

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

Reader #1:

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

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

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

TOTAL 105 13

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #1:

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

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

Strengths

The applicant does a nice job of discussing important research studies related to different dimensions of the proposed project, and the applicant identifies several studies on online learning that appear to meet the criteria for Strong Evidence -- experimental or quasi-experimental design. The applicant is also to be commended for noting the limitations of the studies discussed. The findings of the studies related to online instruction are statistically significant, and several of the studies have moderate to large effect sizes.

Weaknesses

The significance of the research literature for the interventions of the proposed project is questionable because of lack of detail. Some, but not all, effect sizes are given. Although statistical significance might be assumed, it is not given for each study. In the case of the study on online Spanish instruction, the effect size is actually negative -- i.e., students in an online

Spanish class fare more poorly than students with face-to-face instruction. The applicant's proposed project includes a Spanish language course, so this negative finding is troubling.

The sample sizes in the studies cited are often described as being small, and this threatens the external validity of the studies.

In addition, it is not clear how closely the interventions in the studies cited match the interventions to be scaled up by the applicant. The studies do not focus on the specific courses that will be developed by the applicant. The studies provide some confirmation that online learning can be successful, but they provide no assurance that the courses the applicant will offer will be successful. The applicant's research support would have been much stronger if its own program -- or programs that were virtually identical -- had been the object of research studies with positive outcomes.

The O' Dwyer (2005) study cited by the applicant in support of its online professional development component is not, as the applicant claims, a randomized controlled trial or a quasi-experimental study. It is a pre- and post-treatment survey with no control group, and its outcomes data are purely participant self-reports. The applicant also refers (pp. 17-18) to several random assignment studies as part of the "e-Learning for Educators (defer) project, but there is inadequate information provided about the studies themselves. This is quite problematic, as the proposed project seeks to train admittedly "under-qualified" teachers (cp. 7) to provide online instruction; thus it becomes particularly important to provide assurance that the training protocol proposed can ensure adequate instructional quality.

The narrative is repetitive and not well-organized. The research cited is scattered throughout, and there is infrequent mention of statistical significance or effect sizes. It would have been helpful to have either a table summarizing the important details of the studies cited or to have a separate paragraph devoted to the discussion of each study that included the important information. There is insufficient information about the studies provided to ensure the reviewer that they truly meet the criteria for strong evidence required.

Finally, although value-added assessment is the "coin of the realm" and applicants are even encouraged to include this in their definition of teacher effectiveness, there is reasonable question whether essential elements of the teacher-student interaction -- and thus essential benefits of having a superior classroom teacher -- can be re-created online notwithstanding an equivalence in student achievement scores between online vs. face-to-face instruction. The reviewer did not penalize the applicant for not having a more inclusive and richer definition of teacher effectiveness that could have addressed the

possible deficits of an online teaching environment, but it is an important issue the applicant might consider in designing the project's teacher training and, especially, teacher assessment systems.

Reader's Score: 6

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

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

- (1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.**
- (2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that**
 - (a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -**
 - (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and**
 - (ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or**
 - (b) In the case of an eligible applicant that includes a nonprofit organization, the nonprofit organization has significantly improved student achievement, attainment, or retention through its record of work with an LEA or schools.**

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project is not possible, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.**
- (2) The extent to which, for either an experimental study or a quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as**

implemented at scale.

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

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

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

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

Strengths

The applicant intends to pursue an evaluation strategy that addresses issue of implementation and scalability, on the one hand, and the impact on teachers and students, on the other hand.

The applicant's proposal includes mechanisms for the dissemination of evaluation study findings to project stakeholders.

The evaluation proposal notes the intention to engage an external evaluator.

The applicant provides a thorough table of project objectives related to the evaluation that includes measures to be used and personnel responsibilities.

The applicant explains the quasi-experimental design for the project evaluation in reasonable detail, with particularly detailed data collection procedures.

