it.

Reader's Score: 3

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, 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 bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(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 proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, 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, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

(5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.

Strengths

Weaknesses

6. 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 to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(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 Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

Weaknesses

7. 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

2 Points)

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/06/2010 11:57 AM

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 07/03/2010 6:11 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Soquel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Reader #5:

	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 15 Points)	15	7
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	_____
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	3
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	3
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	0
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	3
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	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	1

Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
(0 or 1 Point)

4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	18

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #5:

Applicant: Sequel Union Elementary School District -- , - , (U396A100056)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

The proposal is focused around a single elementary school that has had success with an intervention model for LEP students. The concept is to take what is working in some classes in the local school, expand it throughout the school, and then take the model to the school system.

It is difficult to determine if this is an exceptional approach that should be scaled up in a multi-school setting. It appears to be a locally implemented project that will eventually reach 10,000 students.

It is difficult to assess the applicant's past performance in implementing a large, complex and rapidly growing project. The capacity to bring to scale such an effort is a real concern.

The proposal needs significant strengthening to be a viable recipient of this grant program.

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 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 actions that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet,

(b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

Strengths

The grant calls for an External Evaluator to collect data for sharing with others. The effort focuses around a clear need for all schools- to raise student achievement through school improvement and reform. In addition, the model appears to build on research-based intervention characteristics and is designed to involve major stakeholders in the implementation phase.

The scale-up need is to establish good intervention practices district wide and then share with others. The goals and objectives of the proposal are laudable, well laid out and with numerous specific strategies for implementation.

Weaknesses

The proposal is a request to receive additional funds through grants to expand an already existing intervention program in a single school and eventually the district. It is difficult to determine whether or not this is an exceptional approach to the applicant's priorities, and student data to support this approach appears to be mixed.

It is extremely difficult to assess the need for such an effort, especially as a scale-up effort. The scale-up that is proposed is to go from one school to their own district, impacting a relatively small number of students in one local elementary school district. Furthermore, the intervention model does not appear to be an especially exceptional approach when compared with numerous other intervention efforts across the nation. In short, this proposal does not rise to the level of need that is required of the scale-up grant category.

Reader's Score: 7

2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20

Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the 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 is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important 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.

(2) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths

Weaknesses

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 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 large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

(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 proposal cites that 100% of teachers and principals are labeled 'high quality' by appropriate criteria, and provides two years of support through the New Teacher Center.

Weaknesses

It is difficult to assess the past performance of the applicant in implementing large, complex and a rapidly growing project. This model has been implemented in a single school in a relatively small elementary school system. The performance of the personnel with respect to large and complex projects is not addressed in the proposal. Resumes are provided, and past experiences primarily in small school districts is provided, but demonstrated evidence of the ability to manage a scale-up effort is not addressed.

One of the statements related to experience is as follows; 'While the... District is small, the district has provided leadership in bringing a variety of resources and speakers to address professional needs of schools countywide'. This type of experience cited does not rise to the level of what is necessary to demonstrate the ability to scale-up large and complex projects.

The data provided are mixed, both for the individual school where the model has been implemented and for the school system overall. The following information was provided to support past performance of significantly improving student achievement;

* ELA test results for economically disadvantaged students show the SC Gardens Elementary School outperforming the District in grades 2, 3 and 4, while 5th grade scores are virtually identical.

* CST test results for economically disadvantaged students show a similar pattern in grades 2, 3, and 4, yet the 5th grade scores are significantly below District, and State scores. Yet ELA scores in 5th grade are higher than County and State scores. However District scores are not provided.

* Other data, such as the State Accountability Index- API-rankings and

percent of students scoring proficient in ELA document steadily increasing performance overall.

Overall the data is impressive in some areas and not impressive in other grades. Of special significance is that the 5th grade performance is not explained, especially given the importance of scaling up an effort based on clear evidence of success.

Reader's Score: 3

4. 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 will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.**
- (3) 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.**
- (4) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.**
- (5) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**
- (6) The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer will evaluate the impact of the project.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed

project to scale, 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 bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.**
- (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 proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings and with different types of students, 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, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.**
- (5) The mechanisms the eligible applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support replication.**

Strengths

The feasibility of the project to be replicated successfully has some merit. The project is small and has been implemented well in this school. Achievement trends, while mixed in some cases, appear to benefit subgroups of students. While there is no evidence of demonstrated success in multiple settings, the relative ease of use of user satisfaction is a positive because of the size of the project.

Weaknesses

The number of students proposed to be reached totals 10,000. However, there is no clear explanation of how the number of students will be reached and if the plan is to expand to county and state/regional sites. This lack of clarity makes it extremely difficult to determine if the applicant and other partners (retired teacher and administrators and state higher education institutions) have committed to scale up efforts and if so, to what degree.

The capacity to bring to scale is a real concern. The applicant continually refers to the small size of the district and the fact the management group fits around the Superintendent's dining room table. In addition the applicant refers to the impact of budget cuts and how difficult it has been to maintain programs and offerings. Given these ongoing issues, the question of scale up is one that must be answered in concrete, detailed specifics, and such is not the case in this proposal.

The budget is a serious concern and does not adequately include the estimates of costs to reach 100,00, 500,000 or 1,000,000 students. This failure to provide these budget figures is a source of concern regarding the applicant's capacity to bring this effort to scale

Reader's Score: 3

6. 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 to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any other partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.

(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 Scale-Up grant.

Strengths

Weaknesses

The information provided to address the criteria required under sustainability is inadequate and simply does not address the criteria. Little or no evidence is provided related to the extent the applicant demonstrates the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant and the demonstrated commitment of partners.

Reader's Score: 0

7. 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, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.**
- (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.**
- (3) The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.**

Strengths

There are goals with specific and concrete activities to meet the goals and objectives as outlined in the proposal

Weaknesses

The management plan is adequate in some categories and inadequate in others (to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget). While goals and activities have been provided, there are no milestones in the plan, nor are there clearly defined responsibilities other than a listing by year of personnel involved.

Job descriptions of personnel involved are found in the Appendix. They appear less than acceptable in relation to managing large, complex and growing projects, as little information about this management requirement is found in the job descriptions. This is true for the project director as well. The expertise of the independent evaluator could not be determined.

Reader's Score: 3

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 proposal is clearly focused around early elementary education, including improving learning outcomes for young students.

Weaknesses

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

Weaknesses

The proposal did not address this competitive preference,

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

The proposal states numerous times that one of the areas of focus are students with special needs, including LEP and special education students.

Weaknesses

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

This was not a priority of the grant proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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