

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	35	33
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Sub Total	80	78
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. Competitive Preference 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. Competitive Preference 7	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. Competitive Preference Pr	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. Competitive Preference 9	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 10		
Competitive Preference Priority 10		

1. Competitive Preference 10

	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Total	85	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #45 - 84.411C Panel - 45: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Knowledge Works plan to establish two new High Tech High Schools in a rural, high need corridor of South Carolina students enrolled in these schools an opportunity to see and apply their academic standards / skills to real problems in science, engineering and mathematics. Research shows that this approach to learning is particularly engaging for adolescents who frequently ask teachers what is the purpose of all these facts and skills they are expected to learn. Although the approach exists in only a few schools nationally, it has demonstrated a positive impact in several of its schools when faithfully implemented.(pp. 9-12) The New Tech design is innovative and the management plan especially strong.

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

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(3) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the effect, on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

Strengths:

The Knowledge Works plan to establish two new High Tech High Schools in a rural, high need corridor of South Carolina is an exceptional approach to standards-based instruction. Unlike traditional approaches to teaching and learning, New Tech High School s focus is on the application of standards / academic skills to real problems in science, engineering and mathematics. Research shows that this approach is particularly motivating for adolescents who frequently wonder where or what is the purpose of all these facts and skills they are expected to learn. They understand the need to prepare for college level work. Although the approach exists in only a few schools nationally, it has demonstrated a significant positive impact in several of its schools.(pp. 9-12) The proposal has the enthusiastic endorsement of district and state education administrators, state level professional associations, business associations, higher education, as well as Richard Riley, former Governor and Secretary of Education. (pp.92-109).

The two schools that will participate in the project are among South Carolina s very poor and rural, located in communities that offer few examples of adequate let alone high achievement. (pp. 6-7 and pp. 120-126). The proposed project addresses student needs and interests; teacher needs (substantive professional

development); in addition to facilitating connections to higher education and potentially the business community. It includes dual credit and early college credits which have been shown to encourage and increase college-going rates.

Knowledge Works offered research evidence from some of its schools that documented the positive impact of this school improvement approach on student achievement, college going rates and career/work placement when the model is faithfully implemented pp. 9-11.

Weaknesses:

There are two weaknesses evident in this proposal: the absence of a description of the technology base that currently exists at either school and/or the absence of a plan to acquire it. Data supporting academic need of the participating schools is limited to performance on state assessments. It would be helpful to include graduation and college-going rates of the participating schools.

Reader's Score: 33

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design to be conducted 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 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 Development 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.

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

(4) 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 Development grant.

Strengths:

The goals and strategies clearly address Priority 5 by identifying and addressing student achievement, graduation and college-going needs with specific outcomes including performance on state assessments, graduation rate, and college enrollment. pp. 13-15.

Success in raising student achievement will always depend on the work of classroom teachers those closest to the problem. This proposal also addresses in a substantive way the need to prepare teachers for implementing a problem-solving instructional approach. The professional development component is thorough (visiting existing NTH schools, addressing course sequencing issues, local coach, etc.) and of high quality.

While the project identifies various educational and economic gaps/weaknesses in rural South Carolina, early research indicates the approach is particularly successful in preparing students for college and in STEM fields p. 8.

The demonstrated impact of New Tech programs is substantial in absolute terms academic achievement and college enrollment patterns in participating schools.

Weaknesses:

None found.

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 projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

This management plan is exemplary. There are clear goals and actions p. 13-15. Not only does it include all stakeholders in the planning and implementation phase of the project (essential for buy-in) p.25, but also addresses the serious need on the part of teachers for ongoing support during implementation. It includes not just training but also opportunities to shadow teachers and administrators in the New Tech Network, which shows a clear understanding of how schools work.

Qualifications of key staff are appropriate and supported by the monitoring that Knowledge Works will provide.

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score: 20

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Competitive Preference Priority 6 - 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 7 - 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:

The Knowledge Works proposal brings to the participating schools a technology-driven problem-based approach to teaching and learning with which post-secondary STEM programs are anxious to connect. Research (pp.9-12) shows that students who complete the curriculum are more likely to be successful and continue their education after high school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found in relation to this Priority.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 8 - 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 9 - 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 10 - 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:

The problem-based curriculum that forms the core of the New Tech High Schools is technology driven.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found in relation to this Priority.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/7/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Sub Total	80	80
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. Competitive Preference 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. Competitive Preference 7	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. Competitive Preference Pr	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. Competitive Preference 9	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 10		
Competitive Preference Priority 10		

1. Competitive Preference 10

	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Total	85	82

Technical Review Form

Panel #45 - 84.411C Panel - 45: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

This proposal provides an innovative and exciting approach to improving student achievement. PBL is an effective approach that engages students and holds promise for student success. The NTN model and focus on STEM areas of curriculum is a worthy focus.

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

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(3) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the effect, on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

Strengths:

This application has clear goals, outcomes and statements of why a successful implementation is likely to occur for each of the goals. Examples are given of places where the NTN model has significantly improved student achievement in the STEM areas as well as increased the likelihood of college attendance and success.

The applicant gives numerous examples and cites studies about the NTN schools models and their positive results. These results have shown to impact student achievement in rural schools.

The applicant gives details for extensive focus on families and students understanding the essentials of college enrollment, completion, funding, and the application process.

