

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	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 #33 - 84.411C Panel - 33: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

(1) The 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 proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority established for the competition to turn around persistently low performing schools; in this case the IOBUSD school district in rural Arizona, a Title 1 setting. The goals to improve college readiness of IOBUSD students enhance the use of technology for instruction and improve alternative education options for adolescents in detention centers using an exceptional coalition of proven support organizations.

The applicant has done a thorough job in describing the gaps and weaknesses in the current system with a plan to improve what takes place for an extremely high risk population of Native American Indians in rural Arizona. High school passing math and reading scores for the high school for grades 10, 11, and 12 range from 5.8% to 42.9% of the school population. Low graduation rates are also documented and are no higher than 56% for 2011. Fifty-seven percent of children ages 5-17 in IOBUSD live in poverty. Students are also technologically disadvantaged compared to students in urban areas.

The project as prepared will have a positive impact in improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap for this district population. The applicant asserts that with small class cohorts, it is anticipated that graduation rates will have a large positive effect when measured. The introduction of the AVID curriculum, a research based curriculum will be the impetuous for helping student to improve academic performance. The product is associated with success with this high need population.

From a cultural perspective, the Tohono O'odham nation will preserve its ancestry for generations to come.

Weaknesses:

None noted

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 proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy which is aligned with the priorities the applicant seeks to meet. Goal 1-4 highlight the total program and include implementing a comprehensive high school completion and college readiness model in grades 6-12 at BMS, BHS and at alternative education sites in IOBUSD, improve academic achievement for students in low performing rural schools and turn the schools into high-performing schools, improve high school graduation and college enrollment rates for rural students in persistently low performing schools and improve the use of technology in instruction and in postsecondary planning so that IOBUSD students are computer literate and tech-ready for college and life. Accompanying the goals are clearly specified objectives.

The applicant provides an estimate of the cost of the proposed project per student to reach the desired 1000 students. There are also cost figures to raise the scale of students to 100,000, 250, and 500,000. The costs as presented are low compared to comparable figures provided for the rest of the state and nation.

The applicant asserts that in this rural Indian Nation, presented with the critical needs of the students, several hundred dollars of federal money per student will make the significant impact the project seeks. (e33)

The lead agency, the Metropolitan Education Commission, provides sufficient information about their organization in the project narrative to bring the project to fruition and beyond. The lead agency is a combination of a city/county commission and has contacts with 15 school districts located in Tucson and Pima County. This organization has contacts with the highest levels of governing boards and also has access to the Arizona College Access Network, a statewide organization. The University of Arizona according to the applicant, views this project as a vehicle for improving recruitment of Tohono O'odham students.

Weaknesses:

None noted

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 management plan as detailed provides specific staff and task responsibilities for the project. Each goal is enumerated with a responsible person named. For example: Goal - Implement a comprehensive high school completion and college readiness model. Responsible person: Project Director, with support from the Principal Investigator. The Superintendent of Schools for the target district will oversee project implementation in IOBUSD. The applicant illustrates a high level of responsibility for project implementation lying with high level administrators and leaders. The management plan is suited to meet the project objectives.

The qualifications of the project director are detailed and represent someone who will have experience managing complex multi-partner projects. Professional background information is presented for the Supt. of Schools, Principal Investigator, Project Director - Interim, and for the Regional College Access Center Program Coordinator.

Weaknesses:

None 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:

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 applicant meets the criteria for this competitive preference. Goal one clearly states the intention of the applicant and includes a provision for students who attend alternative settings such as juvenile detention centers, which are usually overlooked in school reform initiatives. Activities include programs such as the Academy Without Walls summer internship, summer bridge programs and dual enrollment opportunities, campus tours, etc.