Weaknesses

There is insufficient information about the nature of the evaluation of the online training that teachers of the online courses will receive. It is not clear, for example, that the outcome measures are valid and reliable.

It is not clear how the applicant will choose the comparison groups for the evaluation study and whether the sample chosen is representative of the population in the scale-up effort.

There appear to be inconsistencies in the table of Project Evaluation Details

(pp. 32 ff) concerning the use of the external evaluator, as well as other concerns about the rigor and independence of the evaluation. Why, for example, is the external evaluator not listed as being involved in ensuring that courses are aligned to common standards or in establishing the effectiveness of the online courses? Also, there is some question concerning the objectivity of the chosen evaluator (M.D. Roblyer). The evaluator is deeply enmeshed in the online learning field, which would clearly enhance her ability to understand the details of the proposed project but raises a question as to how unbiased she would be in the evaluation itself -- especially in the case of comparisons between online and face-to-face classes.

It is not clear what the budget is for the evaluation. The budget narrative allocates (p. e4) \$525,000 for an Outside Program Evaluator. And there is also a line item in the personnel section of the budget (p. e0) apparently for \$630,000 (exclusive of fringe benefits) for 2 Curriculum/PD Evaluation Program Analysts. Whether these analysts are part of the evaluation itself is unclear, and the reviewer could find no other funds allocated to the evaluation piece of the project.

In general, the evaluation design section is very difficult to follow. It is rambling, repetitive, and poorly organized, with information pertinent to the evaluation dispersed in other sections of the narrative. The disorganized narrative adds to confusion about the precise nature of the evaluation proposed, but it seems to be deficient in important respects.

Reader's Score: 7

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

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

(1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.

(2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated

success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project

director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and

(c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

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	15
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	10
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	7
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	5
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	3
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	0

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	2
TOTAL	105	42

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #2:

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

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 needs for the project are well articulated including the increasing need for highly qualified math, science, and foreign language teachers once the

American Diploma Standards are implemented which require four years of high school math and science.

The need for high quality teachers in the above mentioned areas continues to be a problem in rural schools as evidenced by the number of charter schools and states attempting to offer cost-effective on-line courses.

This project adds to the body of research regarding online courses by creating a model for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers using online courses as the medium for instruction.

The data regarding the number of students indicating an interest in online courses at 40% and those with the opportunity to enroll in such classes is 10%.

This project creates an environment of collaboration versus individually tackling the development and provision of courses online.

This project directly impacts the quality of education rural students can access. The online courses allow quality curriculum to be provided to students regardless of their disability, address, income, or race.

The goal of allowing "grass roots" autonomy at district level but addressing standardized content, assessment, pedagogy and student support is a strong aspect of the project.

Addressing 7 Carnegie Credits courses that require teachers who are in short supply (math, science, foreign language) provides equity of educational opportunities.

The strategies in the plan include development of courses; increasing the teaching pool to 2600 teachers of online courses; development of a model to evaluate the effectiveness of online instructors; and facilitation of collaboration among states, professionals, and LEAs.

This project provides the framework for measuring teacher effectiveness across LEA, state, and region.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 15

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 Wilson County Board of Education has been involved in the effective and engaging e-learning for Tennessee (e4TN) for a number of years. Their experience in this area has been to expand the network from 7 Local LEAs to 86 in 4 years.

Wilson County has experience administering grants such as the Gear Up grant and Tennessee Technology Literacy Technology Funding for 5 years. In addition, the Board has received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act award to expand online education in Tennessee which supports 4000 students in online education.

The creativity of this county is remarkable in that it utilized a program it termed "teachers to overcome borders" to offer online courses across educational delivery lines.

The data shows that student success with online learning has increased from 2006 to 2009 from 38% to 82% respectively which indicates the ability to make needed changes for success over time.

Data were provided that showed success of exceptional education subgroup as well as ELL. The data indicated that in a small subgroup of special education students (15) all graduated from high school. ELL students (20) passed the online program at 90%.

