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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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	13
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	14
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	9
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	5
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	6
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	1
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address	1	_____

the Unique Learning Needs of Students With 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	48

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 2: 84.396A

Reader #1:

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

NYC has functioned as a laboratory for some of the most innovative school development and turnaround efforts in the nation. They have also invested in high quality research to determine effectiveness. Funding them to continue this work over the next five years seems like an excellent use of i3 funds. However, it is imperative that the knowledge get memorialized and disseminated in ways that are accessible to practitioners. The dissemination portion of this proposal is less developed and needs more work to maximize any i3 investment and really achieve the scale commiserate with this level of request.

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

There are just a few cities experimenting thoughtfully with the portfolio of schools management approach. NYC is by far the biggest and, from the description of their management and guiding principles, the most sophisticated. District's will often latch onto one of the three principles described on page 6, but none have developed the described internal coordination mechanism (p. 8) to ensure using common measures across the portfolio, assessing demand for certain types of schools, and monitoring enrollment and facilities to ensure school conditions are conducive to meeting the academic goals set by the District.

The extensive partnership with intermediaries and community based organizations to do the school turnaround work is also unique. The data on the effectiveness of some of their largest partners in increasing graduation rates is impressive (p. 48-9) and supports the applicant's rationale for continuing its partnership with these organizations to achieve the goals presented in this application.

Goals for grant build sensibly on prior work and are based on evaluation results. Their partnerships are key to scaling and innovation, so investing in their capacity to bring up even more schools makes sense. Building a bench of principals via the new track in the Leadership Academy for the "second in command" at the new schools should help with sustainability over time, particularly given the higher turnover rates troubled schools often experience among senior leadership. The data enhancements to Achievement Reporting and Information System (ARIS) to allow additional school identified variables to be included should further embed the use of data-driven decision-making in schools by making the process even more relevant and responsive. The Innovation Zone (IZone) to incentivize school developers to address issues that still stymie schools from achieving the District's standard for rigor and college preparedness is an excellent and much needed investment that will benefit other districts as well.

Weaknesses

The outcome goals detailed on page 19 are not that impressive or

comprehensive given the level of investment and time interval, and the student outcomes to date. With a graduation rate increase of 10-12 points in 5 years, or about 2 points/year, NYC will only have 73% of its overall student population graduating. It would be more compelling if they had included some additional student outcome goals for ELL, SPED, and their minority populations for each of the data points described. There are surprisingly no outcomes listed for college going and persistence. This data should be available via the partnership with CUNY (p. 2). One also wonders about the tracking of students who are agency involved, like delinquent, foster care, and parenting teen subgroups. These are the most challenging groups and a prime target for the IZone contractors.

Plans regarding scaling beyond NYC lack some important features, including on-site technical assistance to Districts adopting the NYC model and support for developing strong community partners. Also, it is unclear how many students they hope to impact in the five years. The number 60,000 appears several places, but on page 52-53 there is a discussion of leveraged numbers that appear to be for NYC only but it is not clear.

Reader's Score: 13

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 fact that NYC has used this same set of principles and partners to bring up 417 new schools in place of nearly 100 failing schools in 7 years demonstrates adequate capacity to implement large, complex, and rapidly growing projects. A portfolio approach like this is complicated, but the external evaluation data seem to support NYC's capacity to do this work at considerable scale.

The data presented on pages 33-35 demonstrate an ability to close achievement gaps and increase overall achievement, including graduation rate. These data are particularly compelling given the size of this district. Gaining enough implementation fidelity to render gains in student

achievement and graduation rates across so many schools is extremely challenging. Few districts can show results like this.

The school developer partners associated with the Alternative High School Network and charter school franchises have a good track record of cross-pollinating across district lines.

Weaknesses

The partner identified to scale the model beyond NYC, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE), has a fairly academic track record to date and it is unclear if this network of cities the partner will be working with already exists or will be created under the grant.

Reader's Score: 14

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 application presents a clear model for change at scale and in a variety of settings that should be transferable to almost any district, provided adequate technical assistance is available.

Budget numbers seem in alignment with the planned activities for scaling the model to the target number of NYC schools. Most of the funding will underwrite the start-up costs and operations of the new schools, with reasonable amounts allocated for the data system enhancements and evaluation costs.

The applicant provides an analysis of costs to scale the model to 100,000,

500,000 and 1,000,000.

The applicant appears to have the experience and capacity to turnaround the schools serving at least 40,000 students (i.e., the proposed number of students to be impacted by this grant) (pp. 47-49).

