

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 08:50 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	18
Significance		
1. Significance	35	32
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	67
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes		
1. CPP 6	1	0
Innovations that Support College Access & Success		
1. CPP 7	1	0
Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs		
1. CPP 8	1	0
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	0
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	0
Sub Total	5	0
Total	105	67

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Full Development Panel - 12: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet, and (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The eligible applicants 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.

(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 applicant states that the priorities it seeks to meet are 5 (Improving Achievement and Graduation Rates in Rural local educational agencies (LEAs)) and 7 (College Access and Success) by assembling a collaborative of schools from three rural LEAs and local colleges to offer a system of support for students, the AVID College Readiness System, to facilitate their readiness for and ability to attend college. The application includes letters of commitment from these partners (pp. e47-e62) showing how the project goals are more likely to be met with their participation. This commitment is an important component of the project design in as much as it helps insure widespread implementation and the project goals call for directly impacting 800 students and eventually impacting 7600 students from the partner districts (pp. e25; e27). Also, the project design -- and thus meeting the project objectives -- rests on having a collaborative approach. An expressed commitment from the partners to collaborate indicates a common buy-in to the approach and its success. Lastly, the included letters specifically committing the LEA partners to implement the program (pp. e42-e62).

The application offers an orienting overview of the key features of the project, its objectives and the expected outcomes that provides a big picture of how the project will be carried out. It also shows how the proposed project as a whole aligns with the priorities. (pp. e16; e19-e21). This overview is followed by a more detailed discussion of the proposed project goals and outcomes over five years is presented along with detailed descriptions of project implementation strategies the applicant expects to employ (pp. e21-e25). The goals and strategies align with each other and also with priorities. The fact that the outcomes are expressed in measurable terms adds concreteness to the goals and strategies and the applicant provides task descriptions that show clearly how the project will be carried out to meet the goals.

The application provides an estimate of the total cost of the project and the application also provides total and per student costs estimates of the project if it were scaled to serve 500,000 students (pp. e25-e26). In this discussion of the project's five-year and scale-up costs the applicant also includes a brief explanation that the project will have a financial return to the communities insofar as they will more students go to college who will return to the community and contribute more tax dollars (pp. e26-e27). Lastly, the applicant provides copies of letters of commitment that explain in detail how the applicant organization and also of the collaborating schools and districts will integrate the project's key components and the activities and benefits associated

with them into their on-going work (pp. e47-e62). The application also includes a summary of how this will occur (pp. e27-e28).

Weaknesses:

The application does not explain how the proposed project, its goals, objectives, and strategies will be specifically tailored to meet the particular needs of the rural students in the districts in its collaborative. Nor does it explain how the project will provide program adjustments appropriate to address the socio-economic, cultural, or other characteristics and challenges that make these communities uniquely (p.e19). Without more detail about what specific modifications to program elements or activities will be enacted appropriate to helping these rural students overcome the challenges of their communities, the application does not demonstrate that the proposed project is as tightly aligned with the Improving Rural Achievement Absolute Priority as it could be.

The application's estimate of the total cost of the project is confusing in that it states the proposed project initially will serve 800 students at a total five-year cost of \$3,447,659 or \$4311 per student over five years or \$862 per student per year. Eventually the application states the project will serve 7670 students at a cost of \$450 per year (p. e25). However, the applicant says that in other AVID implementations the costs were \$1140 per middle school student for three years (\$380 per year) and \$1318 per high school student for four years (\$330 per year (p. e26). The applicant notes the project will add value by contributing to the schools' capacity to prepare students for college and increase students' wage-earning capacity by enabling them to go to college. This explanation, however, does not adequately address the per student cost discrepancy as AVID would have these effects without the program according to the literature cited by the applicant (pp. e21; e43).

