

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 84.411B Panel - 2: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (U411B110072)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

This innovative grant plans to expand its mentoring program for new teachers to reach an additional 850 teachers in urban and rural districts. The comprehensive model focuses on training and supporting early career teachers to increase teacher effectiveness and increase student achievement. The project is research-based, has strong support from state and local partners, includes a strong management plan and includes area specific implementation plans. Although some revisions are suggested for cost effectiveness, the model includes an exceptional approach for mentoring teachers and the project has great potential for success.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the project. In determining the need for the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(3) 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.

Note Linking Magnitude of Effect to Presented Evidence: The Secretary notes that the extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project is relevant to addressing the third factor of Selection Criterion A and, therefore, will be considered by the Secretary in evaluating the importance and/or magnitude of the impact expected to be obtained by the proposed project.

Strengths:

(1) The proposed mentor program aims to expand a successful model program to reach an additional 850 early career teachers with a potential of creating higher student achievement in rural and urban school districts. The magnitude of this need is well documented with state demographic data which supports shortages and high turn-over of teachers, the need for increasing student achievement of Alaska Native students and providing training and support for special education teachers (pg. 1 - 2). This component also included district standards based assessment results for all student subgroups (pg. 4 - 5) and research-based data supporting the need for a model program to retain first year teachers.

(2) This proposal links the absolute priority directly to the model project for expanding a mentoring program for new teachers. This innovative project proposes to increase student achievement and increase retention of

early career teachers. A needs assessment of previous professional development initiatives provided the need to adopt the New Teacher Center Model. The exceptional approach includes targeting the program's model to meet teacher's and student's needs in the Alaskan setting (pg. 6).

(3) There are many mentoring programs for teachers however this project is the only one that is funded by the state, is non-mandated and includes a full release component (pg. 9). Extensive data collection from the current program supports the need to expand this model to urban schools which will serve more special education and LEP students. The rigorous research demonstrates project accountability, successful program development and the potential for closing the achievement gaps (Appendix D).

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

(2) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

(3) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Note: The Secretary considers cost estimates both

(a) To assess the reasonableness of the costs relative to the objectives, design, and potential significance for the total number of students to be served by the proposed project, which is determined by the eligible applicant, and
(b) To understand the possible costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach the scaling targets of 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students for Validation grants. An eligible applicant is free to propose how many students it will serve under its project, and is expected to reach that number of students by the end of the grant period. The scaling targets, in contrast, are theoretical and allow peer reviewers to assess the cost-effectiveness generally of proposed projects, particularly in cases where initial investment may be required to support projects that operate at reduced cost in the future, whether implemented by the eligible applicant or any other entity. Grantees are not required to reach these numbers during the grant period.

(5) 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 Validation grant.

Strengths:

(1) This grant proposal includes a Validation Logic Model (pg. 17) which provides a road map for the projects' goals, problems, research questions, plans and outcomes. The actions of the project are aligned with goals and objectives while the proposed outcomes include measurable results. The Logic Model is well designed and provides a useful tool for project participants.

(2) This grant project plans to train 850 early career teachers and impact 63,750 students (pg. 18). The cost effective project includes the use of distance technology to reduce high travel costs, allocates 8% of the project's budget for early career teacher training and the LEA's will cover the salary for their local mentoring coordinator in year five of this grant (pg. 18).

(3) The model project is based on current research and includes the New Teacher Center Model (pg. 6) which is a data-driven model and includes a full time internal researcher with responsibility for gathering data and using formative assessments for continuous improvement (pg. 19).

(4) The applicant estimated the cost of the project although the required increased number of students was unrealistic for this area. Although the annual cost per student was high, the project had strong fiscal support from the state and local districts.

(5) This project has achieved past success which is demonstrated by the need for expansion and the support from state and local partners. This well developed model is designed for sustainability and has great potential for continued success.

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

(2) Although this project allocated funding for distance technology, the budget included a large allocation for personnel travel. Explanations were included for the high cost of travel to rural areas, however the use of webinars, skype and teleconferencing could provide ways to implement a more cost effective project.