Weaknesses

The plan to scale this model beyond NYC is weak. The activities proposed by CPRE do not include provision for on-site technical assistance to Districts, or some vehicle for growing central office leadership to place in districts wanting to replicate the model. This is a serious flaw given the complexity and novelty of this model. It is conceptually and technically difficult. A couple organizations have been providing this type of hands on technical assistance to other cities through private funding and it has been well received. This dissemination plan needs to have some capacity like this to really leverage the i3 investment with any fidelity.

The budget does not provide for sufficient technical assistance support for the districts identified as sites for scale-up in this application.

There is also no discussion of the challenge of finding or cultivating community partners in other localities to do the incubating of new schools. The proposal makes a strong argument for the importance of these groups in the development of new schools. New Visions has done a lot of this work for the applicant, and that is in a city where community organizations have to be fairly sophisticated to survive. This will not be the case in many places and it is not clear that CPRE has this expertise internally. No discussion is provided regarding the existence of this type of expertise among community partners in the Districts identified as targets for scale-up under this grant.

Reader's Score: 9

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 principles and central office structures described for this grant seem well integrated into the District's overall approach and theory of change. Leadership's commitment to this approach seems solid (p. 54). The applicant has been using this school turnaround approach to improve the academic performance of its bottom 10% of schools for seven years. The return on investment analysis tool to be developed by the evaluator is being commissioned on the assumption that this model will continue and that the applicant can use the information it generates to refine it. (pp. 55-56)

Weaknesses

This grant seems to be replacing the massive infusions of philanthropic funding over the last 6+ years that largely underwrote start-up costs to their small schools initiative. No real plan is presented for how the District will access this level of funding to keep turning around schools after year 5 (pp. 54-55). Given the number of schools in NYC, it is likely they will still need to continue this process. An analysis of state or local funding projections would be helpful to understanding the District's potential to sustain the work.

Insufficient detail is provided by the applicant to determine if the resources exist to continue the project beyond the grant period. No operating model or financial plan is provided for years 6 and beyond. The letters of support from identified partnering organizations do not indicate a commitment to working with the applicant beyond the grant period. It is also unclear how the portfolio management tool (p. 55) will sustain the project without the extensive management personnel and school operating support provided for in the grant budget.

Reader's Score: 5

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 management plan seems strong for scale-up within NYC (pp. 56-59). The coordinated set of working committees staffed by the applicant is a robust model for ensuring good communication across departments and among partners, and provides good oversight to the project. It also holds good potential for building commitment among the participants to the success of the project. The timeline provided in Appendix H attends to all the moving parts of this scale-up endeavor and is sufficiently detailed.

The project director's qualifications seem adequate to manage this project. Both the director and the other individuals assigned to the project and for whom bios are provided (Appendix C) have prior experience working for the applicant on new school development, including turnarounds, on a large scale.

The qualifications of the independent evaluator are good. The individuals on the research team have extensive experience in conducting rigorous, large-scale evaluations. The team also has experience in studying an array of educational issues relevant to this project's focus. (Appendix H)

Weaknesses

The management plan for scale-up outside NYC is not strong. While some discussion is provided on dissemination strategies, no provision is made for management and oversight of implementation in the identified cities. The partner identified by the applicant (CRPE) to oversee dissemination and scale-up beyond NYC does not have experience in managing large-scale school development. CRPE is a research organization with an academic orientation, not a technical assistance provider or a manager of schools.

A number of key personnel for the project (e.g., Director of New School Development and Director of New School Models, p. 59) are still to be

hired, so no resumes are provided. While detailed job descriptions are provided for each in Appendix C, it is not possible to fully assess the capacity of the applicant to implement this project without the actual resumes.

Reader's Score: 6

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

This proposal supports a strong college access focus, as evidenced by the attention to rigor and personalization (p. 6, 8,11); alignment with higher education expectations and 21st Century skills (p. 9); help students understand issues of college affordability (p. 1); provide support to students from knowledgeable adults (i.e., guidance counselors); and the integration of data-driven decision-making at every level. The new agreement with CUNY to improve NYC student performance (e.g. reduce the need for remediation and improve persistence) also suggests a strong commitment to this goal.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

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

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	13
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	11
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 Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	_____
TOTAL	105	24

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 2: 84.396A

Reader #2:

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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

New York proposes to use Scale-Up Grant support to continue the ongoing process to close less successful NYC Middle and High Schools and replace them with new smaller more successful schools.

New "Portfolio Schools" may be district schools or Charter schools.

In addition for direct support for new schools the proposal calls for supporting the process for identification and management of new schools, expanding a training program for principals, expanding software and data base services, providing contractual support for services in new schools, participation in a national Portfolio Schools network, and program evaluation. The clear statement of purposes links to a clearly organized

discussion of research support for elements of the program.

In Section B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect, the proposal cites some specific research related to each of the core elements of the proposal.