Also, the presentation of the per student costs is not clear as to what the specific costs of implementation cover each year -- and by student over the project's five year implementation (pp. e25-e27). Also, there is no explanation of who will bear the costs for AVID training for additional teachers or replacement teachers as the project continues to be implemented in the districts after the grant period (pp. e27; e172)

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the project. In determining the significance of 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

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

Strengths:

The applicant explains that the proposed project is an exceptional approach in that it combines the development of a collaborative of geographically separated entities (the applicant organization, the LEAs, and the colleges) and the delivery of a proven student support system (AVID) with the result being a curriculum that is vertically aligned -- high school to college -- and that therefore will promote students' entry into and success in college (pp. e28-e29). The fact that this project combines the AVID support system to promote college readiness with a concentrated effort to articulate course and curriculum offerings vertically from middle school to high school, and then to post-secondary school and targets its delivery to schools in rural

LEAs, as described by the applicant, gives this project a unique programmatic approach that has the potential to meet its goals of improving rural students' achievement and college readiness. In addition, establishing a network of both students and staff from partnering LEAs to support not only project implementation, but also project goals adds to the uniqueness of this proposed project (pp. e23-e24).

The applicant indicates that one product of the project will be a manual describing the processes, policies, and specific tasks undertaken in project implementation. The application notes that this manual will be shared with other districts, which can use it as an implementation playbook to replicate this or any project aimed at similar goals (pp. e29-e30). This manual has the potential to make a contribution to the field and become a playbook of best practices and processes for other rural districts to follow that are interested in implementing AVID and aligning their curricula with post-secondary courses especially if they want to collaborate with others.

Finally, the application re-states the expected achievement and college attendance objectives -- 10% increases in college attendance and 10% college success rates -- to stress that the proposed project will have a positive impact on student outcomes (pp. e30-e31). A discussion of the research showing the positive impact the AVID program has had boosting college readiness and attendance (pp. e20-e21; e73-e74) and summaries of supporting literature (pp. e77-e91) support that the project likely will meet these objectives .

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not explain exactly how the implementation guide will be disseminated to other LEAs nor how the results of this project, its implementation guide, and the details of its significance for rural students and communities will be disseminated to the larger rural education community (pp. e28-e31). More specific information on how the applicant intends to actively share this information with the field would strengthen this application.

Reader's Score: 32

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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 application provides a list of management objectives and indicates the Project Director will be responsible for developing a "project management document" of policies, procedures, responsibilities and the like (p. e31). It goes on to describe the details of the project's management; this description includes the management objectives, the tasks and milestones associated with each, the positions responsible for the tasks, and the target dates for task completion (pp. e32-e35). Also attached is a project time line chart for the period of the grant, presented by semester (pp. e158-e166), as well as the memoranda of understanding (MOUs) laying out the responsibilities of the project partners (pp. e47-e62). The detailed management plan, including the description and time line chart, suggests that the applicant is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within the budget presented (pp. e169-e179).

The application lists the key project staff by name, identifies their major responsibilities, and provides a brief description of their backgrounds and experiences (pp.e35-e36). Also included are resumes of key staff (pp. e93-e123). The resumes show key staff have extensive experience implementing AVID, managing

partnerships at the district level, and managing major multi-million dollar projects .

Weaknesses:

The application notes that there will be training sessions related to the vertical articulation goal, but it does not explain what these trainings consist of or who specifically will conduct them (p. e159). Further, although the applicant's summaries of the key personnel qualifications show strong background and experience with AVID, the identified personnel do not appear to have practical experience with development of vertical articulation activities. The applicant does not provide explanations of how the listed staff are qualified to manage or carry out this important vertical articulation activity (pp. e35-e36; e93-e123).

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.**
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**

Strengths:

n/a -- Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

n/a -- Scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

1. We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on

- (a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);**
- (b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and**
- (c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve**

children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations that Support College Access & Success

1. 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 application describes a proposed project with the major aim of enhancing rural students' academic readiness for and success in attending college. The applicant presents a unique approach that involves the development of a curriculum that articulates courses from middle school to college while applying the AVID program to train and support teachers as they undertake this effort. (pp. e19-e25; e28-e29).