(3) This grant proposal included on-going data collection and formative assessments, however external research and best practices for mentoring programs was not included. Because this project is based on the New Teacher Center Model, supporting research for implementing this model would strengthen this component. Emphasis was placed on fully releasing mentors from their teaching duties to participate in this project. Supporting research is needed to validate this procedure which is both disruptive to student learning and very costly.

(4) The cost per student for this project was high based on operating and start-up costs (Budget Narrative). Revisions to personnel, contractual and travel costs could lead to a more cost effective budget and the inclusion of online systems and teleconferencing could lower budget costs.

(5) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 21

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or a well designed quasi-experimental study.

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

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

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

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and (2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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 complex projects.

(3) 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

(1) The well developed management plan includes three teams to implement this model project. The Policy Design Team, Evaluation Team and Leadership Team are represented on the Advisory Committee and include members that are highly qualified and have specific project responsibilities (pg. 34 - 35). Project timelines and benchmarks provide a well organized plan to implement a successful project.

(2) The strong qualifications of the project leaders are noted in the attached resumes and the past success of this project demonstrates the skilled organization and management of the project leaders. (Appendix F)

(3) The well designed proposal combined with state and local support has great potential for successful implementation. The potential for future expansion and replication in other areas is great.

Weaknesses:

(1) Although strong plans were in place for implementing this project, the project timeline during the first year includes very few activities. The addition of teaching training and a strong integration of this project during the first year would strengthen this proposal.

(2) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

(3) No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 24

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. Competitive Preference Priority 7 - Innovations that Support College Access and Success (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 8

1. Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (zero or one 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:

No strengths were noted in this section.

Weaknesses:

Although this priority was embedded throughout the grant both the needs of LEP students and Special Education students were addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 9

1. Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Improving Productivity (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcome per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in this notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

This innovative model will improve productivity by recruiting, hiring and training new teachers.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. Competitive Preference Priority 10 - Technology (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 9/8/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 84.411B Panel - 2: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (U411B110072)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the project. In determining the need for the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(3) 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.

Note Linking Magnitude of Effect to Presented Evidence: The Secretary notes that the extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project is relevant to addressing the third factor of Selection Criterion A and, therefore, will be considered by the Secretary in evaluating the importance and/or magnitude of the impact expected to be obtained by the proposed project.

Strengths:

Scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

No Comment

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Note: The Secretary considers cost estimates both

(a) To assess the reasonableness of the costs relative to the objectives, design, and potential significance for the total number of students to be served by the proposed project, which is determined by the eligible applicant, and
(b) To understand the possible costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach the scaling targets of 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students for Validation grants. An eligible applicant is free to propose how many students it will serve under its project, and is expected to reach that number of students by the end of the grant period. The scaling targets, in contrast, are theoretical and allow peer reviewers to assess the cost-effectiveness generally of proposed projects, particularly in cases where initial investment may be required to support projects that operate at reduced cost in the future, whether implemented by the eligible applicant or any other entity. Grantees are not required to reach these numbers during the grant period.

(5) 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 Validation grant.

Strengths:

Scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

No Comment

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or a well designed quasi-experimental study.

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

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

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

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and (2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

- " Exceptional work. This presentation shows extensive and impressive depth. The multiple designs are nicely laid-out and a strong analysis of potential threats is provided.
- " Figure 7, starting on page e44, provides a clear and compelling illustration of how the various data collection and analyses methods are directly tied to key research questions. The timelines description is also helpful in seeing how the research will be conducted in a timely manner.
- " The external evaluator, Education Northwest, has collaborated with the ASMP group to prepare this evaluation and they are highly qualified to conduct this work. The discussion on e53 about how this collaboration enhanced the proposed evaluation design & major activities is important and appreciated.
- " The high quality of this evaluation design compellingly suggests high replication potential for other districts and states.
- " The plan for offering stipends to teachers who participate in the project control group displays important thought and sensitivity.

