

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 10		
Competitive Preference Priority 10		

1. Competitive Preference 10

Sub Total 1

Total 85 82

Technical Review Form

Panel #30 - 84.411C Panel - 30: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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:

This proposal has many strengths. First and foremost, it clearly addresses the district's need to increase college preparedness for high-need students, specifically African American and Latino students. Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is faced with high drop-out rates and a low percentage of college-bound students. To the district's credit, their strategic plan includes actions to increase educational equity and to provide rigorous academic programs by raising graduation requirements to meet the entrance requirements for the University of California and California State University. Their proposal to work with The College Board, incorporating a previously tested process (EXCEerator) in a revised form, represents an excellent approach to reach these goals. The strength of this collaboration lies in how it should build educators' capacity to prepare students for college success, address students' expectations regarding college, increase students' "college knowledge" and create a college-going culture throughout the district. (p. e13) The past history of the EXCEerator process (p. e25) and the revisions that College Board has made to the program, indicate that it should provide the support OUSD needs for their students to succeed in a rigorous academic program.

The proposal includes excellent data (pp. e 27-31) outlining and quantifying the specific gaps and weaknesses that will be addressed by the project. OUSD has clearly done the groundwork to identify the achievement gaps, the disproportionate effect on college readiness indicators for high-need students and other students, the lack of tools and resources to accelerate improvement for high-need students and the need to improve both student and family "college knowledge".

The proposal clearly indicates the extent to which OUSD expects the implementation of EXCEerator to have a positive impact on these gaps and weaknesses (p. e32). Based on the congruity between the goals of EXCEerator and the district, in combination with the past successes of the process and the subsequent adjustments to it, OUSD predicts a 4% increase in graduation rates, a 12.4% increase in AP participation and a 1.3% decrease in drop-outs. These indicators are all clearly linked to progress in college and career readiness.

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 proposal has a strong project design. The goals are clearly stated and supported by appropriate objectives that, if met, will lead to success. (pp.e34-35) The District has undergone careful analysis of previous results with EXCEerator (p .e88) and its revision from a school to a district focus in preparing to design the project. In addition, OUSD has a strong history of collaboration with The College Board (pp.e89-91) that has informed their current project design. The planned implementation follows a logical and sequential path. Using both the EXCEerator District Diagnostic and the EPIC CollegeCareerReady online diagnostic tool should provide a good blend of district- and school- identified needs. The creation of an EXCEerator team (including College Board staff) should provide excellent strategic planning, implementation guidance and monitoring, and a plan for sustainability. In particular, the plan for creating a prioritized and integrated district roadmap with

actionable outcomes is a great strength of the project design. These actions are all clearly aligned with the priorities that OUSD is seeking to meet and should result in achieving the goals of the project.

The estimated per student cost of the project is very reasonable considering the expected district-wide impact. As post-secondary readiness is part of the District's current strategic plan, the project will clearly be well-integrated into the ongoing work of OUSD and The College Board. Additional strengths of the project design are its coordination with the district's multiple initiatives (e40) and how, after initial implementation, the project will transition to monitoring student outcome data, adult changes in practice, and sustainability. As part of the design, the Project Director and the EXCEerator Project Manager will look for additional funding to sustain the project and to implement subsequent changes identified, but not addressed within the current proposal. Through this careful planning, the benefits gained by the project will not disappear and future participants will have additional resources.

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 detailed management plan is very strong, as evidenced by the Project Timelines (p. e140-143). Tasks and the personnel responsible for each are clearly indicated by year and by quarter, including actions to monitor sustainability. The tasks are aligned with the project design. If followed, OUSD should be able to achieve the objectives of the project on time and within budget.

The Project Director is a good choice, as she is a current OUSD employee and has excellent experience leading curriculum and instruction reform with an emphasis on developing programs with academic rigor. The job description of the "to be hired" EXCEerator District Director is comprehensive and outlines the needed education and experience required for the position. The composition of the Steering Committee is particularly strong, as it includes all of the appropriate stakeholders, including bargaining unit leaders, secondary leaders and teachers, students, and college and community partners (p. e55). The Project Management Team is also well constructed, as they will have day-to-day responsibilities for implementation, coordination with OUSD leaders and College Board staff, and integration of the project with other district initiatives.

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:

As the focus of EXCEerator is to strengthen the district infrastructure in order to strategically develop the capacity of teachers, school and district administrators and counselors to support student achievement and increase college readiness, this proposal strongly supports CPP7. The diagnostic feature of the process will identify and prioritize college-readiness needs and guide the development of a district roadmap with actionable outcomes to address those needs (p. e20). College Readiness Specialists will work throughout the district offering professional development, coaching, and mentoring to support educators to increase academic rigor (pp. e37-38).

Focused professional development and the coaching of adults are intended to create a college-going culture in the district and to provide college preparation support (p. e32).

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:

EXCEerator should provide systematic integration of all college-readiness efforts in the district, thus significantly increasing the efficiencies of those initiatives. Diagnosis of district needs regarding college-readiness, implementation of actions to address those needs, and the on-going professional development, monitoring and evaluation of those efforts should improve student outcomes related to college-readiness at a good cost/benefit ratio. Building adult capacity and effectiveness should improve productivity

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/10/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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	34
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	23
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality of the Management	20	19
Sub Total	80	76
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	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 10		
Competitive Preference Priority 10		

1. Competitive Preference 10

Sub Total 1

Total 85 78

Technical Review Form

Panel #30 - 84.411C Panel - 30: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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 project represents an exceptional approach by aligning the entire high school curriculum to the admission standards of the two major state universities in the area of the target district, thereby ensuring that high school graduates will be eligible for admission and prepared for the rigors of university coursework.