Weaknesses:

The application does not describe specific goals, strategies, or tasks that will help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes and it does not explain how the program components will provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults as regards getting in and staying in college (pp. e19-e25; e28-e31).

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs

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

Strengths:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

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

Strengths:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Technology

- 1. 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 did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 08:50 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2012 05:10 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	21
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	74
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes		
1. CPP 6	1	0
Innovations that Support College Access & Success		
1. CPP 7	1	1
Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs		
1. CPP 8	1	0
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	0
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	0
Sub Total	5	1
Total	105	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Full Development Panel - 12: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet, and (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The eligible applicants 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.

(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 proposed model has a definitive set of goals to improve graduation rates, college enrollments, and college success rates through the implementation of the AVID Program and the creation and integration of a Vertical Alignment System in three rural and low-come schools in Florida. The applicant will partner with the South Florida State College and the Heartland Educational Consortium. The program builds on the current work of the AVID Program, which has been proven as an innovative project, and will provide support systems into the school day.

The system will support high school completion with academic success and more productive college access and success through increased productivity. Linking performance indicators and tracking achievement will provide staff with a data system that can be used to enhance services and instruction based on student performance.

The AVID Program has shown a significant impact on student achievement, dropout rates, increased high school graduation, and post-secondary enrollment and completion in a wide range of school districts throughout the country. The project will utilize a range of staff from these target schools to develop the Vertical Alignment Component of this project. This will include content area specialists, school leaders, and decision-makers from participating school districts and other partners. This will bring a variety of thoughts and involvement regarding the classroom curriculum to this development.

(2). The applicant states that the cost per student for the 800 students involved in this project will be \$4,311. The applicant states the lessons learned and information gathered from this project states that all students in these schools will benefit over the course of this project and then this cost will be lowered to \$450 per student for all students in the school. If this project was expanded to 100, 250, and 500 thousand students the costs would be \$625 in the first year and then drop to \$277 in year two and \$238 in year three.

(3). The Vertical Alignment System that will be developed and the corresponding handbook that will be provided and available to any school district that is implementing AVID is an important component of this

project. This will be a valuable resource to schools and school districts that have or would like to implement AVID.

(4). The participating school districts and college will be able to sustain the program and all components as developed through this project. The applicant intends to develop a project manual and will make it available to as a free resource that can be downloaded from the Internet by each of the 4,800 schools presently implementing the AVID Program. Other schools can also benefit and utilize the concepts in the manual.

Weaknesses:

(1). No weaknesses are noted for this factor under the criterion.

(2). The applicant did not address why the costs for this project is so high for the first 800 students and then drops dramatically as the cohort grows. A breakdown of the specific costs used in the calculation of the estimates and a discussion of the changes in the costs would clarify the budget requests. Further, this information would be helpful in understanding the costs for sustaining or scaling the project to serve a greater number of students.

(3). The Vertical Alignment System and the handbook to be developed appear are a large part of the cost of this project. Without additional detail on the costs for these two components and how these costs would apply in a different school, it is difficult to determine the specific cost breakdown for each component of the project and how it would impact future users of this project.

(4). No weaknesses are noted for this factor under the criterion.

Reader's Score: 21

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the project. In determining the significance of 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(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). There are numerous school districts in the country that are utilizing the AVID Program to enhance student academic learning. AVID Programs offer additional rigorous coursework to the present curriculum that prepares students to complete high school in good academic standing and prepare them for success in college. The vertical alignment development to accompany AVID will be developed and then made available via an on-line Internet handbook.

(2). The applicant identifies a wide range of existing research regarding AVID and how vertical alignment benefit numerous schools, staff, and students. This project will utilize this research and apply it to the implementation of this project to expand knowledge through developing a handbook that will be widely available to other schools as they explore ways to increase student academics and post-secondary success. There is also ample research on the transition from middle to high school for many students and this project will address this transition in the handbook to be created.

(3). AVID has a record of improving student achievement and student outcomes. The development of this process will have a positive impact on extending the achievements that AVID has had and now will be expanded with the vertical alignment that will be created from this project.