Weaknesses:

- " None.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (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 complex projects.**
- (3) 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.**

Strengths:

Scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

No comment

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. Competitive Preference Priority 7 - Innovations that Support College Access and Success (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 8

1. Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 9

1. Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Improving Productivity (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcome per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in this notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. Competitive Preference Priority 10 - Technology (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 9/14/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 84.411B Panel - 2: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (U411B110072)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

NO COMMENT

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the project. In determining the need for the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(3) 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.

Note Linking Magnitude of Effect to Presented Evidence: The Secretary notes that the extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project is relevant to addressing the third factor of Selection Criterion A and, therefore, will be considered by the Secretary in evaluating the importance and/or magnitude of the impact expected to be obtained by the proposed project.

Strengths:

NO COMMENT

Weaknesses:

NO COMMENT

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Note: The Secretary considers cost estimates both

(a) To assess the reasonableness of the costs relative to the objectives, design, and potential significance for the total number of students to be served by the proposed project, which is determined by the eligible applicant, and
(b) To understand the possible costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach the scaling targets of 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students for Validation grants. An eligible applicant is free to propose how many students it will serve under its project, and is expected to reach that number of students by the end of the grant period. The scaling targets, in contrast, are theoretical and allow peer reviewers to assess the cost-effectiveness generally of proposed projects, particularly in cases where initial investment may be required to support projects that operate at reduced cost in the future, whether implemented by the eligible applicant or any other entity. Grantees are not required to reach these numbers during the grant period.

(5) 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 Validation grant.

Strengths:

NO COMMENT

Weaknesses:

NO COMMENT

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or a well designed quasi-experimental study.

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

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

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

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and (2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

1. An appropriate research design (randomized control trial) and sampling technique (random assignment of a treatment/control group) was selected (p. e43, e46, e47, e53).
2. Key research questions and the proposed methods for addressing each one was provided (p. e43-53). Figure 7 provides a detailed chart of each research question coupled with the type of evaluation the question will contribute to, the variables that the question is going to measure, the data sources that will be collected for the question, and the type of analysis that will be conducted to answer the question (p. e44-46).
3. The evaluation plan includes the purpose and details on the implementation/impact evaluation and the exploratory analysis (p. e43). A detailed sampling plan for each was provided (p. e47).
4. A synopsis of the data collection plan was provided and included multiple data sources (p. e47-48).
5. A detailed data analysis plan for each of the research questions was provided (p. e48-50).
6. Potential research limitations were discussed and what would be done in an attempt to minimize their effects (p. e50-51).
7. A graphic logic model was provided detailing the research problem, along with the program goal, strategy, research questions, project plan, and outcomes (p. e37).
8. The project plan will be assessing the fidelity of implementation and providing information that future implementers will need to replicate or test the program in other settings (p. e52-53).
9. The evaluation plan provides sufficient information about the key elements and approach to the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.
10. The proposed project plan includes evidence of sufficient funding and staff to carry out the project evaluation effectively (p. e53, e163).
11. Short biographies and curriculum vitas displaying the qualifications of the key external program evaluators were provided (p. e57-58, e117-122). A brief description of the role of the evaluation team was also provided (p. e54).

Weaknesses:

1. No mention was made as to the specific variables being controlling for (p. e48-49).
2. No mention is made as to how the student achievement scores will be standardized across the grades and if pre-scores (previous year scores) will be controlled.
3. No mention was made as to how the qualitative data would be analyzed and steps used to ensure validity of the findings.

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(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 complex projects.

(3) 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

NO COMMENT

Weaknesses:

NO COMMENT

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. Competitive Preference Priority 7 - Innovations that Support College Access and Success (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 8

1. Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 9

1. Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Improving Productivity (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcome per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in this notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. Competitive Preference Priority 10 - Technology (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 9/14/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 84.411B Panel - 2: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (U411B110072)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the project. In determining the need for the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(3) 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.