The weaknesses in infrastructure and opportunities for the students who live in the target district are established through substantial analysis of local and regional data (pp. e29-31).

An additional strength of the proposal is the inclusion of data from pilot studies examining the efficacy of the EXCEerator model proposed for this project. Although the data is described in only general terms, it is an external validation of the potential of the project to have a positive impact on the targeted goals (p. e33). The magnitude of the project 's impact is relatively conservative (i.e., 4% rise in graduation rates, 12.4% increase in AP class participation and a 1.3% reduction in dropout rates, p. e33) suggests that the proposal is realistic and the project designers have considered the intractability of many problems facing schools in communities similar to theirs.

Weaknesses:

The proposition that every student who graduates from a given high school can be made ready for post-secondary success without remediation (p. e24) is overly ambitious. It fails to consider that some individuals with disabilities will not engage in post-secondary academic studies with success and also that some

individuals without disabilities may choose a skilled trade or other vocational option that does not require college. By focusing on the need for college preparation for many students to the extent of offering only one curriculum path, the program eliminates options for another segment of the population.

Reader's Score: 34

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:

One of the strengths of the project design is the inclusion of baseline rates of performance in various target categories (e. g., % of students taking at least one AP class, p. e34). By establishing these metrics, the project managers can direct their resources to the areas of most need. Another strength is the clear step-wise plan of action that starts with a district-wide diagnostic analysis to gauge strengths and weaknesses (p. e35) thereby confirming areas of need and focusing effort where it will be likely to most quickly promote attainment of project goals. Another aspect of the project that suggests it will attain the desired outcomes is the intention to disaggregate data according to meaningful subgroups (p. e36). Disaggregating the data is yet another way that ensures that the project will address all participating students according to their needs.

The cost of the project at \$232 (p. e39) per student is very low and supportive of the systemic approach to dealing with the infrastructure and opportunity deficits established in the need section.

Weaknesses:

There is no provision for students who are not interested in attending college or for students who are not capable of engaging in a successful post-secondary educational experience such as attending college. The proposal would be stronger if some discussion of what such students will do if they are unsuccessful in this new and more challenging curriculum was included or if some discussion of evidence that the needs of every student in a community such as the one targeted for this project can be appropriately and successfully educated through a college preparatory curriculum was provided.

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

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

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The project personnel possess substantial qualifications and experience to enable them to manage the activities described in this proposal (pp. e50-55). Job descriptions for to-be-hired personnel (e.g., Project Director, p. e95) are included and of sufficient detail to suggest that the people hired will be of similar qualification and experience to those already committed to the project. The list of actions to be taken that appears in Appendix J carries sufficient detail to describe what will happen and provides quarterly targets for completion, thereby ensuring that the project will be carried out according to the timelines proposed.

Weaknesses:

The project includes a steering committee (p. e55) that is made up of professionals and individuals outside the district. The inclusion of local stakeholders such as parents, or a local advisory board would strengthen the proposal by potentially broadening the support for the project.

Reader's Score: 19

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 alignment of the district curriculum with college entrance requirements is a strong effort to address student's preparedness for college. The inclusion of College Readiness Specialists is a way to link students with support from knowledgeable adults.

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:

The project addresses productivity by focusing on areas of crucial need and establishing clear goals and actions to be carried out at each phase of the funding period.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 9/10/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 10		
Competitive Preference Priority 10		

1. Competitive Preference 10

1

Sub Total

1

Total

85

81

Technical Review Form

Panel #30 - 84.411C Panel - 30: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Oakland Unified School District (U411C110360)

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:

Oakland Accelerates, primarily a professional development and intensive coaching initiative that uses the latest iteration of The College Board's improved EXCEerator program focuses on district level implementation rather than a school level one to strengthen the district's college readiness infrastructure. The high quality of the Oakland Unified School District/College Board collaboration for assessment, planning and professional development and the courage of district leadership in setting standards at a high level of college readiness district wide makes this an exceptional solution to the identified priorities (e24-25, e33).

The district proposes to address: high dropout and low graduation rates; disparities among subgroups taking AP courses and not meeting college entrance requirements; and, disparities in students entering and succeeding in post-secondary education. A strength is the framework of existing initiatives which will be knit together through this project to focus on a common goal (e25). This is important work for all OUSD students but particularly for the African American and Latino subgroups which show the greatest disparities (e29).

Weaknesses:

None 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 goals for the project are clear and measurable. Strategies and actions are aligned with priorities and seem well designed to achieve proposed outcomes (e34-39, Appendix J). An important strategy is the recruitment of College Readiness Specialists from within the district to serve as peer coaches to teachers, counselors, and school and district administrators (e37).

The costs seem reasonable for the scope of the project.

Weaknesses:

None 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:

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has a strong management team with extensive experience in successful school reform leadership and program management. The Post-Secondary Readiness Steering Committee which includes the Superintendent, is a major strength due to the broad base of involvement including bargaining unit leaders, college and community leaders as well as students, teachers and administrators to guide the Project Director (e55). The collaboration at the district level should help to ensure the success of the project. The College Board will hire a full-time EXCEerator project manager as well as involving highly qualified key personnel in the implementation. The depth of management resources for this project is extensive which is commendable (Appendix F).

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:

This proposal meets requirements for Competitive Preference Priority 7 with an overall focus on building capacity of district educators to support all students to enter and complete college without remediation (e24). Efforts focus on academic preparedness as well the college application and financial aid process. In addition to supporting students at school, planned outreach to families, especially where language and cultural barriers exist (e23, e37, e148) is a strength.

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:

None noted

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide sufficient data or detail to support the contention that this project will significantly improve outcome per unit of resource.

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:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

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