Weaknesses:

- (1). No weaknesses are noted for this factor under the criterion.
- (2). No weaknesses are noted for this factor under the criterion.
- (3). No weaknesses are noted for this factor under the criterion.

Reader's Score: 35

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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 applicant provided a comprehensive list of program activities with responsibilities, timelines, and tasks to be accomplished. The vertical alignment development is a critical component of the project and will be a collaboration of leaders and key decision-makers from each school district, content leaders, and college personnel. The handbook to be created is will assist with the transition of students from middle school to high school and from high school to college.

The dissemination and next steps component of the management plan supports scalability through presentations at research and professional conferences, professional articles, and submission of a validation grant.

(2). The Director of Leadership Development has experience in rural education and the AVID Program, and will lead the implementation and have fiscal over-site of the project. The other staff has extensive experience and/or involvement in rural education and managing Federally funded projects.

Weaknesses:

- (1). No weaknesses are noted for this factor under the criterion.

- (2). The application does not provide enough detail regarding staff experience related to vertical alignment and this is a very important component of this project.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - (1) **The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**

 - (2) **The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.**

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

Strengths:

n/a - Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

n/a - Scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

1. **We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on**
 - (a) **improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);**

 - (b) **improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and**

(c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations that Support College Access & Success

1. 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 AVID Program is the base of this project and is a well-respected and researched program for increasing the likelihood of youth from low-income families and other students, as well, to graduate from high school with the academic skills necessary to succeed in higher education. Research provided in the application indicates that students need interdependent sets of skills and knowledge, including: key content knowledge, college knowledge, academic behaviors, and key cognitive strategies. This project will identify innovative practices that will be part of this project and answer these needs.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide detail on the college application process and financial aid issues that confront many rural students and their families.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs

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

Strengths:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

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

Strengths:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Technology

- 1. 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 did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this competitive preference priority for the purposes of earning competitive preference points.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2012 05:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/20/2012 04:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	14
Sub Total	100	14
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes		
1. CPP 6	1	
Innovations that Support College Access & Success		
1. CPP 7	1	
Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs		
1. CPP 8	1	
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	
Sub Total	5	
Total	105	14

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Full Development Panel - 12: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet, and (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The eligible applicants 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.

(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:

n/a Scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

n/a Scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the project. In determining the significance of 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(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:

n/a Scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

n/a Scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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:

n/a Scored by another reviewer

Weaknesses:

n/a Scored by another reviewer

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.

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

Strengths:

This application provides an evaluation design including both a summative outcomes component as well as a project implementation component (p. 19) which includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This is a strong approach as it will likely allow for performance feedback assessing both interim progress as well as measuring intended outcomes. Additionally, the proposed combination of utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches will allow for measurement of a variety of different types of program outcomes as well

as assist in understanding how the project's implementation led to the measured outcomes.

Furthermore, the student outcome component is guided by three key evaluation questions (p. 19) which are reasonable and appropriate for the project as they address key student outcomes including students' enrollment in AP and dual credit courses as well as their college matriculation rates. The application provides a description of both a pre-post analysis of student outcomes utilizing a two-level hierarchical linear model (HLM) approach as well as a dosage analysis based on the years of exposure to the AVID program (p. 21). The dosage analysis would be important as it would help establish the effect of differing levels of program implementation fidelity on student outcomes.

One of the strengths of this application is its description and details about its qualitative methodologies including the frequency of data collection for the various proposed data strands and the constructs each of them will address (pp. 23-24). Also the cost of the proposed evaluation ranging from \$95-\$150k/year seems appropriate for the size and scope of the project and its year-to-year fluctuations based on the evaluation activities (Appendix J) is quite appropriate and is another strength of this application. Finally, the external evaluator proposed, MDRC, is a nationally-known firm that will provide the requisite independence, appropriate objectivity, and evaluation expertise for this evaluation which is important for carrying out the project evaluation effectively as it will likely provide confidence to project stakeholders for the evaluation work as well as any potential findings.