Note Linking Magnitude of Effect to Presented Evidence: The Secretary notes that the extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project is relevant to addressing the third factor of Selection Criterion A and, therefore, will be considered by the Secretary in evaluating the importance and/or magnitude of the impact expected to be obtained by the proposed project.

Strengths:

A (1) The applicant included ample evidence to support the magnitude of need in Alaska regarding teacher shortage, achievement gaps, language challenges, and discrepancies in graduation rates for Native Alaskans and Special Needs students.

Not only did the grant document the shortage of teachers, but the high turnover rate (approximately 10% - pg 1). Additionally, the turnover rate of special education teachers was reported to be 52% after three years.

The LEA partners represent a significant percentage of the Alaskan student population and employ 70% of the teachers (pg. 2).

Academic data that supports need includes:

One-third of the Anchorage students do not graduate on time (pg. 2)

122 schools are categorized as Level 2 or higher for Title I Improvement (pg. 2)

Diverse populations with nearly 90 languages represented in Anchorage (pg. 3)

Academic achievement gaps for Limited English, Special Education, and Native Alaskan is significant with as much as 40% gaps (pg. 4)

A (2) There has been a focus on retaining special education teachers using SIG funds with research reporting an 80% retention from the subsample for the program (pg. 2).

They are using a research-based mentoring program as their model, New Teacher Center model (pg. 5). The commitment to a two year mentoring experience demonstrates an exceptional approach as well as providing the mentors a full-time position and limiting the number of new teachers they will be mentoring.

The fact that the ASMP will target certain areas that have particular needs will benefit rural schools, special needs teachers, and teachers in schools with a large Native Alaskan population.

The UGO project plans to expand the program to the four largest urban school districts, their LEA partners (pg. 6).

The quote from the teacher was a nice touch and really illuminated the exact reason this program is important (pg. 7).

A (3) The state support given to the ASMP program demonstrates the importance of the program and benefits based on previous data collected over the past seven years (pg. 9). This program is designed to help the urban schools, whereas the previous state supported program was focusing on rural schools.

The use of focus groups, follow-up interviews, online surveys, and data collection on retention rates for teachers represented the research provided that is based on Alaska's unique circumstances.

A research literature summary was included in Appendix D as well as the article on Mentoring to Student Achievement in Alaska: Results and Policy Implications by Barbara L. Adams which concluded that the ASMP is making a difference in the rural communities of Alaska.

There is an honest and thorough inclusion of research that focused on a variety of scenarios using mentoring programs, which has influenced the direction of the ASMP UGO project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - (1) 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, and**
 - (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.**
 - (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**
 - (3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.**
 - (4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.**

Note: The Secretary considers cost estimates both

(a) To assess the reasonableness of the costs relative to the objectives, design, and potential significance for the total number of students to be served by the proposed project, which is determined by the eligible applicant, and (b) To understand the possible costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach the scaling targets of 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students for Validation grants. An eligible applicant is free to propose how many students it will serve under its project, and is expected to reach that number of students by the end of the grant period. The scaling targets, in contrast, are theoretical and allow peer reviewers to assess the cost-effectiveness generally of proposed projects, particularly in cases where initial investment may be required to support projects that operate at reduced cost in the future, whether implemented by the eligible applicant or any other entity. Grantees are not required to reach these numbers during the grant period.

(5) 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 Validation grant.

Strengths:

B (1) The applicant included a logic model (pg. 17) that provided a clear goal, the strategy to be used, research questions, a plan of action, and desired outcomes. The strategies and actions are aligned to the absolute priority of improving teacher effectiveness, but takes it further with a focus on teacher retention and student achievement.

The logic model and previous discussion on the New Teacher Center model as well as the commitment to full time mentors with a low mentor to new teacher ratio should provide the project a strong chance of success.

B (2) The majority of the costs are reasonable and focused on supporting the goals, strategies, and actions of the grant. The budget narrative is very clear and provides good detail regarding the breakdown of expenditures. Exceptional expenses were justified by providing additional information such as flight costs to rural areas.

