

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - 84.411B Panel - 10: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Regents of the University of Minnesota (U411B110098)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

During the panel meeting, we thoroughly discussed areas of disagreement among the panelists, and my final scores reflect my best professional judgment.

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:

The applicant presents current research in abundance as support for the need for prevention of school failure before it occurs and remediation is required. This application not only addresses the needs of children ages 3 and 4 but expands the proposal to transition to early childhood education through the third grade. Of particular interest was the research noting the importance of extending early childhood to third grade to prevent the "drop-off effects" of students leaving preschool and "attending low quality elementary schools". (p. 3). In this proposal the applicant expands the need for school readiness with the additional goal of parent involvement. The plethora of research magnifies the need for the project and is supported by data from NAEP on low income and minority children. All of the research provided supports the absolute priority 1-Innovations that Turnaround Low-Performing Schools through "intensive and continuous" services in the educational and community arenas.

The proposed services to be provided by the applicant are designed to address the needs identified in the early childhood research. The need to address transitions from preschool to elementary school is an area of weakness in many programs. The continuity of programming and services is essential to the goals set forth in

this application. The return per dollar invested is significantly higher in the CPC programs than other models (p.6) In addition, the longitudinal studies showed that the effects of the program persisted through high school graduation; lower rates of crime; and less mobility. (p.6)

This application is an exceptional approach to addressing the improvement of achievement in low-performing schools by frontloading the educational experiences of students who typically do not receive quality early childhood education. The inclusion of preschool through Grade 3 in the project provides for ongoing support once the students enter school. In addition, the in classroom coaching model provides for support in implementing the project with fidelity. Addressing the transition from preschool to early elementary is an element missing in the current movement of students into elementary school.

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:

In this application, the applicant listed six (6) goals that include fidelity of implementation, monitor the quality of implementation, evaluate the impact, assess the impact, determine cost effectiveness, and implement a sustainability plan. (p. 9) The goals, objectives, and strategies listed on page 9 and 10 are tightly aligned which illustrates the importance the applicant places on a quality approach. Developmental milestones are listed and aligned to the grade levels this project seeks to address. By addressing a cost benefit analysis the applicant builds a case for the program through savings usually spent on remedial programs during the course of a child's school experience. The schools in the project sites reflect urban, rural, and metropolitan areas. The target school populations are similar to the prior research in Chicago which allows the applicant to generalize the impact of the proposal. This proposal is extending the services in the target sites to grade 3 although prior implementation stopped at grade 2. This decision was based on a review of the research on reading achievement when the support is extended to grade 3.

Costs for the implementation of the program vary based on location and whether certain aspects of the program are currently in place. The applicant states the average cost of the program is \$5300.00 over the five year life of the grant or \$1200.00 to \$1700.00 per year. The cost does not reflect local matches required by each of the districts. Based on a document from the Economic Policy Institute and Institute for Public Policy reports cited in the study, "the project is expected to recoup costs within five years. . . ". (p. 12) The cost of scale up for 100,000 students is \$476.2 million, 250,000 costs \$1.19 billion, and 500,000 children is \$2.38 billion. Costs in other sites without the necessary facilities would exceed the costs listed above. The cost of this program is low considering the amount public schools spend of special education and interventions to address the needs of students who enter school years behind what is expected at specific grade levels.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant discussed sustainability based on reallocating current funding, using Title I, Head Start, etc. clarity in how this could be accomplished in each site would have strengthened this area. The sustainability is listed on the project timeline but a description in the project plan would have clarified this point.