The data on success in math from 75% (target) to 93% may illustrate that when students are taught by high quality instructors in an environment where race, gender, and socioeconomic status are not visible, students perform at a higher rate.

The development of a "pioneering course development model" has allowed 26 online courses to be developed. The development of this model indicated the infrastructure this group has developed in order to scale-up this project nationally.

Of the 4000 students using the e4TN program, 80% of seniors passed the courses which contributed to an increase in graduation rates.

The previous work in this area has provided additional online teachers from 60 districts as trained online instructors.

Weaknesses

On page 41, the applicant indicates that ACT scores are improving each year but no data were provided. Provision of the data would show how close the students are to the national level.

The information on all students with subgroups disaggregated indicates that all students showed a decrease in the below proficiency percentage but no specifics were provided(p. 42).

Reader's Score: 10

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 project hopes to reach 52,000 underserved students (including in rural areas) in math, science, foreign language, and ACT Prep for College readiness. Past experience of this group indicates that with the addition of the quality partners, infrastructure, tiered implementation model, and personnel, it should reach this number.

The personnel involved in the project have impressive credentials to successfully bring this project to scale. Three individuals will lead the consortium; Dr. Wendy Oliver, original founder of e4TN, Mr. Dan Long, Executive Director of the Department of Assessment and Virtual Learning in Tennessee, and the Commissioner of Education for Tennessee.

Kim Clemmons will serve as the OC3 liaison and grant coordinator for this project. She has experience in federal programs, instructional technology, and 21st Century grants.

The partners included in this project add to the credibility and expertise of the individuals in this endeavor. Florida Virtual School, Georgia Virtual School, Gwinnett County Virtual School, North Carolina Virtual School, and South Carolina Virtual School will lend their expertise and implementation knowledge to the project.

Private partners include: Apple Professional Development; AT&T; Desire2Learn; and Randa Solutions who will provide expertise at a reduced cost to participants.

Weaknesses

One area that was excluded from the application was the cost per student and computation of costs for reaching 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students. Including these amounts would have strengthened the application. The dissemination aspect of this project does not reflect specifics or include

a timeline. A description of the "social media" to be used, "updates and reports published as appropriate", and the study to be published at the end of the five years does not provide enough information on the dissemination needed to support replication(p. 37).

Reader's Score: 7

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

Sustainability with this project is reflected in the metatagging system for the standards. In addition, SCORM compliancy increases the content portability of the project. Training of a state pool of qualified teachers able to teach STEM allows for the ongoing support necessary for this project. The provision of all curriculum and no recurring costs for textbooks provides for scale-up and long-term implementation without additional materials costs. There is broad support from stakeholders in the letters of support from all of the participating states and LEAs.

Weaknesses

The adequacy of the budget is difficult to ascertain due to a lack of sufficient details.
The sites included in the application have sufficient funding during the i3 fiscal cycle but there is no indication as to how the project will continue past the five year timeline.

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 lists the administrative structures and milestones for each of the five years with the dates and specific objectives to be accomplished.
Sustainability with the states and LEAs is built into the management plan as part of the framework of the project.

Weaknesses

The external evaluator is currently on loan to the Tennessee Department of Education from the Korean Military and he has strong credentials in assessment and research at the Tennessee Department of Education. He is the contracted individual who will be responsible for the evaluation of the project. It would be helpful to explain his experience in designing and conduction large scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

The quality of the individuals involved in the project is impressive but it is not clear as to who is ultimately responsible for the project. In order to provide clarity it would help to attach titles such as project director, etc. It was difficult to determine what roles the extremely qualified individuals would play in this project because the management plan did not list individuals responsible for the work.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Not addressed as a priority by the applicant.

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

Rural students will have equity in receiving higher level math and science courses that will increase their chances of being successful in college level work.