Weaknesses:

The application could be strengthened by the incorporation of a comparison group of either demographically similar, non-project participating schools or potentially other schools using AVID who are not part of the project Collaborative. The latter would address one of the weaknesses of the proposed evaluation which is that it is not entirely clear what the treatment is in this application. In some places in the application it appears to be the AVID program in conjunction with the Collaborative and in others it appears to be the AVID program solely. If it is indeed the former than a group of other similar Florida schools who are only using the AVID program and not involved in the Collaborative could be an excellent comparison group. Additionally, it is unclear why "it will not be possible to collect college entrance data on students prior to AVID implementation" (p. 20). The addition of pre-treatment data, perhaps from the National Student Clearinghouse, would definitely strengthen the evaluation design.

Additionally, the application would be strengthened by the inclusion of a quantitative discussion of the proposed power or estimated effect sizes that could be detected for each of the analyses especially given the application's statement that "with only 4 high schools, the power to detect small statistically significant differences will be very limited" (p. 22), in order to address the concern of investing significant resources in an evaluation knowing that it is unlikely to detect a statistically significant effect and thereby not using evaluation resources effectively. It is also unclear if, and how, the fidelity of implementation measures developed (pp. 22-23) will be utilized, if at all, in the impact analyses.

Finally, while the application includes a logic model (p. 7), the application could be strengthened by refining it to show more specifically the hypothesized linkages between individual program activities, outputs, and program outcomes, rather than one bulleted block list of each, and how the evaluation design will test these causal hypotheses. This would be especially helpful for potential replication or testing in other settings.

Reader's Score: 14

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

1. 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 - Innovations that Support College Access & Success

1. We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

(a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;

(b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and

(c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs

1. 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 - Improving Productivity

1. 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 - Technology

1. 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: 09/20/2012 04:51 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 03:27 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Significance		
1. Significance	35	0
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	16
Sub Total	100	16
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes		
1. CPP 6	1	0
Innovations that Support College Access & Success		
1. CPP 7	1	
Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs		
1. CPP 8	1	
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	
Sub Total	5	0
Total	105	16

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Full Development Panel - 12: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet, and (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The eligible applicants 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.

(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:

n/a Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the project. In determining the significance of 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(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:

n/a Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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:

n/a Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

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

(2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.

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

Strengths:

The evaluation is framed in terms of implementation and outcomes strands (e37). For student outcomes, the evaluation will use the school districts' data records to conduct a two-level hierarchical linear modeling analysis, exploring high school credits and average grade-point averages earned, percent of students enrolling in and completing advanced coursework, and high school retention and graduation rates (e39). A secondary analysis will explore the relationship between AVID dosage and student outcomes. The analysis will

explore three themes: (1) the projects capacity to strengthen students high school performance and capacity to stay on track for graduation; (2) students enrollment in advanced, honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment courses; and (3) students post-secondary school enrollment. These plans will contribute both to fine-tuning implementation and to assessing differential outcomes, all of which are important to achieving improved student outcomes and to supporting scale-up efforts.

A rich set of primary analyses proposed, including (1) pre-post measurement of change over time in students school participation, persistence, and success; (2) and a secondary analysis of program dosage to determine if spending more time in AVID schools is associated with improved outcomes. The added exploration of the impact of dosage will contribute much needed information to the field about whether amount of time with services is a reliable predictor variable in this project design. Descriptive information about where students attend post-secondary schools will also be collected and reported (e38-e39). Data collection on the implementation will include site visits, phone check-ins and interviews, and school surveys of all participants. (e41). Together, these multiple measures for assessing implementation as well as impact will strengthen developers certainty about the impact of these kinds of services on students achievement and college persistence.

The outcome analysis will use districts data records to implement a two-level hierarchical model (schools nested in schools and school fixed effects), controlling for school-and student-level baseline characteristics. Using extant data records to verify outcomes makes data collection efficient and ensures alignment with other data the district might be maintaining.