Weaknesses:

None 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:

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 applicant has met the competitive preference. The district has licenses for Plato software, has Smart Boards and is conducting a pilot study with textbooks on Kindles. The Wisdom Project, the name the applicant will use for the program, will hire a Technology Trainer to insure that the district's technology tools are standardized and teachers, students and parents know and use best practices for incorporating technology into instruction. The Regional College Access Center as their site coordinator will spend scheduled time at the district on how to use the RCAC website for college and career planning. AVID, the main instructional tool is an online instructional program as well.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 1

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/16/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	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 #33 - 84.411C Panel - 33: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

(1) The 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 Wisdom Project is a partnership between the Metropolitan Education Commission (MEC), the Indian Oasis-Baboquivari Unified School District (IOBSUD), the Tohono O'odham Nation, Tohono O'odham Community College, and the University of Arizona. The proposed project will serve 1,000 students in grades 6 thru 12 where 94% of students have low-income status over a course of four years on an Indian reservation. (project abstract & p. 9) The proposal represents an exceptional approach to Absolute Priority 4 in establishing a program that will allow students to complete high school and prepare for college through college readiness strategies in a Title I low achieving high school that it is in its second year of School Improvement and a Tier III middle school within the school improvement process within the Indian Oasis-Baboquivari Unified School District. (p.1) The proposal also meets Competitive Priorities #7 & #10 through its use of technology to introduce an online college preparation tool which will give students access to college and successfully prepare them for college. (pg. 2) In addition to targeting high school and middle school students, the project will also serve those students who are in the alternative schools and the juvenile detention center. (p. 1) The proposal establishes a compelling need for the project through: #1) comparison of high school graduation rate - 39% graduation rate for Baboquivari High School students, while across the state of Arizona, Native American High schools showed a graduation rate of 60% (p. 3); #2) table on page 3 establishes persistently low graduation rate since 2007; #3) data from 2009 specifies that 57% of students live in poverty (p. 4); and #4) 2nd largest reservation in the United States encompassing 4,460 square miles which creates a barrier for student and family engagement in education (p. 4). The project planners referenced a 2011 study conducted by the Arizona Board of Regents to help identify their gaps and weaknesses that included: low percentage (32%) of American Indian high school students passing the four mathematics courses required for university

admission compared to 49 % of Caucasian students (p. 4); low percentage of students passing reading and math (table on p. 5); and students within juvenile detention not having access to school (p. 5). The proposal includes targeted approaches and strategies that have been research-proven in order to address the identified gaps such as the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) postsecondary readiness curriculum which will aide in closing the achievement gap in math and has a success rate of 90 to 95% (p. 6), dual enrollment and summer bridge programs to facilitate college success, and parent outreach. (p. 2) The proposal demonstrates that if funded it will have a positive impact in increasing high school graduation rates and in increasing college enrollments and success and can be easily replicated for other Native American students.

Weaknesses:

The Wisdom Project does not present any weaknesses.

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 Wisdom Project has a clear set of measurable goals and objectives that are aligned with the priorities 4, 7 & 10. The proposal includes the four goals with specific objectives for each: Goal 1- implement a comprehensive high school completion and college readiness model for grades 6-12 at the middle school, high school and alternative sites through the AVID curriculum, summer internships, summer bridge programs,

dual enrollment, workshops, and college tours (aligned with Competitive Priority 7); Goal 2 - improve academic achievement as measured by AIMS in the areas of reading and math (aligned with Absolute Priority 4); Goal 3 - improve high school graduation and college enrollment rates (aligned with Absolute Priority 4 and Competitive Priority 7); and Goal 4 - improve use of technology so that students become computer literate (aligned with Competitive Priority 10). (p. 9 - 12) In order to accomplish project goals, the Wisdom Project will use the AVID curriculum in order to prepare students for college and include tutoring in math and other college readiness subjects. (p. 8) In addition, the project will engage students in leadership opportunities and career exploration and provide training for both the teachers and students on MEC's Regional College Access Center which is a college preparation toolkit. The project will also include a summer bridge program with dual opportunities through the Tohono O'odham Community College and the University of Arizona will offer campus tours and a academic summer program. (p. 9 - 12) The proposal includes reasonable startup cost for the proposed number of students to be served over the four year period and provides a state vs. national comparison in spending per student. (p. 12) The proposal also provides the possible costs for 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000. (p. 12) The Wisdom Project incorporates activities that will continue to benefit the students, school district, and partners at the end of the grant period. The project will replicable by others due to the fact that the strategies can be easily reproduced and through the sharing of the successes and data. (p. 14)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen within this component.