Weaknesses

The applicant does not address providing students with information on financial aid or application processes in order to enroll in college. Peer support for students is not an area mentioned in the application.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Not addressed as a priority by the applicant.

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

Students will have access to higher level math and science courses which, according to the data provided, will assist them in graduating from high

school and being successful in college/university.

Rural students will have equity in receiving higher level math and science courses that will increase their chances of being successful in college level work.

All students involved in the work of this project, now or in the future, will have an opportunity to enroll in the ACT Preparation course online to assist in success on the college entrance exam.

Online courses with qualified teachers will assist the rural students where LEAs have difficulty attracting and retaining staff that have the credentials and skills to teach math, science, and foreign languages.

The long term effects of the project will be a pool of qualified teachers capable of teaching higher level math, science, and foreign languages to students regardless of their geographical location.

Equity of educational quality will be available to rural students so as to be competitive with students from urban areas where LEAs may not have difficulty attracting teachers in these content courses.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2010 12:36 PM

Status: Submitted
 Last Updated: 07/02/2010 9:53 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

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	13
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	8
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	6
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	3
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	3
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	0

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	2
TOTAL	105	35

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #3:

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

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

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

Strengths

(1): The concept is to create a multi-state consortium to develop a regional virtual school. Absolute Priority 1--Supporting Effective Teachers and

Principals and provide access to students with high quality instruction from effective teachers. The concept is well thought out and includes good ideas to reach students in rural and urban areas.

(2): Goals and objectives are listed with strategies to achieve the goals, objectives and outcomes. The model development began in TN and strategies and collaborations have begun the development to expand the model across the state and region.

Weaknesses

(1): Within the stated objectives and strategies, there was not a succinct plan for how each state would work to award credit (or to accept) for virtual courses, nor was there an action step listed for agreement by partner states. While the concept is a good one, many states have implemented virtual schools. Florida has led the way and they are partnering with the applicant for this application.

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

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

(1): As fiscal agent (page e37 and 38) Wilson County has managed a number of grants and has an 8-year history researching the advantages of e-Learning.
(2ii): Data was presented related to achievement from 2006 to 2009. The application made a case for delivering effective teachers to rural areas and the ability of the model to increase graduation rates.

Weaknesses

(1): The performance evidence for the applicant was specific to state initiatives and there was no history provided of the consortium members

working together to achieve the goals and objectives of the proposal.

(2): Data were presented attesting to the achievement of students but the information was reported in generalities such as "the percentage of students' success has increased from 38% in Spring 2006 rising to 82% in Fall 2009" (p. e39). Data were represented in broad generalities and there was nothing to indicate that student achievement had increased. The information provided indicated there was an increase in passing rates but nothing in terms of actual increase in grade performance.

Reader's Score: 8

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

(1): 4TN was able to grow from one school district to 8. They want to reach 52,000 students by the end of the Scale-Up grant period.

(2): There is evidence that the partners have the relationships and partnerships to develop the regional virtual entity. Florida has lead many of the virtual initiatives and this state listed as a strong partner as are a number of states in the region.

Weaknesses

(1): The application was unclear as to how many students were projected to be served over the duration of the scale-up. 52,000 was a number listed but other discussions referred to more students in others states. The format for this aspect was not clearly articulated.

(2): The past experience of the partners and consortium is not evident in the application to substantiate the capacity to bring the project to scale on a

regional level. While there is evidence of good collaborations, they are still in the formative stages. The consortium is being formed and has no history of working together.

(3): Limited evidence was provided to support demonstrated success in multiple settings as a consortium. The model began within a school district and has expanded but the proposed framework and partner states is newly formed. While there is evidence of success, validation as a regional model needs further work.

(4): Information regarding this factor was not evident. Costs projections were not listed.

(5): The suggested process to disseminate was listed as using social media but the mechanisms were unclear.

(5): The suggested process to disseminate was listed as using social media but the mechanisms were unclear.