Use of Smaller Special Schools Research. Multiple studies presented using various study groups and various designs to show gains in past programs with similar attributes.

- Smaller Schools of Choice MDRC study, not yet public, provides strong quasi-experimental multi-year study showing positive results for SSC schools (Proposal p. e29).
- Charter School students in CREDO study matched feeder school and charter school students found higher standardized test scores and reduced achievement gap at charter schools. (Proposal p. e25).
- Charter School students in RCT study found higher achievement scores for charter schools than students from comparison schools.
- Career Academies study found positive impacts for career academies with small overall impact but substantial impact for students classified as high-risk (Proposal p. e28).
- Evidence from accountability system using regression discontinuity approach contrasting schools rated D or F with other students in higher rated schools made greater progress in math - mostly due to progress of 5th grade students. (Proposal p. e30).

Leadership

-Recent study of Aspiring Principals Program contrasts 86 selected APP principals with 334 matched non-APP principals showed students in APP principal schools made gains in ELA but not in math at elementary schools, no differences at high school.

Weaknesses

While the research presented is impressive, it is not a perfect match with the proposal which calls for the creation of both Middle Schools and High Schools.

The evidence does not directly link the role of the proposed small schools as replacements for specific failing schools or directly compare the success of students between matched schools or consider the potential impact of student attrition.

Details are not presented on the selection criteria used for groups compared in the not yet fully reported MDRC study along with the full details on the "lottery-like" procedures and how the ability of students to provide a prioritized list of potential schools or geographic characteristics might have impacted student placement. More detail was needed.

Numbers included in each comparison and effect sizes are not reported for a number of the studies summarized. This is a problem. With very large numbers you often get statistical significance with small effects.

Where school level analysis is the key to treatment, it is not always clear if all students in the school were included in the analysis. More detail was needed on the groups being compared and students included and excluded from the analysis.

The NYC study based on accountability data did not provide detailed information on the implementation of the model or explanation for the use of school grades. If the D and F grades were based on extreme achievement, alternate explanations of findings such as 1) regression toward mean, 2) lack of variation in test data for low performing schools, and the potential 3) curvilinear nature of growth across both groups needed to be considered and rejected.

Only one study actually includes a report of effect size. While there is not detail of the statistic used to report that effect size, the reported effect size does not appear to be large. It is important to actually provide effect size. It appears from this summary that effect sizes to be expected are moderate.

The leadership study reported would not be considered as "strong" evidence of the efficacy of the one element of the Aspiring Principals Program.

Reader's Score: 13

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

NYC proposes a complex and sophisticated evaluation design that addresses every major element of the proposed grant.

Critical variables and methods of data collection have generally been clearly specified.

Formative and process based evaluation of elements are sufficiently specified for training and product development elements of program.

Reporting and evaluation products are sufficiently specified.

Evaluation budget appears is sufficient.

Weaknesses

The close relation of the NYC schools and the evaluator (Research Alliance) is both a strength and weakness. On one hand, it appears to be a good operating partnership. On the other hand, much of the evaluation is based on data provided to the evaluator without any specified audit or quality control on the part of the evaluator. Lead evaluation staff has recently worked for NYC suggesting a potential conflict of interest. It would be helpful to have additional information on the independence of the evaluator.

The evaluation does not directly address how each of the specific program goals for increased student achievement will be addressed. It is not clear how the step-up nature of the grant will expand the number of schools proposed for closure and replacement.

It would be helpful if there was a clear specification of what would be considered success for each and every element of the proposal.

It is not clear how quickly the Research Alliance will develop new measures and modified measures, and how the modified measures will be introduced into the NYC data system. The evaluation places heavy reliance on existing NYC systems for school evaluation. Details are not provided on how open NYC is to modify the existing data system or on checks on the quality of the data to be provided by NYC.

Detail is not provided in the Impact Study Design that considers the statistical power of the analysis. This appears to be a potential problem with the number of participants that might be included at the individual school level.

It is not clear how individual schools will be selected for "reconstitution" and

the impact of factors such as geography and the availability of willing partners in the school selection process. The selection criteria may well affect the value and validity of the school progress report information used for group selection in the discontinuity regression analysis.

It is not clear that the use of the school progress report 0-105 scale or the selection of the "ten lowest performing schools in the list in a give year (Proposal p. e38) is appropriate. This becomes more of a problem as the original low scoring schools may be reconstituted or provided with additional resources.

For student level impacts, it is not clear what will be used for Middle School group selection. In addition, the procedure for the use of the HSAPS system and lottery like selection is not clear though the problem is recognized in the discussion of "operational complications" (Proposal p. 39).

Maturation and potential interaction of maturation on covariates in various programs is not considered.