B (3) The services described in the application are based on the most current information and research available to this program, because it is based on previous experience and evaluations from the ASMP program that has been in place. Using the NTC mentor training provides up-to-date knowledge on how to mentor and support effective teaching with a focus on new teachers (pg. 19).

The applicant references a review of professional development models on the Doing What Works website that ten of the ASMP mentors looked over to determine areas that would meet their needs. These resources are research based and sponsored by the Department of Education (pg. 20).

As stated earlier, the applicant also included a list of resources and research-based articles that have been used in the process of developing the ASMP UGO project (pg. e69-e75)

B (4) The applicant does include a detailed analysis of the scaling up of the project to 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

B (5) The data does have positive impact on student achievement and is improving retention rates based on previous studies with the rural schools that participated in the ASMP program.

Additionally, the State of Alaska legislature has proven to be supportive for the last seven years, therefore there is an expectation that they will continue to provide the funding (pg. 21).

Weaknesses:

B (1) No weaknesses found based on this specific criterion.

B (2) There is some confusion as to why this grant has budgeted costs for rural mentors when it was stated back on page 6 that ASMP will maintain current funding level to rural schools, while the UGO project will expand services to the four largest urban school districts.

On page e161 in the budget narrative on travel for rural mentors, \$25,000.00 per person per year x 8 people x 5 years = approximately 1 million dollars that is budgeted for rural mentors' travel.

There is a reference to adding 8 rural mentors at \$80,000.00 a year, which means another 8 x \$80,000.00 x 5 = 3.2 million in salaries (assuming the \$80,000.00 includes their fringe (pg e163).

At the same time, the budget includes information that only 14 mentors will be used at the four partner urban LEAs (some of which are not budgeted every year and none are budgeted for year one) (pg e166-171). If these four schools employ 70% of the teachers in the State of Alaska (pg. e22) and this grant proposes to focus on urban schools, then 14 mentors for 70% of the teachers versus 8 mentors for the other 30% (rural) does not seem reasonable.

B (3) No weaknesses found based on this specific criterion.

B (4) No weaknesses found based on this specific criterion.

B (5) It is unclear if the data from the ASMP rural schools is enough to warrant the amount of money that would be needed to provide enough mentors for the urban schools.

The cost of keeping the mentors in the urban schools on a full time basis may present a problem for districts, if the school districts faced reduced funding from the State of Alaska.

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or a well designed quasi-experimental study.**
 - (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
 - (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.**
 - (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and (2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - (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 complex projects.

(3) 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

D (1) A management plan is included that provides a timeline, who is responsible, and what those responsibilities are in each major area of leadership. A description of each leadership team is provided with some narrative as to the teams' responsibilities (pg. 34-35).

D (2) Key personnel are highly qualified and have extensive experience in their areas of expertise. The reviewer determined that the resume listed on pg. e95 belonged to [REDACTED] although his name was not listed. The format and the information provided in this resume were helpful in more fully understanding the program responsibilities.

Descriptions provided in the budget narrative were also helpful in understanding the personnel positions and the responsibilities tied to each position (pg e159).

The use of the external evaluator observing the Policy Team and District Leadership Team will be useful in fully understanding what is expected of the evaluator and what types of data the teams could use to help them make better decisions based on the data and evaluation reports provided by the external evaluator (pg. 34).

D (3) The MOUs from the partner LEA schools were provided as part of the grant application. ASMP UGO has the support of the State of Alaska Legislature and the University of Alaska. The program has a positive and successful history within the rural schools and has the capacity to bring the same level of success to the urban schools through the use of the mentoring program for new teachers.

Based on the previous support given by policy makers, the evidence provided in this grant, and research data available from the ASMP, the capacity to scale up and sustain this program should be feasible.

Weaknesses:

D (1) The timeline is presented in such a way as to indicate that the spring of the 1st year (grants are being awarded in January, 2012) will not have any specific activities or actions. Considering that this is a program that has been in place in rural schools for the past seven years, the management plan indicates that it will take a year and half to prepare the mentors for the urban schools (pg. 35). A quicker timeline under the circumstances seems reasonable to this reviewer.