Reader's Score: 6

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

(1): Evidence from business partners and letters from consortium states indicate a willingness to continue after the duration of the project period.

Weaknesses

(1): The consortium is being developed for the purpose of building a regional model. The history of the partners working together was not articulated by the applicant nor was there a well-designed plan for multi-year funding at the close of the Scale-Up period.

(2): The TN school districts indicate that they will continue at the close of the grant period but as a consortium, but there was no evidence of multi-state commitment to incorporate the virtual school as part of ongoing work.

Reader's Score: 3

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

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

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

Strengths

(1): The management plan to achieve the proposed project was well-developed in terms of achieving the virtual school accessible to a consortium of states.

Weaknesses

(1): While qualifications of key personnel were good, those personnel also had other responsibilities and they did not have a history of working together. Because the overall consortium is new, details of the working organization to support the virtual school was still in the development stages.

(2): The evidence in the application did not demonstrate the overall qualifications for the proposed personnel to manage a project of this magnitude. Key personnel also had other responsibilities within their current positions which would make scale-up challenging in developing the new relationships necessary within each state.

(3): The qualifications of the independent evaluator were not clearly developed with regard to the evaluation of a model as comprehensive as the

multi-state consortium.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

The applicant did not address the preference in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

The preference was addressed but not fully. It did not address the methods by which students would be provided with information about college affordability and the application process.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

The applicant did not address this preference.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

The model proposed provides a cost effective approach to deliver high

quality instruction to rural school districts with high quality teachers.

Weaknesses

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/02/2010 9:53 AM

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

Reader #4:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	N/A	N/A
Selection Criteria		
1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
2. B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of Effect (up to 20 Points)	20	8
3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
4. D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 15 Points)	15	7
5. E. Strategy and Capacity to Bring to Scale (up to 15 Points)	15	_____
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	_____
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	_____
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	_____

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

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

TOTAL 105 15

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #4:

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

Selection Criteria

1. A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design (up to 15 Points)

In determining the need for the project and quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).

(2) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

Points)

The Secretary considers the strength of the existing research evidence, including the internal validity (strength of causal conclusions) and external validity (generalizability) of the effects reported in prior research, on whether the proposed project will improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. Eligible applicants may also demonstrate success through an intermediate variable that is strongly correlated with improving these outcomes, such as teacher or principal effectiveness.

In determining the strength of the existing research evidence, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) that its implementation of the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant, substantial, and important effect on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

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

Strengths

The applicant mentions five studies, however only two are reported and only one has strong evidence in support of the proposed project. A study by Bakia and Caspary comparing the achievement of students from the Florida Virtual School and from traditional schools used propensity scores to create matched groups. The study demonstrated that on-line students performed better on the study's outcome measures (pages 14 -15). However, there were no statistical significance levels, effect sizes, or sample sizes reported. The primary study (O'Dwyer, Carey, Kleiman) presented a quasi-experimental study that produced positive effect sizes of .37. The study was conducted in different geographical regions including four rural and two urban districts. Another quasi-experimental study (Rockman) was presented, but reported negative effect sizes. Most of the discussion in this section focused on the need for larger sample sizes for future research studies about online instruction. Another study conducted by E-learning demonstrated strong results regarding the effect of professional development on teacher content knowledge, online pedagogy and student achievement. This study was across

21 states and involved 369 teachers and 21,217 students. However no effect sizes or statistical significance levels were reported. TVAAS research was reported which was longitudinal and demonstrated significant findings about the relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement (page 12).

Weaknesses

The studies presented did not provide the necessary data to determine that the differences found are significant or the effect large enough to conclude that the study supports replicating the project with confidence. The details of the quasi-experimental studies were not provided in terms of specific statistical methods used to analyze the data or on which outcome measures the on-line students out-scored the traditional classroom students (Bakia and Caspary). The limited geographical area in which the studies were conducted does not support strong generalizability of the findings. The presentation on the O'Dwyer study indicates that the students were similar in the comparison classes, but does not describe if the students were matched on any specific factors or characteristics (page 18) to ensure equivalent groups. The Rockman study used matched comparison groups but reported negative effect sizes which are not supportive of the project. The e-Learning study did not indicate at what level (elementary, middle or high school) the study was conducted. Therefore the study may not represent the same context as that of the proposed scale up program.