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:

not applicable

Weaknesses:

not applicable

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:

In keeping with the collaborative approach to addressing the needs of at risk students, the project will be overseen by two professors through a Steering Committee represented by stakeholders.. Each district and partner will have a representative on this committee. They will meet quarterly to monitor progress with specific focus on monitoring and implementation. (p.26) A management team will oversee the day to day operation of the project by a Project Director, Co-Director, Manager, and Coordinator of Implementation. Three additional teams are the LEA Program Implementers, Evaluators, and Scale-Up and Disseminators. (p.27) Representatives from each of the partners is essential to support, ownership, and scale up of the project. They have divided the labor and expertise to support this application. A Project Timeline details the work by academic year, grade level, season, and whether the activity occurs during the grant period. The areas that are identified are project management, implementation, evaluation, scale up, and sustainability. Also included in the Project Timeline are the individuals responsible for the work. These plans make sense because they address the implementation by year, by grade level, area of the grant, and individuals responsible. The timeline is linked to the goals, objectives, and strategies to ensure that the work is implemented as planned to keep the project moving during the duration of the grant. The qualifications of the personnel add to the strength of the applicant in that the Co-Directors have experience in education and economics. Both of the Co-Directors essential to this project as it is focused on early childhood and maintains that this is a cost effective method of assisting low performing schools. [REDACTED] expertise will be especially helpful as the foundation of the project is based on long term economic benefits to the communities. Both of the Co-Directors have experience as investigators or researchers in similar research. In addition, [REDACTED] will work as a liaison to SRI regarding cost benefit analysis. Her background is as an economist of education with special emphasis in cost-benefit analysis. The coordinator of implementation is the Chief Officer of Early Childhood Programs in the Chicago Public Schools and as a professor at the Erickson Institute. Those individuals selected as coordinator of leadership and professional development have experience with early childhood and expertise in the area in which they will have primary responsibility. The individual hired as the coordinator of sustainability has experience with state policy and has legislative work with the former governor as well as serving on the Governor's P-20 Council.

SRI International will serve as the independent evaluator and has assigned three individuals with extensive backgrounds in designing research as well as the analysis of quantitative data. All three of the researchers have experience with evaluations of early childhood and educational initiatives. The statistician has experience in using the statistical methodologies necessary in this proposal.

Bringing the project to scale is addressed through three approaches. The first approach is to build into existing infrastructure; support creative financing; and obtaining broad support from the community/businesses. Each of these areas represents key issues when implementing change in public education. If we do not align what we are doing to what is currently in place, we waste resources. In the current educational environment we must show districts how to leverage current funding to gain additional funding. Finally, without the support of the community and business, initiatives change when the board and

upper management change.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 25

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:

This application improves the readiness of students and specifies developmental milestones. In addition they focus on improving alignment by having a seamless program from the age of three through Grade 3. Since the program services students from age 3 to 9, the individuals involved at each level have an understanding of the role they play in the development of the child. The assessments they are using to assess the developmental milestones are aligned.

Weaknesses:

Although the proposal addresses social, emotional, and cognitive readiness the applicant does not deal with improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between birth and age three.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

The applicant addresses Competitive Preference 9-Improving Productivity reducing costs for "remedial education and problem behaviors requiring service intervention". (p. 3) The quoted research indicates that preventative programs, such as this proposal, provide significant savings over the school years of a child. (p.3) In addition, the collaboration of services and use of funding for already existing programs leads to greater efficiency of resources.

Weaknesses:

n/a

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: 9/14/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - 84.411B Panel - 10: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Regents of the University of Minnesota (U411B110098)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

During the panel meeting, we thoroughly discussed areas of disagreement among the panelists, and my final scores reflect my best professional judgment.

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:

N/A Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

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

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(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:

N/A Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

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:

The evaluation narrative provides a thorough, well-designed, and articulated quasi-experimental design. Through the use of propensity score matching and prior year data/information, the design includes evaluation of the impact of the project on study participants, as well as additional exploratory questions related to the number of years in preschool.

Data collection instruments include highly researched and valid measures of school readiness and achievement, as well as interview and survey measures. Along with classroom checklists and participation logs, these instruments will provide substantial data regarding the project implementation and information for interim adjustments in the project.

The evaluation design includes an extensive process for investigating the impact of subgroups of students, any moderation effect of elements of the CPC, and whether particular parent outcomes might mediate impact of the program on students. Along with a cost effectiveness analysis, these analyses should provide exceptional information to facilitate replication in other settings.

The project plan includes over \$2 million for evaluation services, which is about 13% of the total project funding, which is sufficient for a thorough and effective evaluation. The evaluation contractor, SRI, has an extensive history and experience performing evaluations for complex projects.