Some NYC smaller schools such as College Board schools have not added all grades at one time. Grade levels and staff have been added over time potentially complicating comparison group development. Will some schools start to operate with all grade levels while others develop their student body over time? No information is provided on how differences in smaller school development will be taken into account.

There is an additional concern about the potential effects of making changes to the comparison groups identified when schools and the make-up of schools change as programs are discontinued or impacted by having students shift enrollment when more alternatives become available and when "non-lottery" assignments are available. There may be a solution to this in the large population of students available for comparison groups which would allow the initial selection of a very large sample and then reformation of the sample through some form of matching procedure. Use of a very large comparison group would also allow Monte Carlo sampling within the population to reconstitute the comparison group and provide replications which would increase the potential validity of the evaluation and strengthen the argument for an actual impact.

Additional discussion of the use of "historical" comparison groups would be helpful in that students selected on possession of similar covariates may not be similar if the universe from which they are drawn is different or has changed over time. For example, one suggestion in Manpower labor studies has been that comparison groups should be selected from similar geographic areas to ensure that the experiences of the groups are similar.

There are substantial expenditures included in the grant for the development of various Leadership Academy Programs (Appendix H). It is not clear how all of these relate to the new schools to be created and if they will be directly preparing principals for new schools. It would seem that a tracking of the participants of the leadership programs and discussion of the extent of placement of those participating in new small schools would be in order.

The evaluation is complex and includes a number of staff positions responsible for various aspects of the project evaluation as specified in Appendix H. It would be helpful to have an Assessment Timeline similar to the Project Management Timeline to ensure that design, data collection, instrument development, staffing, and all other activities are planned to take place so as to produce the needed information, analysis, and reports.

Substantial elements of the program call for the development of software, data management tools, reports, and training related to the use of data management tools and data. Again, a timeline to be used in assessing progress toward specific goals would be helpful.

Reader's Score: 11

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 11:01 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2010 0:22 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	12
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	13
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 Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	_____
TOTAL	105	25

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 2: 84.396A

Reader #3:

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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 MDRC study appears to be quite well designed, rigorous, and with an impressive sample size. Particularly valuable is the implementation of the "lottery" selection to produce random assignment minimizing internal bias. The sample size affords sufficient power to allow for examination of critical subgroups and their interactions. Likewise, the studies of diverse school models (pg 25) were well designed with random assignment and large sample sizes. The Rockoff & Turner study employed a sophisticated design and large sample size to establish the potential for failing schools to produce substantially improved results. These add up to an impressive number of well designed studies with significant statistical power capable of establishing very strong evidence of effectiveness.

Weaknesses

While the studies appear excellent, it is unclear to what extent the implementation will be consistent with the cited studies. Additionally, the results they report are problematic. We are looking for strong, important effects. The proposal refers to "large" effects but across all of the cited studies only reports one explicit effect size. While many results are reported as "large" the definition of large is unspecified. It is unclear if the basis of the categorization is Cohen's (1988) rubrics for classifying effect sizes, unspecified NYCDOE internal definitions, or undefined criteria of the grant writer. This is especially problematic since the one explicit reported effect size of .21 (pg 23) is characterized as large. Assuming that this is an effect size measured by Cohen's d (unspecified in the proposal), an effect of .21 is at the bottom of the small range rather than large. This renders the characterizations of other findings as "large" suspect. This is reinforced by findings with very large samples statistically significant at levels of $p=.04$ or $p=.05$. This level of statistical significance with large samples cannot be a large effect. The proposal stresses the large number of statistically significant results obtained. Yet, with very large samples it would be surprising not to obtain such significance. The significance is not as important as the magnitude of the effects and these are inadequately reported. Hence, it is difficult to determine if the impacts are real but negligible, substantial, or somewhere in between.

Reader's Score: 12

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 is a comprehensive formative and summative study with myriad measures answering three explicit and appropriate questions. The design is rigorous and the evaluation staff appears knowledgeable. The time frame is sufficient to allow for longer term evaluation rather than a simple snapshot. The plan addresses impacts at the school, student, and system level in a thoughtful and thorough way potentially permitting a rich analysis of the intervention(s). The plan employs sophisticated techniques including randomized controlled trials, regression discontinuity design, and

propensity matching. The focus on assessing the establishment of a "culture of data use" is valuable. The combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment is strong.

Weaknesses

The large number of measures and sub hypotheses while valuable has potential to be a "double edged sword". So many variables are being assessed that it is important to establish before the scale up a clear, concise definition of what constitutes success. The negative potential for such a smorgasbord of measures and analyses is to permit the "cherry picking" of positive results from an array of positive and negative results/outcomes. This can be allayed as a concern by a clear prioritization of the relative importance of the outcomes to be assessed.

