

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 02:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	80
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	1
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	0
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	1
Sub Total	5	2
Total	105	82

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Full Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

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:

A. STRENGTHS: The applicant clearly outlines three project goals and utilizes a series of tables to present the corresponding (and measurable) objectives and the anticipated outcomes to support the project's efforts in meeting the i3 priorities (pp 5-8, Appendix J). These goals demonstrate a plan to provide both school and family supports as youth progress through the grades, including training to project stakeholders to ensure that participants have the knowledge and skills they need. Examples include the family training activities to be provided through the Families for College Academy and the peer mentor training which will be strengthened as student "mentees" eventually become the mentors themselves (pp 5-6).

A clear explanation is provided of the proposed project costs including start-up and operating estimates per student per year for reaching the total number of students served as required in the application (pp 8-9). The narrative discusses costs specifically related to the project's objectives and design to establish the fact that costs are reasonable. In this regard, the applicant indicates the greatest costs are 1) the expertise and curriculum intended to help achieve the student goals and objectives, 2) the parent and family engagement activities, and 3) English Language Learner (ELL) academic achievement - all of which demonstrate a clear focus on Priority 3 and capacity building at the district, school, and family levels. Project resources are proposed to be directed at the middle grades so that by high school, more ELLs will successfully access the core curriculum (p 9). This will help to increase student achievement over time and begin to mitigate barriers to postsecondary success. It is also evident that the district intends to incorporate the findings of this project into the district's ongoing school improvement work by honing the district's strategic and technology plans and supporting a variety of training initiatives including a train-the-trainer model. These activities will contribute to an expanded and tested set of strategies which will support the sustainability and scalability of a comprehensive project design.

Weaknesses:

A. WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 25

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:

B. STRENGTHS: In order to highlight the extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach, the applicant provides research findings which focus on the issues to be addressed including the characteristics of challenges impacting English Language Learners (p 10). This review of relevant literature drives home the point that successful school transformation rests with a staff which is willing to engage parents as active partners in the educational process (p 10). The applicant sums it up best stating, "educators need to not only invite families to participate as partners in their child's education and create a welcoming school environment, but to understand parents' perspectives on literacy and school, help them grasp the parental role in U.S. education, and ensure they gain confidence to inhabit that role" (p 10).

The significance of the proposed project is founded in a discussion around the fact that there is a lack of research into promising practices and this inhibits the development of evidence-based solutions focused on parent engagement as a key for ELLs (p 11). The applicant points out that the Families for College initiative "puts family engagement at the heart of a project whose exceptional approach is its combination of components identified by researchers as central to effective EL programs" (p 10). The proposed plan to engage families in ongoing monitoring and intensive, relationship-focused activities designed to teach parents how to monitor their child's academic progress is sound. These strategies will concomitantly build parenting confidence and help to increase parent leadership in the community schools. Given these strategies, the initiative is expected to impact ELL educational outcomes and result in gains for the targeted students and their families (p 12). In addition, these findings are anticipated to inform the field regarding promising practices and the development of evidence-based solutions.

Weaknesses:

B. WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were identified.

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:

C. STRENGTHS: The applicant revisits each goal and its objectives, and then illustrates the tasks, timeline, and responsibilities for each in a table (pp 13-18). These tables provide a strong graphic depiction of proposed activities in conjunction with the logic model found in Appendix J. It is noted that one section of these tables outlines these elements in order to address project sustainability and scalability (p 17). This approach serves to illustrate the breadth and scope of the applicant's proposed strategies. In addition, the application describes the qualifications, training and experience of the project director and key project personnel to demonstrate prior experience, e.g., work with the California Schools to Watch model schools program; leadership for a United Way of Greater Los Angeles education grant; and experience as a trainer for California Teacher of English Learners program (pp 19-21). The resumes which are found in the Appendices reveal the applicant's capacity for managing an initiative of the size and scope of the project, as well as the fact that these individuals possess the appropriate background and training. In sum, the management plan as described is adequate to support the achievement of the objectives of the project. The sustainability and scalability of the initiative is evident in the capacity building activities to be utilized including the family academy and the professional development offerings.