D (2) One of the key positions, Program Coordinator, which is the full time position that has a majority of the responsibility for the implementation, training, and work with the evaluators, is yet to be determined at this time (pg. 57). Having this person in place from the inception of the grant application would have been beneficial to a quicker start to the implementation of the program. Being operational and having teacher mentors available in August of 2012 would have delivered a much quicker impact to students and teachers.

D (3) No weaknesses found in the area of criterion.

Reader's Score: 24

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (zero or one 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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. Competitive Preference Priority 7 - Innovations that Support College Access and Success (zero or one 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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 8

1. Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (zero or one point)

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

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

Strengths:

The NTC model provides special training to new teachers that will help them to meet the needs of students with disabilities and LEP students.

Providing consistencies in the life of special needs students is extremely important to their progress, therefore, improving the retention rate of special needs teachers will impact student achievement.

The data provided demonstrated a high need with Native Alaskans in several areas.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 9

1. Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Improving Productivity (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcome per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in this notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

As stated in the grant application, the amount of time and money that goes into the process of recruiting and hiring a new teacher is significant. The amount of time that is used to train new teachers and help them become familiar with the school's system as well as the impact on students, both provide valid justifications for retaining teachers. The ASMP UGO program has the potential to impact a high needs area for students and teachers. Giving those new teachers multiple methods of support for two years will provide much needed support in many areas of concern for new teachers. The indirect effects to productivity may not all be measureable.

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. Competitive Preference Priority 10 - Technology (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/15/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 84.411B Panel - 2: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: University of Alaska Fairbanks (U411B110072)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the project. In determining the need for the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

(3) 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.

Note Linking Magnitude of Effect to Presented Evidence: The Secretary notes that the extent to which the proposed project is consistent with the research evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project is relevant to addressing the third factor of Selection Criterion A and, therefore, will be considered by the Secretary in evaluating the importance and/or magnitude of the impact expected to be obtained by the proposed project.

Strengths:

. The Applicant adequately describes the project s needs: The Alaska Native students perform lower than any other demographic group on standardized student achievement test in all academic areas, cited by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Report to the Public. Shortages in teacher workforce coupled with high turnover especially in the rural schools affects student s achievement in subgroup populations (Alaska Native, Limited English Proficiency, and Special Education), which are highly representative in the four school districts participation in this project, and the graduation rates for these students is well below the district level (See Figure 1, page e-22, Figure 2 and 3 page e-23, Figure 4 and 5 page e-24 and 25

2. The Applicant proposed an exceptional approach to the priorities identified for the grant competition. Plans are to implement the Statewide Mentor Project which provides a New Center Teacher Model that develops a comprehensive professional development to support early career teachers in their first year of teaching (page e-25). This model is targeted to teachers who are working with Native Alaskan children and families who reside in rural areas.

3. The Applicant indicated the need to expand the programs goals to Alaska s urban school district that are experiencing some of the same unique needs and challenges as the rural schools.

4. The Applicant provided evidence of updated studies conducted by the project which related to mentoring teachers and the New Teacher Center Model (See Figure 6 Matrix of Prior Related Research Studies page e-317. Further research studies addressed the importance of project needs for funding the project and developing a teacher mentoring program.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Note: The Secretary considers cost estimates both

(a) To assess the reasonableness of the costs relative to the objectives, design, and potential significance for the total number of students to be served by the proposed project, which is determined by the eligible applicant, and
(b) To understand the possible costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach the scaling targets of 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students for Validation grants. An eligible applicant is free to propose how many students it will serve under its project, and is expected to reach that number of students by the end of the grant period. The scaling targets, in contrast, are theoretical and allow peer reviewers to assess the cost-effectiveness generally of proposed projects, particularly in cases where initial investment may be required to support projects that operate at reduced cost in the future, whether implemented by the eligible applicant or any other entity. Grantees are not required to reach these numbers during the grant period.

(5) 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 Validation grant.