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 Wisdom Project identifies MEC as applicant and fiscal agent who will be responsible for the oversight of the project. (p. 22) The proposal identifies project personnel responsible for the ensuring the achievement of each goal. (p. 22) The proposal establishes a detailed timeline with milestones for the first year and indicates that they will provide additional detailed timelines for each year of the grant. (p. 23 - 24) The proposal identifies and specifically names the primary investigator and narrative includes a description of the qualifications that she has to manage a project of this magnitude. (p. 24-25) The proposal identifies the superintendant as the person responsible for implementation of the project. (p. 25) In addition, the proposal identifies key roles within the project. (p.25) The proposal includes resumes for key project personnel in Appendix F which also helps to establish that the chosen personnel possess the qualifications, training and experience that would be necessary to manage the Wisdom Project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen within this component.

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 Wisdom Project uses innovative practices and strategies that are designed for students in grades 6 - 12 in order to prepare them to access college with success. Goals 1 and 3 are aligned with the proposed project with its incorporation of the AVID curriculum which aides in college readiness and the established partnerships with Tohono O'odham Community College and the University of Arizona will provide a summer bridge program, dual enrollment opportunities, campus tours and academic summer programs. (p. 9 - 11) The project will help both students and parents understand issues of college affordability, financial aid, and the application process. The project will also provide support and encouragement from peers and adults

throughout the grant period.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

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:

Goal 4 of the proposed project meets Competitive Preference Priority 10 through its use of technology to introduce an online college preparation tool (AVID) which will give students access to college and successfully prepare them for college. (p. 2) Additional strategies that will be used for this priority include the use the Regional College Access Center website and additional hardware which will be standardized across school district. All teachers will be trained on the instructional technology component. (p. 12)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses within this Competitive Priority component.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 9/16/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/21/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	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 #33 - 84.411C Panel - 33: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Metropolitan Education Commission (U411C110308)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional)

General:

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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

(1) The 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:

1) The proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for this competition. The applicant has proposed the Wisdom Project, a high school completion and college readiness initiative that will serve middle and high school students attending schools in a rural school district, area alternative schools, and a juvenile detention center, in a predominantly Native American community. Schools targeted by this project include a persistently-low achieving Title I high school in the second year of a School Improvement grant, and a Tier III middle school in the improvement process. The proposed initiative will provide students access to AVID, dual-enrollment and summer bridge programs to facilitate college success; and outreach to parents to provide them with information about college eligibility and assistance in completing admissions and financial aid applications, so that they can assist their children. Services are provided through a collaborative of schools, community-based agencies, government and private organizations. (Pages 1-2)

(2) The applicant identified gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure and opportunities in the district, and addressed them in its proposal. Specifically, it reports that the district is located in a remote Native American tribal village, the second largest reservation in America -- comparable to the size of the state of Connecticut. Its high school has a 39% graduation rate. The drop-out rate at the high school is 9%. About 57% of school-age children live in poverty. The average student travels one and a half hours each way to school. The combination of poverty and remote-living causes many students to be delinquent. The distance serves as a barrier to student and family engagement in education. Only 32% of American Indians in the state passed mathematics courses required for college admissions. None of the students in the area Juvenile Detention

Center have access to educational services. (Abstract, Pages 1-7)

The applicant proposes an intervention which provides students in the Juvenile detention center with a school program. Students in targeted high and junior high schools will receive supports designed to improve academic achievement, proficiency in technology use, and high school and college graduation rates. The applicant will implement its college readiness model in grades 6-12. This will consist of AVID curriculum and services, leadership and citizenship development training, and use of the college preparation toolkit. Students are also provided with access to college tours, a summer-bridge program, dual enrollment opportunities, and use of instructional equipment. (Pages 1-9)

(3) The applicant has demonstrated that, if funded, the proposed project will likely have a positive impact as measured by the importance or magnitude of its effect on improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and increasing high school and college graduation rates. The applicant integrates innovative strategies that are scientifically-based, as well as evidence which shows that the intervention has a high potential of being successful. According to the applicant, 61% of 8th graders who complete the project also complete Algebra, a college gateway mathematics course, before moving on the high school. The national rate is 22 percent. 90-95% of all project students successfully completed course work required for college admissions and graduate high school with a regular diploma, compared to 36% nationally. (Pages 4-7)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

1) The applicant has proposed a project with a clear set of goals and objectives, and an explicit strategy, with detailed action steps, that are

(a) aligned with the priorities the applicant is proposing to meet, and are detailed for each site and key personnel. It also provides a logic model, which visually depicts the project goal, in operation with project activities, outputs, and short and long-term outcomes. Theoretical mediating effects are also listed. The applicant has also provided a comprehensive evaluation design outline (Pages 11-12, 14-25 & e103).