The applicant will work collaboratively with higher education to support dual enrollment allowing students to graduate high school with college credits; a strategy that supports college going behavior in students.

The applicant is addressing the Corridor of Shame which is a documented high poverty, low achieving, high minority area. The goals of the grant would have this become a corridor of innovation as they plan to use the high schools training sites to incubate and promote innovation in the region.

The applicant cites studies that PBL in classrooms saw higher math results than lecture driven classrooms.

Using the PBL methodology will increase achievement among the minority students the grant will serve

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design to be conducted 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 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 Development 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.

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

(4) 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 Development grant.

Strengths:

The application clearly explains the goals and action items for the project with extraordinary detail and precision.

The application provides information on how to bring the project to scale as required in the grant application.

Costs for the project are reasonable and the applicant used the experience of the NTN high schools across the country to determine the per student expenditures.

The applicant cites support from the South Carolina Department of Education for the early college model and local community colleges are supportive of the goals.

The grant applicant has examined ways to sustain the innovation and involves community support, building

effective infrastructures, and supporting teacher leadership in their efforts to implement the model with fidelity. (p. 17-18)

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 projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The grant applicant provides a plan based on their numerous national and statewide implementations. Clear action items are stated with identified timelines and responsible parties to the plan.

Coaches for NTN will provide support to staff in the identified areas of the management plan. (p. 26)

The applicant will use the presence of many high needs, high poverty schools along the I-95 corridor as possibilities for replication and scalability.

The network of NTN schools nationally demonstrates the applicant's ability to manage large scale grants. The personnel are highly qualified and work across the country working to improve schools in high poverty areas.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 20

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Competitive Preference Priority 6 - 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 7 - 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:

The grant provides support in the required areas for understanding to families and students with what it takes to get into and stay in college.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 8 - 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 9 - 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 10 - 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:

Technology used by students and staff is a key component of this grant and will add to the student understanding and management of information through its use.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/7/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	35	35
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of the Management	20	20
Sub Total	80	80
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. Competitive Preference 6	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. Competitive Preference 7	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. Competitive Preference Pr	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. Competitive Preference 9	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 10		
Competitive Preference Priority 10		

1. Competitive Preference 10

	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Total	85	82

Technical Review Form

Panel #45 - 84.411C Panel - 45: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

The applicant and its partners have collaborated to bring about change in instructional strategies for disadvantaged non-whites in the southern corridor. The team has selected an innovative approach in teaching low-income disadvantaged students. There is intensive training for teachers to prepare classrooms using online resources. All resources that teachers and students use are computer-based. This is an exceptional and innovative approach because a large majority of disadvantaged African American students are concrete and tactile learners. The program addresses the needs of the target population increasing the likelihood of the students' future academic success.

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

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(3) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the effect, on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

Strengths:

The applicant's proposed project has clearly defined and measurable goals and objectives. The applicant has proposed an exceptional approach that will convert two high-need RLIS- eligible high schools into a standards driven project-based-learning high tech high school. The applicant's proposed project is aligned with Absolute Priority #2, Absolute Priority #5 and Competitive Preference Priority 10. Two key elements of the study are intense teacher training and the use of collaborative online learning along with a supporting STEM focus (p.4). If funded, the proposed project will likely succeed and serve as a model for other New Tech High Schools (p.8). The applicant has identified areas of weaknesses to include graduation rates, dropout rates, number of minorities attending post-secondary schools, and the significant achievement gaps existing between whites and non-whites.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design to be conducted 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 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 Development 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.

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

(4) 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 Development grant.

Strengths:

The proposed project is designed to determine the benefits to students receiving the services provided by the applicant. The applicant has designed a research project that will use data collected during the implementation of the project. The data obtained from the research study will prove valuable to the school and other low-performing minority schools in the southern corridor of shame.

The applicant has provided the costs to include start-up and operating costs per student for the five-year grant period. See chart (p.16). The program will serve 640 students. The applicant has planned a well-designed comprehensive program that reflects the experience of the applicant and its partners. The cost per student is reasonable, sustainable, and scalable as compared to the number of students to be served. The applicant has provided strong evidence of collaboration with its partners.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

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 projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant has an experienced management team in place. The project director, key personnel, and superintendents of the target school will ensure the successful completion of the proposed project on-time and on budget. All personnel are qualified and experienced in managing rural schools (p.26). The resumes of the project director and key personnel are provided (pp. 27-29). The roles and duties of the project director and NTN staff are also provided.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 20

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

1. Competitive Preference Priority 6 - 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 scored

Weaknesses:

Not scored

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 7 - 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:

There is strong evidence that the applicant addresses Competitive Preference #7. The proposed project will address college preparedness and affordability for disadvantaged students. The use of an online computer lab which allows individualized learning is an appropriate strategy that allows the student to work at their pace. The learning environment and strategies involving projects that incorporate real-world work experiences will enhance and enrich the students' knowledge of available careers.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 8 - 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 Scored

Weaknesses:

Not Scored

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 9 - 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 scored

Weaknesses:

Not scored

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 10 - 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:

The applicant has provided strong evidence that the proposed project has met the requirements of Priority # 10. The applicant provides professional development and training enabling teachers to use online instruction as a tool in their classes. The innovative approach will use the computer for all areas of study. The students and teachers will utilize an online management system. Technology will be used throughout the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses note

Reader's Score: 1

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