Weaknesses:

The application did not include specific line-item details on elements of the SRI subcontract budget, so it is not possible to determine if resources for the evaluation are effectively allocated to the various project components.

Reader's Score: 24

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:

N/A Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

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:

N/A Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

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 Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

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:

N/A Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

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:

N/A Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

Reader's Score: 0

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 Scored by other readers

Weaknesses:

N/A Scored by other readers

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - 84.411B Panel - 10: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Regents of the University of Minnesota (U411B110098)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

During the panel meeting, we thoroughly discussed areas of disagreement among the panelists, and my final scores reflect my best professional judgment.

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:

STRENGTHS: (1) The applicant provides some information about the Midwest Expansion of the Child-Parent Program. The program is designed to validate and expand in Chicago (page e33) and promote school readiness. The issue of students not ready for school is wide-spread among students who perform below standards.

(2) The applicant discusses major advances in early education. They indicate that the CPC program was designed to promote children's success through a blend of language enrichment and parental involvement within a system of support services. This discussion supports the importance of preschool experiences.

(3) The applicant provides information about their claim to the effectiveness of the proposed project. Also, there is discussion about the effects of preschool on school readiness, strong pattern of impact on third grade reading scores, and findings for educational and economic well being. The impact of preschool experience is significant on later school experiences. It stands to reason that success in the primary grades will have a positive effect on the student's academic performance in subsequent grades.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES (2) The information does not make a convincing argument that the applicant's approach to improve student achievement in persistently low-performing schools is incomparable or extraordinary. The approach closely resembles Early Start and Head Start programs.

Reader's Score: 17

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:

STRENGTHS: (1) The applicant has listed six goals that the proposed project plans to reach (page e30). The goals are consistent with the applicant's belief in the success that preschool experiences have on future educational achievement. The program strategies provide clarity to exactly what is intended in the goals. For instance, Goal 1 notes the importance of implementing the CPC model in a way that is true to standards that ensure quality. The program strategy further explains the specifics that support the goal. In this case the applicant states that the implementation should be of high quality preschool for two years in small classes taught by certified teachers. The applicant clarifies the remaining goals with the same precision. This process is good because it ensures the probability of all participants knowing exactly what the applicant's expectations are.

(4) The applicant estimates the costs of the proposed project per student to be \$4.762. The estimated costs for the applicant to reach 100,000 students is \$476.2 million, 250,000 students \$1.9 billion, and to serve 500,000 students \$2.38 billion.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

- (3) Insufficient information is provided about the services to be provided having been derived from up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (2) The applicant indicates that the estimated cost for the proposed project is \$4,763 per child over five years (page e32 to e33). The Budget Detail (pages e275 to e262) provides some information about expenditures. The CPC program does hire teaching staff. Depending on the school district anywhere from zero to four head teachers could be hired. The costs associated with CPC Program are the result of the program adding a quality preschool program onto the existing first through third grades in the school. The applicant's explanation of the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project are not developed well enough to make a determination that the costs are reasonable.
- (3) The applicant provides a list of services that the program will implement. Next the applicant discusses staffing, facility, and professional development plans. While the discussion is informative, it does not shed any light on how the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (5) The applicant fails to provide information about the potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of CPC Program and other partners at the end of the validation grant.

Reader's Score: 17

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

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:

STRENGTHS: (1) The applicant provides Table 8, Project Timeline of Activities. It displays the year, Grade, Seasons (of the school year) in a heading. The topics listed are as follows: Project Management, Implementation, Evaluation, Scale Up, and Sustainability. The table serves the purpose of listing the major functions of the proposed project. This particularly important because at a glance one can see that activities related to the topic will occur at the designated time.

(2) With the exception of the project manager, the qualifications of other key personnel suggest that they are highly qualified. The applicant provides a biographical sketch and resumes of key personnel.

(3) The applicant has the capacity bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level. The applicant states that building into existing infrastructure, supporting creative financing, and obtaining broad support will enhance the process of developing the capacity to bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level. The process described will work because it accomplishes the following: 1) creates a plan that addresses communications; 2) develops financial options that LEAs can choose from; and 3) gather support from key education organizations including state associations.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES

(1) A weakness is the fact that the management plan does not include the names of the individuals responsible for the item nor does it specify milestones for accomplishing the proposed project's tasks.