Weaknesses:

C. WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 20

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

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

CPP#8 - STRENGTHS: The applicant proposes to address the needs of Limited English Proficient Students at the secondary level under this competitive preference priority. A considerable research basis for this proposal is provided, and the applicant justifies a need for a strategy that addresses family and community norms and language-driven instructional practices (p 2). This is essential to ensure the achievement of the project goals. It is stated that academic resources will target "grades 6-8 so cohort students may reclassify as Fluent English Proficient by the end of 8th grade to access the high school core curriculum" (p 2). The ELA-English 3D program design is outlined by the applicant and will consist of a middle school block concentrated on developing academic language to improve student achievement and student growth (pp 3-4, 10, 15). Overall, this approach will provide an expedient method to address the unique learning needs of the targeted student population.

Weaknesses:

CPP#8 - WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

CPP#10 - STRENGTHS: It is noted that Moreno Valley USD is an Apple district with an iPad pilot program, school-wide wireless access, and district use policies in place (p 4). These characteristics provide a strong platform for the success of this priority. The applicant proposes to utilize iPads as an instructional tool with students in the targeted EL group, each expected to bring them to school every day. Students and their parents will receive instruction in their use, and EL teachers, peer mentors, and high school counselors will be provided training to enable them to effectively use this technology (pp 4, 14). A promising aspect of the use of the iPads is that it will also encourage the building of district capacity for long-term solutions to EL needs (pp 7, 15). The use of technology is expected to assist with the development of student self-efficacy and parent engagement in their child's education, while also tapping cognitive engagement, collaboration, inquiry, and critical thinking. These features of the proposal are highly desirable as they will contribute to a learning environment that is motivating, supportive, and non-threatening. A final note regarding the completeness of the applicant's plan is the incorporation of an electronic peer mentoring component into project activities (p

11). This configuration is not well-researched in the field and could be helpful in shedding light on a new line of inquiry.

Weaknesses:

CPP#10 - WEAKNESSES: No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 02:22 PM

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

Reader #2: *****

	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	15
Sub Total	100	15
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	15

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Full Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

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

Weaknesses:

n/a

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

Weaknesses:

n/a

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

Weaknesses:

n/a

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 proposal includes an evaluation of the California League of Middle Schools English Learner Families for College intervention. The evaluation will include quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group to assess whether or not the intervention impacts family and student outcomes.

The evaluation provides clear research questions and helpful research objective from which to judge

intervention effectiveness (p. 23-34).

The proposal outlines data sources and methods for assessing fidelity of implementation and performance feedback, which includes both checklists and focus group interviews. Based on the description, the evaluation will provide high quality fidelity of implementation data.

The lead evaluator, Dr. Price, clearly has the experience and expertise to conduct a high quality evaluation. The budgeted 8% contractual allocation is appropriate given the nature of data collection and analysis.

Weaknesses:

The procedure for matching procedure did not provide sufficient information about how the students would be matched. Although some matching variables are listed (p. 24), it was unclear whether matched students would be from the same schools or would they be matched at the school and not the student level. Overall, the sampling procedure needs to provide more information.

The repeated measured ANOVA is appropriate for the analysis, but the authors should provide more information about covariates and other analysis methods, if appropriate. The description was not clear about the relationship between the research questions, data sources, and analysis procedures.

The evaluators do not include any independent measures of academic achievement and rely solely on state assessments. The authors should consider an additional measure of academic achievement to complement the state assessments. This would provide a more in-depth analysis congruent with a Development grant.

Reader's Score: 15

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

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(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

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 02:22 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2012 05:06 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	24
Significance		
1. Significance	35	35
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management and Personnel	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	20	0
Sub Total	100	79
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	1
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	1
Sub Total	5	2
Total	105	81

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Full Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

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 proposal establishes the case for the need of additional research-based evidence supporting effective parent engagement linked to student academic success. Using a longitudinal research model to assess, track, and monitor the project objectives and activities used to connect students, staff, and parents to desired outcomes. The project goals and objectives align to expected outcomes for targeted population. The project has a solid implementation plan using technology to build students, parents, peer mentors, and education staff strengths and knowledge on academic success, college preparation, and career exploration (page e19). The proposal estimated start-up and operating cost and scale up projections focus on 360 cohort students but 1,080 students and families will benefit from the project via staff expertise and sound curriculum (page e25-e26).

Weaknesses:

The project is structured as a train the trainer model; the proposal could make a stronger case for model infusion. Also, the plan could provide an in-depth explanation on how the project will provide a rigorous, cost effective and sustainable EL model that other districts can adopt or replicate, without it the likelihood of sustainability and replication is unclear.