The proposal indicates that a number of instruments will be developed for the evaluation (e.g., page 42, page 45). It would be preferable to employ measures with already established reliability and validity. Since new measures are being developed greater explanation as to the expected process for establishing satisfactory evidence of psychometric quality and the minimally acceptable psychometric standards would be helpful.

Reader's Score: 13

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: 07/03/2010 0:22 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/07/2010 11:15 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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	10
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	12
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	12
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	5
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	5
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	1

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	45

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 2: 84.396A

Reader #4:

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

This proposal is part of a district wide reform agenda that has as a major strategy the provision of options for secondary school students in low-performing traditional schools. It also seeks to enhance the capacity of the district to offer high-quality alternative secondary schools based on students' needs. Despite some shortcomings in the areas of project management and sustainability, the plan is innovative and ambitious.

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 unmet need in the New York City Public Schools is that the demand for small, alternative secondary schools with innovative programs, strong leadership, and the flexibility and autonomy to meet the needs of struggling learners exceeds supply. Partners with proven expertise can extend and accelerate the work of the New York City Public Schools particularly in the design and development of small, alternative secondary schools and in the development of new school leaders. While partnering is not new, giving up control of some schools to external providers and creating a within-the-district network of charter-like public schools is innovative. Very few districts in the country have created this internal capacity.

Other unmet needs addressed by this project are the low graduation rates, academic performance, and college completion rates of students at the high school level enrolled in traditional high schools in the New York City Public Schools.

Three project goals are presented with accompanying objectives. These include: 1) enhancing the infrastructure required to sustain and scale up new school models; 2) replacing failing schools with new models; 3) creating a replicable model for secondary school turnarounds. Five objectives are outlined and project plans for each objective are generally described. These are well aligned with the needs and priorities the applicant seeks to address. If carried out with fidelity and according to proposal timelines, the project should accomplish its goals.

Weaknesses

Since some of the work involved in establishing the new schools will involve developing new programs for training school leaders, this project combines scale up with developing new programs. Doing both simultaneously and well may present a challenge for the New York City Public Schools.

The project plan would have been strengthened by the inclusion of more detail and specificity in the actions described in each objective. For example, extending the New York City Public Schools Innovation Zone, an activity

under the objective - strengthening the level of personalization and rigor across all school models - is described in general terms as a "research and development" effort. Alignment between the activity, as described and the objective it is designed to meet is not presented with enough clarity to determine how personalization and rigor will be addressed through simply extending the zone.

It is unclear whether all of the proposed 150 new schools will be supported by the Investment in Innovation Scale up grant and how other district funds will be used to create conditions for success, such as locating facilities, maintaining operations, transporting students, providing food services, purchasing textbooks and instructional materials, etc. This could affect the strength of the applicant's expectations of achieving goals.

Reader's Score: 10

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 district, under its Children First reform agenda, has managed several phases of complex change and has the requisite experience called for in this criterion.

Academic indicators, as presented by the applicant, seem to demonstrate a modest, positive trend in student achievement as evidenced by an average increase of nearly 2 percent in student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading for Grade 4 students and a 7 percent increase overall in mathematics at Grade 4.

The district's efforts to recruit and train effective principals through the Leaders in Education Apprentice Program (LEAP) and the New York City Leadership Academy for assignment of school leaders to struggling schools indicate a commitment to making improvements in the area of recruitment and placement of high quality school leaders.

Weaknesses

It is difficult to analyze the data on student performance offered in support of this criterion because it is not presented in easily readable form. Graphs and tables would have provided more clarity and more compelling evidence to support the applicant's claims of significant improvement in the areas outlined in the criterion than straight narrative. For example, statistics are included on improved graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students, but no comparable data is presented for White and Asian students to gauge whether the achievement gap is narrowing.

Reader's Score: 12

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 capacity of the New York City Public Schools to scale up the number of Portfolio Schools to 150 and students served to 60,000 (estimated), using Investment in Innovation funds and other resources, seems reasonable because conditions for success have been built in the district. For example, the district has an \$11 billion capital fund for building new schools, well-established programs for teacher and principal recruitment and development, and a citywide school choice system. The applicant has coherently explained how these resources and initiatives will support the development of the new secondary school models.

Because the district will work with external partners including successful charter management organizations, the capacity of the district to bring Portfolio Schools to scale is further expanded.

The potential for replication of the Portfolio Schools Model, if successful in

the district, is both strong and feasible because the New York Public School system, as the largest school district in the country, has a wide range of factors that influence education, a highly diverse student population, and a breadth of problems and conditions that make it a good setting for implementation.

Mechanisms for dissemination include a district technology-based knowledge sharing system, an online community of practice organized by an academic research partner, the Center for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), as well as publications and research reports. These can and may be augmented by other district efforts to publicize the model.