The evaluation design anticipates documenting what it takes to sustain the collaborative implementing the project and examine the fidelity of design implementation (e40). Experiences of both student and staff will be documented and the process evaluation will generate formative feedback for the AVID Center. This evaluation component will focus several vital implementation research questions (e41).

The proposed budget provides adequate resources to support the depth and quality of the proposed evaluation.

Weaknesses:

It is not entirely clear whether the evaluation is assessing the success of the Collaborative partnership and its elements within and across the participating schools, or if it is evaluating the impact of the combined AVID and partnership elements on the treatment group. This lack of clarity weakens the case made for the evaluation, making it uncertain as to exactly which program elements will be examined.

Assuming the treatment group is comprised of students who benefit from the combination of Collaborative and AVID services, the proposed evaluation would be further strengthened by the including a comparison group of other AVID schools which did not benefit from the Collaborative components. AVID is such a long-running program, that one would expect there to be substantial comparative data and many potential comparison studies for creating a stronger quasi-experimental design.

The design would also be clearer if it included a discussion of the anticipated power levels and effect sizes, especially in the four pilot high schools (e40). Moreover, the logic model needs to be refined to show the linkages between individual inputs and outcomes.

Although the proposed budget is sizable, and the proposed evaluation team is well qualified to conduct this type of study, the applicant does not make clear how the cost elements will be distributed each year (e171). The sufficiency of resources would be more defensible if the budget narrative included further information about the costs associated with securing instruments, collecting data, and conducting the analyses.

Reader's Score: 16

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

1. We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (birth through 3rd grade) by enhancing the quality of early learning programs. To meet this priority, applications must focus on

(a) improving young children's school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive readiness) so that children are prepared for success in core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101(11) of the ESEA);

(b) improving developmental milestones and standards and aligning them with appropriate outcome measures; and

(c) improving alignment, collaboration, and transitions between early learning programs that serve children from birth to age three, in preschools, and in kindergarten through third grade.

Strengths:

n/a Scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations that Support College Access & Success

1. We give competitive preference to applications for projects that would implement innovative practices, strategies, or programs that are designed to enable kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students, particularly high school students, to successfully prepare for, enter, and graduate from a two- or four-year college. To meet this priority, applications must include practices, strategies, or programs for K-12 students that

(a) address students' preparedness and expectations related to college;

(b) help students understand issues of college affordability and the financial aid and college application processes; and

(c) provide support to students from peers and knowledgeable adults.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs

1. 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 - Improving Productivity

- 1. 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 - Technology

- 1. 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: 09/21/2012 03:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/19/2012 07:33 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	20
Significance		
1. Significance	35	32
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes		
1. CPP 6	1	
Innovations that Support College Access & Success		
1. CPP 7	1	0
Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs		
1. CPP 8	1	
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	
Sub Total	5	0
Total	105	70

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Full Development Panel - 12: 84.411C

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: AVID Center (U411C120039)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

(1) The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy, with actions that are (a) aligned with the priorities the eligible applicant is seeking to meet, and (b) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(2) The eligible applicants 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.

(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:

- Three clear goals and five specific, measurable outcomes are presented on pages 3-4. Two project strategies are presented on pages 4-6: (1) undertaking systematic vertical alignment to increase college readiness; and (2) accelerated implementation of AVID. These strategies aim to improve college-going cultures at schools, increase access to accelerated/advanced coursework, and overall are supportive of the applicant's goals and outcomes as well as the priority of the competition.

- The logic model on page 7 links activities with interim and long term outcomes, the achievement of which will directly impact college readiness, matriculation, and persistence (AP5, Competitive Preference Priority 7). The logic model ties the activities to the outcomes in a way that demonstrates that the project is aligned with the priorities.

- On page 8 the applicant presents scale up costs for other entities to reach 100K, 250K, and 500K students per year for four years, showing a reduction in costs each subsequent year. If realized, these cost reductions would aid in the scale and sustainability of future projects.