(2) A project manager will be hired to provide day-to-day oversight of project activities. The applicant is unable to provide information about the qualifications, relevant training, and experience of the successful candidate.

(3) It does not appear that the applicant has the capacity bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level because the management plan does not list specific action items that point toward achieving the scale objectives.

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:

STRENGTHS: The proposed project will implement a program designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children birth through 3rd grade.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

STRENGTHS: The proposed project will increase efficiency by reducing the chances that the students in high quality preschool programs are less likely to need remedial education

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were 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: 9/16/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - 84.411B Panel - 10: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Regents of the University of Minnesota (U411B110098)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

During the panel meeting, we thoroughly discussed areas of disagreement among the panelists, and my final scores reflect my best professional judgment.

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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) This proposed evaluation uses propensity scoring to identify matching schools for this quasi-experimental design, which is a valid method.
- (2) The evaluators plan to conduct regular project briefings and produce annual reports to provide ongoing implementation and performance feedback throughout the project.
- (4) The proposal includes contracting with an external evaluation team from SRI International. The members of the evaluation team have relevant experience and expertise to conduct this evaluation. They will work with the University of Minnesota. The MOU between the University of Minnesota and SRI International clearly spells out expectations for the evaluation team. The budget is sufficient to cover the resources necessary for conducting such an evaluation based upon my experience.

Weaknesses:

- (1) The data are collected from parents by interview at baseline and then again at the end of 2nd grade. That is a long time interval. The evaluators propose to implement a mail survey in between. The use of two different measures to gather information on parent involvement may lead to differences that are attributable to method rather than actual differences due to program effects. The method of implementation may affect the response rate with the mail survey rate being much lower than interviews. The other rating of parent involvement relies upon teachers to maintain logs, which may not be reliable given the teachers' competing demands.
- (2) Although the evaluators are proposing a number of measures of implementation fidelity, they are all self-report by the school staff. The design would be strengthened if external evaluators were more involved in collecting these data or less subjective measures were included.
- (3) Implementation data will be collected; however, it is not clear in this proposal how those data will be useful for describing key elements and approach to facilitate replication. The design is more focused on methodology for answering the research questions. For example, one of the intervention components is comprehensive family services, and there is no description as to how that will be measured or documented.

Reader's Score: 20

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

Reader's Score: 0

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - 84.411B Panel - 10: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Regents of the University of Minnesota (U411B110098)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

During the panel meeting, we thoroughly discussed areas of disagreement among the panelists, and my final scores reflect my best professional judgement.

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:

Based on research in the field of early childhood education, the applicant makes a strong case for the program need in both the school districts proposed for this program as well as school districts nationwide. Data cited from studies indicate that up to 50% of all children entering Kindergarten are not fully ready for success; in urban areas, that percentage may be as high as 75%. Additional current research indicates that there is a strong correlation between a strong PK-3 program and success in later school years. This project proposes to provide students with a strong PK-3 experience.

Many of the components in this project can be found in most developmentally appropriate early childhood programs throughout the country. What makes this approach exceptional is the multiyear approach (up to two years of PK through Grade 3) which includes wrap-around/comprehensive support services for students and a strong professional development component for teachers that includes in-class coaching.

The applicant, again, makes a strong case for the magnitude of the effect of this project. In addition to research already conducted on this proposed project, the project components are founded in early childhood

best practices developed from outside the project. (See extended reference section pp. e56-e63.) Many of the references cited support the economic premise that each dollar spent in an effective PK-3 program saves multiple dollars over the life of a student's academic career.

The current program research (pp. e28-e.29) presents a compelling case that this project has a strong long-term impact on participating students. For example, long-term studies indicate that program participants have a greater achievement growth in both mathematics and reading. There are results that show the program has substantially reduced the performance gap in performance using national norms in addition to participants achieving a higher rate (49% v 31% for non-participants) of on-time high school graduation.