Weaknesses

Scaling up the Portfolio Model to other large, urban districts through partners who manage schools in those districts or who operate on a national level may be too ambitious a venture until results, outcomes, and actual impact on student growth, achievement, and other indicators of student success are demonstrated.

The estimated cost per pupil for the scale up, \$1,294 per year decreasing to \$830 per year over the grant cycle, is based on the applicant's total Investment in Innovation grant request. Other costs that may be borne by the district, such as facilities, maintenance, transportation, food services, and supplies, books, and materials, may not have been factored in. This could increase the per pupil cost and affect both replication and scale up over time.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Letters of support, included in the Appendix to the application, indicate that the Portfolio Model has stakeholder support and approval. This is a strength because stakeholder support can translate into resources for continuation of the project beyond the grant cycle. Supporters include potential funders and other resource providers, including the state department of education, institutions of higher education, foundations, charter school management organizations, and community organizations.

The applicant claims that closing failing schools and opening new ones is a core strategy of the district's long-range agenda for school reform and improvement.

Training programs for principals and other school leaders pre-dated this application and will continue beyond the funding cycle.

Weaknesses

Analytic tools developed to assess need and to site Portfolio Schools in various boroughs within the city may not be a powerful enough vehicle to sustain this work over time. Budget projections beyond the grant cycle, an integrated all-funds approach and budget for the future, long-range district plans, and the commitment of foundations and philanthropic organizations would provide more compelling evidence of sustainability.

Letters of support from union leaders, government officials, parent organizations, and businesses were not included in the application. This would have strengthened the application by demonstrating a broader base of stakeholder support.

Reader's Score: 5

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 management plan is thoughtful. It consists of the Deputy Chancellor for Strategy who will serve as the Project Director, an overall Steering Committee for oversight and to keep the project on track, and four working groups supervised by the Project Director with expertise in each area of project implementation. Existing New York City Public Schools staff will also be deployed and eleven new staff members, reporting to the Project Director, will be hired to work directly with schools and partners for day-to-day management of the project.

The qualifications of the project director include experience in the management of large-scale and complex project management and program expansion.

The project director and key personnel for the independent evaluation appear to have the qualifications required for designing large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

A project management timeline is provided in the Appendix. Pre-determining a project timeline for implementation increases the likelihood that deadlines will be met.

Weaknesses

Steering Committee members may need to meet more frequently than four times a year, particularly because the project is so ambitious and because start-up issues may need more timely attention. Bi-monthly meetings of the four working groups may be too infrequent to stay on top of project development as well.

The relationship of the Project Director/Deputy Chancellor to the members of the Steering Committee is unclear. This could present problems of authority as the project expands.

It is unclear whether the eleven new hires will provide enough staffing for the project director as the project expands to 150 schools. Job descriptions for new hires do not require experience in large-scale project management.

Budget management and accounting responsibilities are not provided for in

the staffing plan.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Priority not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;**

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

Strengths

The project clearly addresses increasing college readiness for low income students and lists as one outcome improved college graduation rates. Ensuring personalization and rigor in each new school, as stated in the objectives of the project, requires mentoring provided by teachers and school staff as well as a strong core academic program aimed at preparing students for success in college. Issues of college affordability, the college application process, and financial aid are addressed one-on-one with students and parents.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Strengths

Priority not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

Priority not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/07/2010 11:15 AM

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/08/2010 3:38 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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	12
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	0
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	13
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	0
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	10
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	7
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	6
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	1

3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
4. Competitive Preference 8: Innovations That Serve Schools in Rural LEAs (0, 1, or 2 Points)	2	0
TOTAL	105	49

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 2: 84.396A

Reader #5:

Applicant: Board of Education of the City of New York -- ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation - ,Division of Talent, Labor, and Innovation (U396A100063)

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 proposal describes an innovative Portfolio model that addresses the unmet need of increasing student achievement in low performing urban schools; especially for special populations of students(e.g., students with disabilities, English Language Learners). In addition, there is a focus on providing a more rigorous curriculum designed to better prepare these students for college. The first six pages of the proposal paint a clear picture of the priorities and how these priorities are aligned with the goals and objectives of the proposed project.

The portfolio model that is being presented has not been widely adopted. This model has been operating successfully in New York City for the past seven years and the New York City Department of Education is hoping to expand this successful practice on a large scale basis both in the city and the nation.

The applicant provides convincing documentation highlighting the research demonstrating that less than 50% of students leave high school ready for college. This percentage is even lower for Black and Hispanic students. There is a need to provide at-risk students with more rigorous learning environments that give all students skills to become productive citizens.