Reader's Score: 8

3. C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant (up to 15 Points)

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

- (1) The past performance of the eligible applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.**
- (2) The extent to which an eligible applicant provides information and data demonstrating that**
 - (a) In the case of an eligible applicant that is an LEA, the LEA has -**
 - (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA, or significantly increased student achievement for all groups of students described in such section; and**
 - (ii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or**

increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and principals, as demonstrated with meaningful data; or

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths

The applicant is proposing a quasi-experimental evaluation with control groups formed using propensity scores (page 26). The evaluation will address the achievement of on-line students compared to traditional classroom students, student growth after taking OC3 courses, and the development and validation of a teacher effectiveness model. The evaluation will be across eight states increasing the generalizability of the results and

the external validity. It will use statistical analysis including logistic regression, data mining models, decision trees, latent profile analysis, and analytical hierarchical process. There will be a focus group to help determine which teacher characteristics should be included in the data set for evaluation and program operation purposes. There will be a weekly evaluation of on-line teacher performance to determine weights for variables that will be used in other statistical analyses. An independent evaluator will be hired and adequate funding to conduct an evaluation has been allocated.

Weaknesses

The evaluation plan includes statistical analyses, a matched comparison group, data base development to collect data, and data collection plans; however the evaluation plan is not coherent. Technical information on proposed instruments was not provided to show reliability and validity of the instruments. The applicant is not certain that the participating states have the necessary data to conduct the evaluation. The comparison of student achievement will be based only on one content area, Algebra I. The evaluation plan focused more on developing a project data base, modifying the project and developing research models for teacher effectiveness than evaluating the scale up process. The implementation evaluation does not appear to be about studying and documenting the implementation of the project components for replication but actually developing the program. This reviewer is not certain that the identified resources available are solely for evaluation.

Reader's Score: 7

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

In determining the quality of the strategy and capacity to bring the proposed project to scale, the Secretary considers:

(1) The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the capacity of the eligible applicant and any other partners to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.

(2) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

(3) The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated

success in multiple settings and with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project

director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

- (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;
- (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and

(c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

Status: Submitted

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

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

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	15
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	8
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	6
6. F. Sustainability (up to 10 Points)	10	3
7. G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (up to 10 Points)	10	3
Competitive Preference		
1. Competitive Preference 5: Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
2. Competitive Preference 6: Innovations That Support College Access and Success (0 or 1 Point)	1	0
3. Competitive Preference 7: Innovations To Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students With	1	0

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	2
TOTAL	105	37

Technical Review Form

Scale Up 1: 84.396A

Reader #5:

Applicant: WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION -- , - , (U396A100066)

Summary Statement

1. Summary State

The proposal is designed to create a multi-state on-line set of courses for students in the consortium. Based on previous experience in a local setting, the proposal desires to build the on-line curriculum and create an evaluation to determine the content's effectiveness.

There are many positive aspects of this proposal. The idea is an exceptional and innovative. It is designed as a way to increase student options for high content courses, while potentially offering students in many rural communities with opportunities previously not available.

The major issue surrounding this proposal is the lack of past performance to demonstrate the capacity to manage a large, complex and rapidly growing project. Funds are requested primarily to pay start-up costs, including the development of evaluation protocol. The use of funds for this purpose raises concerns about the scale-up of a large-scale, untested effort.