(b) expected to result in achieving project goals, objectives and outcomes of the proposed project. The project design and management plan are very well thought out and presented. The intervention proposed has been piloted and deemed to be effective. The project staff is competent and respected, and the initiative is well supported within the district and surrounding community. Also, the proposed strategy grows out of a thorough needs assessment, and the timeline ties the goals, activities and outcomes together. (Pages 1-21)

2)

(a) The applicant proposes the following per-pupil estimates for start-up and operating costs over the life of the project.

(b) The applicant proposes the following scaling targets: 100,000 students will be served for \$500 in per-pupil costs per year. This amounts to \$200 million over four years. The per-pupil annual cost to serve 250,000 students is \$350 per year. The total cost over four years is \$350 million. The per-pupil cost to serve 500,000 students is projected to be \$250 annually, and a total cost of \$500 million over four years. (Page 12)

(3) Proposed project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance for the project. The applicant proposes a cost of \$750 per student to reach 1000 participants during the start up year -- a total of \$3 million over four years. The proposed funding will help some of the state's most neediest schools to fill a gap in available funding. The applicant reports that the state where the proposed project will take place is ranked 48th in per-pupil funding. It allocates an average of \$8,666 per student, while the national rate is \$11,681. (Page 12)

(4) The project has a high 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 grant period. The applicant reports that it is ideally positioned to develop the proposed strategy collaboratively with partners and to bring it to scale. Its partners include superintendents from 15 area school districts, governing boards, community organizations, administrators, and higher education and government representatives. The project will provide findings from the project's evaluation to partner colleges, and to the state's College Access Network. The latter works with schools and district statewide, and provides the applicant with the guidance and support necessary to implement the project regionally and across the state. All partners have made written commitments to incorporating the initiative into their ongoing work. (Pages 13-14)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

(1) The management plan is more than adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. It includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as protocols, and tasks related to project sustainability and scalability. (Pages 8-25)

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of the the project director and key project personnel indicate that they have sufficient experience in managing projects the size and scope of the proposed initiative. The management structure presented in the proposal calls for joint leadership which is shared between the two primary partners. The applicant and the school district. Each has a person who collectively comprise the highest level of project leadership. The applicant organization's representative is a well-respected member of the community, and oversees multiple grants and initiatives, i.e. two GEAR UP projects, and a Challenge grant, in her daily work. She formerly led a city-wide initiative which links intervention networks in the favor of high needs children, and has considerable project management experience, as well as experience serving high-needs students. The district's representative is its superintendent. It is reforming and working to secure more resources to support district classrooms and initiatives under her direction. These two representatives will be supported by the Project Director, RCAC Site and Mentoring Coordinators, a school counselor, a Technology Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. (Pages 22, 24-25)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses listed.

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 applicant proposes use of an innovative on-line college preparatory system which provides targeted students with access to on-line college resources, and college preparatory courses, which will be supplemented by other AVID Program activities. It also proposes to provide professional development support to teachers and peer-training for students, in technology use. This system provides access to the Regional College Access Center to students in an isolated rural district in Title I schools, where they can take college preparation courses on-line, participate in peer training, and in one on one academic advising via Skype. Students will be able to set up individual college preparation accounts, receive customized referrals and information, and to research various colleges, grant and scholarship programs, and college living. This program serves to (a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college; (b) help students understand issues of college affordability and financial aid and college application processes; and (c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults. (Pages 2 - 3)

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:

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 applicant proposes use of an innovative on-line college preparatory system which provides targeted students with access to on-line college resources, and college preparatory courses, which will be supplemented by other AVID Program activities. This method helps to eradicate the distance between targeted communities, schools and colleges. It also proposes to provide professional development support to teachers and peer-training for students, in technology use. This system provides access to the Regional College Access Center (RCAC) to students in an isolated rural district in Title I schools, where they can take college preparation courses on-line, participate in peer training, and in one on one academic advising via Skype. Students will be able to set up individual college preparation accounts, receive customized referrals and information, and to research various colleges, grant and scholarship programs, and learn about college living. This program serves to (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. Teachers and project staff are provided with professional development support that allows them to support students' learning and exploration. (Pages 2 - 3)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses listed.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

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