A detailed outline of information is provided on page 7 and 8 as the "five key principles that distinguish the NYC model from others," including external capacity, leadership, collaboration, portfolio planning, and personalization and rigor. This adds to the support that this project is unique to any other.

The applicant is proposing to create a unique national model for school turnaround and emphatically details the critical elements of success for this model. Each of these criteria is defined and support is provided on pages 10-18 as to how the applicant expects these elements of success to result in achieving the goals, objectives and outcomes of the proposed project.

Weaknesses

The descriptors for the difference between models and strategies are confusing. It is difficult to decipher if the term referred to as Innovation Zone (iZone)are models or strategies, making it unclear as to what comprises an iZone model. Further the City's Achievement Reporting and Information System (ARIS) is mentioned but not clearly defined. It is unclear as to whether the ARIS is a database of information, a program, a strategy or a type of model being used as part of the Portfolio strategy. The City's Achievement Reporting and Information System (ARIS) model is mentioned

but not defined. The Leaders in Education Apprentice Program is mentioned, but the program's description is not clearly provided. It would have been helpful to have a glossary of these terms so that the functions of the named strategies/programs/models/systems would have been better defined.

It is also not clear as to how the success of the Portfolio model has been determined. There needs to be better documentation for how the outcomes have successfully been accomplished.

There is not a clear process for how these programs/models/ strategies will be put into place. A sequenced set of events (or Action Plan) needs to be in a written format so that the process for implementation is evident to all stakeholders to ensure that all are moving in the same direction toward the same goals and outcomes.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Not assigned to score Selected Criterion B.

Weaknesses

Not assigned to score Selection Criterion B.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Since 2005 the New York City Department of Education demonstrated significant gains in a variety of academic areas. Some examples are: math and reading for ELL students and students receiving special education services. In addition, the New York City Department of Education has significantly decreased the Black-White and Hispanic-White gap in math at grade 3 through grade 8 levels. At the high school level the graduation rate for Black students increased by 18 percentage points from 2005 to 2009.

The documentation provided on page e33 provides a quick snapshot of the New York City's Department of Education's experience with large scale projects. "Operating the largest school district in the nation, NYCDOE has seen significant improvements through the development of large-scale reforms." The New York City Department of Education has demonstrated in the proposal their experience with implementing large, complex and rapidly growing projects. There is documentation throughout the entire proposal that speaks to the large numbers of students, schools, teachers, principals, partners and parents that the New York City Public Schools has successfully reached through a number of large scale projects in order to sustain increases in student achievement and prepare high school students for the rigor of college.

The New York City Department of Education was able to seek out talented individuals and form partnerships that resulted in increased student achievement for schools that became part of projects such as Children First and the Portfolio School Model.

Weaknesses

The way the applicant presents data is confusing as to whether or not the percentage of graduates pursuing post-graduate education is increasing or decreasing. For example, the paragraph on page e35 is unclear: "For the Class of 2009, 45% of students, the largest percentage ever, earned diplomas within four years, up from 30% among the Class of 2005. NYC public schools are also sending significantly more students on to college. Fifty eight percent of the graduates in the Class of 2009 enrolled in college in the first fall semester after graduation. Additionally, 64% of graduates from the Class of 2008 enrolled in college within their first 15 months after graduation and 74% of graduates since 2005 have enrolled in college at any point after graduation."

Reader's Score: 13

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

Not assigned to score Selection Criterion D.

Weaknesses

Not assigned to score Selection Criterion D.

Reader's Score: 0

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

On pages 48 and 49, the applicant names well-known partners and provides an abundance of innovative programs that the partners have coordinated which resulted in increased student achievement and lowered achievement gaps for at-risk students. The fact that the applicant is partnering with these named organizations provides documentation for a strong success factor in bringing the proposed project to scale. The partners are nationally recognized and have easy access to national networks affording more opportunities to bring the project to scale at national, regional and state levels.

Because of the sheer size of the student population attending New York City Schools the Portfolio Model process is able to be used with a variety of partners, in multiple settings, with a variety of student populations, in the New York City area. This is also able to occur due to the commitment and the current funding received from the partner's philanthropic coffers.

The online, networking, publishing and conference strategies that are named on page e53 for dissemination provide activities that support successful implementation for bringing the project to scale within the New York City area and serving the 60,000 students proposed to be reached by the project.

The applicant clearly explains how the project costs are aligned with bringing the project to scale on page e53 when the applicant states "start-up and operational costs associated with serving the first 100,000 students are \$70,914,327; \$281,862,193 for 500,000 students and \$545,547,027 for 1,000,000 students with per student costs estimate at \$709.14, \$536.72 and \$545.55 respectively."

Weaknesses

There is a discrepancy as to how many students will be served by the project. On page e47, the proposal states "will transform the lives of 40,000 students

over the next 5 years." However, on page e52 the proposal states "given the total numbers of students to be served by the project (by the final year, this number is estimated to be 60,000)."