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 appears to be an unusual and perhaps exceptional approach to the priorities of the application- namely to offer on-line courses in a variety of settings via a consortium of southeastern states. The proposal does address an unmet need, namely the equity of high quality courses for all students, regardless of geographic location. There is no clear emphasis on meeting the needs of high-needs students but it is likely that these students will benefit from the overall proposal, as equity of opportunity is the hallmark of the proposal.

The goals, objectives and strategies are very clear and appear to be aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet. These goals and strategies appear to be well thought out for implementation of this project in multiple states.

Weaknesses

None found.

Reader's Score: 15

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 applicant has provided evidence of improving course completion and raising graduation rates from the time period 2006-2009.

Weaknesses

It is extremely difficult to assess the past performance of this concept, overall, as this proposal is one that is a new venture , with funds being requested to conduct research, create a way to measure the effectiveness of online learning, provide new courses aligned to the Common Standards and provide professional development to teachers. The applicant appears to have had previous performance in local schools, but not in implementing a large, complex project.

The applicant has not provided evidence of significantly improved student achievement, as once again this is a project to create new approaches to online learning. Evidence has been cited for improved course completion and graduation rates, but the focus on achievement data was not present. Previous academic studies of the connection between online learning and student achievement are presented, with the results being limited and inconclusive. However, these studies do not apply directly to the applicant's specific work in this field.

Reader's Score: 8

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 number of students proposed to be reached is up to 52,000 underserved rural and other students in mathematics, science foreign language and ACT preparation. Additional references throughout the proposal refer to different

categories of students to be served by different activities, but no other quantifiable number could be found in the proposal.

Weaknesses

There is little or no evidence to establish the applicant's capacity to bring the proposed project to scale. As mentioned previously, this proposal is to create a new initiative around online learning, and while parts of the activities have been tried before, most of the strategies are newly created. The history of the organization serving as lead applicant, Wilson County BOE, is a local school system that is a member of the consortium.

The applicant did not provide cost estimates to reach 100,000, 500,000 or 1,000,000 students.

There is little discussion of dissemination other than mention of strategies such as social media, monthly online meetings and quarterly face-to-face communication among project stakeholders. Dissemination appears to be focused internally rather than externally in ways that would support replication.

Reader's Score: 6

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 information on support for broad stakeholders is thorough and provides ample evidence of public and private involvement and support. This commitment is important to sustaining the project over time.

Weaknesses

There is little or no discussion of the applicant's demonstrated availability of resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. The section of the grant on sustainability is composed of two paragraphs that describe various ideas around the project but do not directly address the applicant's ability, or interest, in maintaining the project after funding ends.

There is little or no information provided regarding the incorporation of project purposes, activities or benefits into the ongoing work at the end of the grant period.

Reader's Score: 3

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 provides a level of evidence that the plan will help to achieve the objectives of the proposed project. Evidence on timelines, activities and people responsible supports the adequacy of the plan.

Weaknesses

There are clear goals as outlined in the first category, but a management plan around personnel, resources, budget and other tasks is simply not provided in this proposal.

The personnel, including the director and key project personnel, appear to

be qualified with relevant training and experience. However, given the fact this proposal is to scale-up an entirely new venture, it is difficult to assess how well the personnel listed can manage a large, complex and growing project such as this one.

The qualifications of the personnel involved in evaluation are not discussed, as the proposal repeatedly refers to creating the evaluation through the grant.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference

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

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

The competitive preference was not addressed in this proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

K-12 students that

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

The connection to this priority relates to servicelearning and a focus on juvenile offenders. The information contained in the proposal does not fully meet the requirements of Preference #6.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Strengths

Weaknesses

This proposal does not address this competitive preference.

Reader's Score: 0

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

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to focus on the unique challenges of high-need students in schools within a rural LEA (as defined in

this notice) and address the particular challenges faced by students in these schools. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or improve teacher and principal effectiveness in one or more rural LEAs.

Strengths

The proposal to expand online learning in a variety of states, including many rural states, is a clear indication this competitive preference has been addressed.

Weaknesses

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

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