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:

The applicant provides clear goals accompanied by explicit strategies. By providing PK-Grade 3 students both academic and support services, the project incorporates what is best known about effective practices at the early childhood level. It follows the premise that early childhood education programs need to support the whole child. A key strength of this design is the adherence to the program fidelity, based on CPC research, which ensures that all program participants have access to similar programs.

Studies have shown that investing in quality early childhood programs is an investment in a child's future. The

projects per pupil cost, \$1200- \$1700, is reasonable for this comprehensive program for students in grade PK-3. There is an expanded teacher professional development program which includes in-classroom coaching for teachers.

The applicant includes the costs for scale up for 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students (p. e36). A particular strength in this section was the manner in which the applicant detailed the method for cost calculation. The applicant differentiated the per pupil costs to show the cost for scale up based on a district's need. For example, some districts already have required program structures in place. The per pupil amount for these districts would be less than the costs for districts who have none of the required supports. In addition, the proposal also specifically cited a per pupil cost for potential capital renovations.

The applicant has a solid research base in urban districts. This project will allow the applicant to further research program effects in metro as well as rural areas.

The applicant clearly addresses the potential and planning for incorporation into ongoing work. A major component to address this is to have each district coordinate all resources in an effort to provide front end support for early childhood services rather than to use these funds to address the need for remediation. Each of the district partners have differentiated how they will achieve this. For example, Chicago will be focusing on reallocation of federal Head Start funds as well as other existing funds to support the proposal's priorities. Milwaukee has chosen to look at this, as well. St. Paul has adopted a new K-5 structure to create space for PK programs; other districts are supporting the addition of literacy coaches and/or parent involvement specialists.

An outside partner, the Federal Reserve of Minneapolis, has committed additional funding for this program. This reallocation of resources is clearly addressed on pages e36-e37.

Weaknesses:

NONE

Reader's Score: 25

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 Being scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

N/A being scored by another reviewer

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:

The applicant has provided a very detailed proposal that includes both scale up and sustainability activities. The timeline is clearly delineated for each of the five years of the project and within each year there is further delineation by season. In addition, there is a very detailed management plan which outlines the roles and responsibilities for the Steering Committee as well as the management team who will oversee day-to-day activities.

The PI for this project has a great deal of experience in studying the effects of early childhood programs. He has experience working with districts. In addition, the PI is a university professor of child development. His combined experience in research, the field, and academia, make him a strong candidate for this position. As co-director of NCRC, he has experience in managing complex projects.

The co-director is both an economist and early childhood scholar. The point of view this individual brings to the project will provide evidence regarding the return on investment (ROI) for this project.

The remaining staff members bring equally strong experience to the project. Several members of this team have multiple experiences in managing complex projects both within the field of education and business. (e.g., Project Director-Illinois State Action for Leadership, Director- New Schools Project, Erikson Institute)

The applicant specifically addresses ways to bring the program to scale and is working with several agencies to develop practical ways for participants to incorporate major components within each school by building into existing infrastructure, supporting creative financing, and obtaining broad support. These factors concerning the applicant's ability to obtain funds are clearly outlined on page e10.

The applicant has established partnerships with foundations, state government officials, and businesses (p.33) to provide the necessary resources to sustain this project. In addition, all project partners will work together to identify ways to reallocate existing resources and identify additional extramural funding to support this project.

Weaknesses:

NONE

Reader's Score: 25

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:

The entire proposal is based on improving early learning outcomes. By proposing a continuum to support students for up to 2 years of PK through Grade 3, the applicant addresses the area of school readiness in a quality early learning program.

This continuum provides ways for educators to implement a cohesive PK-3 early childhood program. The structure of this program allows for transitions to happen between PK and K-3.

Weaknesses:

This proposal does not outline ways to address the transition from Birth through age 3.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

A key strength of this proposal is that it provides districts with the opportunity to review all of their existing resources and outline ways to maximize resource use. For example, districts are currently reviewing various federal, state, and local dollars to better understand how they can coordinate existing dollars to provide maximum effort for their use. This will improve, fiscally, the outcome per unit of resource.

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted

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