- On pages 9-10, the applicant highlights how the project activities will become part of their ongoing work. This includes: (1) vertical alignment collaborative established and maintained by the AVID Center, schools and districts; (2) collaborative alignment process and material incorporated into regular school staff training (to be performed by AVID Center Staff); and (3) project manual available online for free download.

Weaknesses:

- While the applicant provides cost estimates if it were scaled to serve greater number of students and these costs reflect cost savings in subsequent years, it is unclear how they arrived at the reduced figures. For example, the applicant identifies the cost per student in the first year of implementation as \$625 per student. First, this figure does not align with previous per-student costs presented on page 7, with no clarification regarding why the amount is different. Then they state that in the second year of implementation costs will

drop to \$277 per student with no explanation for why costs decrease each year. Without clarity regarding the project cost per student it is difficult to determine the reasonableness of project costs.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the project. In determining the significance of 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 potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.**
- (3) The extent to which the eligible applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the effect, on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates.**

Strengths:

- The applicant chose two major components for the project; collaborative vertical alignment and AVID College Readiness activities. These represent an exceptional approach to the priorities selected by the applicant (AP5 and Competitive Preference Priority 7), as evidenced by multiple studies cited in Appendix D. For example, Barnett, et.al. 2012 (Appendix D pages 7-8) report that college readiness partnership programs (like the one proposed) can improve student outcomes, align academic standards and assessment, and improve opportunities for college recruitment. Also, Guthrie and Guthrie (2000, page D-11) found that middle school students with 2 years of AVID had significantly higher GPAs than their peers.

- The applicant presents a practical plan for sharing findings with other in the field via a manual to guide schools in implementing the approach. (p 12).

- The applicant established five clear targets regarding student achievement, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary persistence. Given the research presented in Appendices C-D it is likely that they will achieve these targets.

Weaknesses:

- The reader would like to see more information regarding the gap in knowledge, theory, and practice that the project aims to fill. There is strong evidence presented regarding the effects of the project strategies (Appendices C-D), and some regarding the need for the strategies (pp 11-12) but it is not clear how the strategies are new or unique in a way that would significantly contribute to the field or to rural students in general.

Reader's Score: 32

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for**

accomplishing project tasks, as well as tasks related to the sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.

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

Strengths:

- The applicant presented a management plan (pp 14-17 and Appendix J) which includes timelines, responsibilities, and milestones for completing each activity. Tasks are broken down by objective, clearly depicting which activities will be used to complete each task.
- Project staff appear to be highly qualified to implement the AVID program, including the Project Director with 20 years experience as a school administrator and three years as an AVID Trainer; and the AVID Florida State Director with five years AVID experience (p 17). Further, the Project Director managed a budget of \$26M during her time as an Assistant Superintendent of High Schools and a budget of \$370M during her time as a Chief Operation Officer. This experience demonstrates her ability in managing a project of this size and scope.
- The data collection and evaluation staff appear to be well-qualified for their positions. For example, the AVID Director of Data and Evaluation possesses a PhD and has served in his position since 2005 (Appendix F). He has relevant research experience dating back to 1996, including a role as Director of Assessment, Accountability and Research, and responsibilities that include data collection, analysis and program reporting.

Weaknesses:

- Although the staffing plan is well represented by individuals qualified to implement AVID, there is no clear indication whether any staff members possess significant experience in developing a vertical alignment system between multiple entities.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.**
- (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.**
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.**

General:

N/A - Scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

1. 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 - Innovations that Support College Access & Success

1. 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:

- On page 2 and in Appendices C and D, it is demonstrated that AVID and vertical alignment support college access and success.

Weaknesses:

- Implementation of AVID is not particularly innovative, given that it has already been studied in multiple settings (see Appendices C and D).

- It is not clear whether the applicant would address college affordability and financial aid processes or provide peer support to students.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs

1. 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 - Improving Productivity

1. 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 - Technology

1. 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: 09/19/2012 07:33 PM