Strengths:

1. The Applicant s goals are ambitious, clear and specific with strategies and activities to accomplish the project s goals. The project provides a Logic Model (See page e-37) which outlines the goals, strategies and expected outcomes of the project program.

2. The Applicant provided a reasonable and cost effect budget which will allocate 81% of the program s budget directly to support the training of the early career teachers during the five year funding period and has indicated a one year plan for project start up funding that will address staffing needs and contract negotiations . Page e-18

3. The Applicant explained the services to be provided by the project s New Teacher Center Professional Development Mentor Training Program. The components of the training program reflect up-date knowledge from research and effective best practices.

4. The Applicant presented an estimate cost of the proposed budget (\$16,484.345) inclusive of the required match, the numbers of students and teachers to be impacted by the project was evident and the cost per student over the five year fund (\$356) was noted. The project addressed the cost to scale to 100,000 250,000 and 500,000 students (See page e-41).

5. The Applicant shows evidence of the project s sustainability by 1) continuing to work closely with the State Education Department and State Organizations to receiving financial support from state and federal grants 2) tying the matching funds to the Local Education Agencies (LEA) and local donors and 3) encouraging LEA partners to own their own mentors with guidance and assistance provided by the project (ASME).

Weaknesses:

1. The project s research data collection were evident, however research-based on Best Practices were not included.
2. The research is needed to validate the full release of teachers to attend trainings and their impact on children learning.
3. There is a need to review the budget funding of the technology component. There is a need to see how the budget will save money with use of on-line conferences and high travel cost

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well designed experimental study or a well designed quasi-experimental study.

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

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

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

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and

(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers.

Strengths:

No Comment

Weaknesses:

No Comment

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary**

considers the following factors:

(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 complex projects.

(3) 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 State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

1. The Applicant outlined a clear and defined management plan and identified key personnel s responsibilities, their specific tasks, a timeline and milestones for accomplishing the project s objectives. (See Figure 10 page e-55-56)
2. The Applicant gave a detailed description of the key components of the management plan and identified who will be responsible to implement and monitor each of the management components (The Policy Design Team, the Evaluation Team, the District Leadership Team) (See page e-54)
3. The Applicant provided the names of the project s key personnel and specific tasks in managing the programs, resumes were submitted, and the key personnel selected reflect a highly qualified team to implement and manage the complex programs (pages e- 56-58).
4. The Applicant identified the Project Director s key responsibilities during the five year funding which includes working closely with specific tasks and addressing the program s organization, implementation and evaluation. The Program Director s resume reflect qualified experiences, expertise and knowledge to manage the project s complex programs. (See Figure 10 page e-53)

Weaknesses:

1. The timeline is not paced for accomplishing the project s programs. The timeline reflects that the program does not begin to work with urban teachers until a year and a half after the program begins and the program will not begin in schools until next year. A quicker time to begin implementing the program is needed.

Reader's Score: 24

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

1. Competitive Preference Priority 7 - Innovations that Support College Access and Success (zero or one 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:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 8

1. Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students (zero or one point)

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

Strengths:

The Applicant described the project s specific focus, which is to ensure that all Special Education and LEP-Certified Early Career Teachers receive mentoring that address the specific challenges of their teaching assignment

The Applicant noted that all four LEA Districts have high numbers of students with special needs and/or students with Limited English Proficiency. Professional development will include strategies offered to all teachers working with these two populations.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 9

1. Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Improving Productivity (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcome per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in this notice), or other strategies.

Strengths:

The Applicant clearly describes how the project plans to improve productivity through systematic and sustained mentoring of early career teachers to increase teacher retention. School District's financial support and resources will be used annually to recruit, hire and train new teachers and ultimately improved student achievement.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. Competitive Preference Priority 10 - Technology (zero or one point)

We give competitive preference to applications for projects that are designed to improve student achievement or teacher effectiveness through the use of high-quality digital tools or materials, which may include preparing teachers to use the technology to improve instruction, as well as developing, implementing, or evaluating digital tools or materials.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 9/13/11 12:00 AM