The proposal indicates that the New York City Department of Education has the financial resources to bring such a project to scale at regional, State and national levels. However it is not clear from the way the proposal is written if there is a clearly defined process in place to bring the project to scale.

The proposal does not explain a process for how the project will be replicated with fidelity. There are a number of well-known partners named as part of the project. However, it is not clear as to which partners will assume responsibility for where the replications will sequentially take place. There is no clear plan for which steps will occur first. For example: The proposal indicates that portfolio toolkits will be created and available to anyone interested in developing a portfolio district. However, there is no outlined plan for how this will occur by 2011 and what steps will need to take place in order for this activity to successfully come to fruition. There is no process described for a steering committee to come together to develop a process for organizing and creating the toolkits. The plan does not describe what these toolkits will look like and how the Department will assure and evaluate that the toolkits will successfully provide fidelity of practice and process for those who request and receive the toolkits. There is no plan in place to evaluate whether or not the toolkits will successfully replicate the project to the satisfaction of all the partners and stakeholders. There is no process in place to gather data to demonstrate that the Portfolio toolkit strategy or activity has met the expectations of the original outcomes or goals of the program. The description of the toolkit plan for replication of the project with fidelity does not have a process defined that will assure that it can be successfully brought to scale with fidelity at regional, State, and national levels.

Reader's Score: 10

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 proposal contains a detailed listing of multi-year financial and operating costs with documented support for sustaining the project from private organizations.

The grant proposal contains commitment from qualified partners.

The proposal contains an impressive listing of partners. There are resources available from philanthropic partners. One strong example is the \$11 billion in capital funds that is available to build new facilities. Having this amount of money available indicates strong support from generous partner organizations.

The applicant is planning for intensive staff development plans for principals who are involved in the project. As part of their training program principals will be indoctrinated with activities that portray and instill the project purposes so that the principals can then become trainer of trainers with staff in the Portfolio model schools. The ongoing professional development activities combined with dissemination activities will incorporate project purposes, activities, and benefits into the ongoing work of the applicant and partners and help to build capacity beyond the end of the five year project.

Weaknesses

Although the proposal recognizes City stakeholder support on page e54, letters of support from public school teacher unions government leaders, state educational agencies, mental health organizations, federal agencies, etc. are not provided in the proposal. Having commitments from district leaders and unions would provide stronger support for sustaining the project on a long-term basis.

The project has current documentation of adequate funding. However there is no plan to assure that the philanthropic donations from private enterprises will survive the economy to sustain the project beyond the five year incubation period. It is unclear as to whether the \$11 billion is being invested over the five year time period until all processes are in place or if the money will immediately be expended on facilities that have already been identified to be constructed. It is not clear if there is a detailed plan for timelines for expending the \$11 billion beyond a five year period.

Reader's Score: 7

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

Responsibilities, timelines and milestones for the sustainability and scalability of the project are defined in the project.

There is strong documentation that the project director and key personnel possess credentials for managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

The independent evaluator is very qualified to conduct experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.

Weaknesses

On page 56, the proposal indicates that a steering committee will meet "quarterly to review implementation milestones of the turnaround strategy, surface issues and opportunities." A project of this magnitude would need to meet more in order to assure the success of the project-especially for the start-up of the project.

There is not any mention of a committee to oversee budget and accounting activity, such as a Chief Financial Officer.

The applicant refers to bringing the project to State scale numerous times

throughout the proposal. However, there does not appear to be key personnel on the management team with affiliations to the New York State Department of Education. In addition, the application did not appear to include any public school state education officials that were part of the oversight or steering committees to assist with the management or organization of the project. The project management team would be able to function more efficiently if there was a liaison who is part of the management team and who can facilitate collaboration with the New York State Department of Public Education and remove bureaucratic barriers that could get in the way of sustaining and scaling the project to the State level.

The proposal does not address a public relations or articulation committee that would provide for vertical and horizontal dissemination of information to maintain stakeholder involvement and buy-in in order to sustain the project on a long-term basis.

The proposal accounts for 11 new hires, but there is no indication that the new hires will need to have large scale management experience.

Reader's Score: 6

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Priority is not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority is not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths

The project addresses the need to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate students from a post secondary institution. This is stated in the abstract on page e0, on page e1, and in the goals presented on page e18. The applicant aligns all goals strategies, and activities throughout the grant to provide a more rigorous curriculum so that students will be better prepared for a successful college experience.

Weaknesses

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

defined in this notice), for students with disabilities or limited English proficient students.

Strengths

Priority not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

Priority is not addressed.

Weaknesses

Priority is not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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