Reader's Score: 24

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 proposal provides good research base information regarding families' role in children's academic success and the rationale for the needed data. The project infuses measurable outcomes to students' academics, parental involvement, professional development, and partnerships to create an infrastructure focus on providing students, families, and educators with accessible resources, communication tools, and technology needed to validate the model and targeted research design. The contribution to the field suggests putting evidence-based theory and recommendations into practices e.g. cohort model, generate longitudinal data, and qualitative measures could generate useful feedback (page e29). The impact addresses how the cohort educational outcomes use of early warning indicators could be used to monitor student challenges via intensive universal relationships (page e29).

Weaknesses:

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:

The proposal makes a strong case for the applicant's experience, knowledge, and skills needed to implement the project design. The plan includes detailed descriptions for key project staff roles and responsibilities, experience and knowledge, and partners' relationship. Also, the timeline aligns task, milestones, and staff responsibility for task to project goals. The applicant supplies relevant information for all key project leaders and partners e.g. job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, resumes, and sound fiscal management.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 20

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

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:

The project provides supports, opportunities, and services to high needs, middle and high school, limited English proficient students and families. The applicant provide strategies and activities to improve academic outcomes and increase college and career readiness (page e 20).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

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:

The design use of technology as the vehicle that support the peer e-mentor component. It uses iPads, approved apps, and a communication tool to facilitate e-mentoring.

Weaknesses:

The design could make a stronger case for the infusion of technology alignment to the desired outcomes. It supports e-mentoring but does not explain how the use of technology might ultimately impact student college readiness.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/24/2012 05:06 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/24/2012 03:29 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	24
Significance		
1. Significance	35	33
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	75
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	1
Improving Productivity		
1. CPP 9	1	
Technology		
1. CPP 10	1	1
Sub Total	5	2
Total	105	77

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Full Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

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:

Proposal effectively demonstrates the alignment of local need, relevant research, and the planned intervention. Goals and objectives described starting on page 5 provide concrete, reasonable targets that clearly link with proposed activities. Intentional connections between parent and student-focused academic components, as described on page 4 of the narrative, further strengthen the alignment of the project with the Absolute Priority. The project design includes a clear and well thought out explanation of targeted students, selection process, and tracking. Complexities of implementation on the ground are well addressed, including how interventions will be scaffolded as youth progress through grades, as shown on page 6. The narrative clearly demonstrates how project components family engagement, data, in-school and at-home learning, youth and parent leadership, as well as peer mentors will work together to ultimately improve academic achievement and increase college access for participating youth and families. Given the variety and strength of program components, costs seem reasonable for a multi-year intervention and the likelihood of successfully meeting targeted outcomes is strong.

Weaknesses:

On page 3, the proposal indicates that the project will function as a train the trainer model, but the narrative does not specify what components this model will use and how those will be implemented. Some related tasks, as well as dissemination of findings, are listed on page 17 in the workplan section, however the narrative would make a stronger case with additional details about plans in these areas.

Reader's Score: 24

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 proposal makes a clear and strong tie between gaps identified in the literature and planned intervention components, highlighting both the unique needs of long-term English Language Learners and the importance of engaging parents as partners. The table found on page 10 explicitly ties the proposed components to recommendations from the literature, making this project an exceptional opportunity to test implementation of an integrated approach specifically focused on the identified needs. As such, the proposed project seems well-positioned to not only improve family engagement and academic achievement for the targeted participants, but also to contribute to a more robust understanding of how to put evidence-based theory and recommendations into practice. The intended implementation through a cohort model further positions the project to contribute to knowledge in the field and the emphasis on a relationship-focused approach also increases the likelihood of positive impact on targeted outcomes.

Weaknesses:

While the proposal details models and research-backing for many of the project components, details and evidence supporting planned family engagement activities are not as well-developed. More details in the narrative regarding plans for dissemination activities would also further strengthen the case for potential impact in the field.

Reader's Score: 33

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 proposal presents detailed and realistic goals including concrete and reasonable targets, that align effectively with the timelines and responsibilities. The leadership team demonstrates relevant expertise for this proposed project, as well as related experience in implementing large grant-funded projects. The proposed creation of an implementation handbook would be a good resource for sustaining and/or scaling up on the work.

Weaknesses:

While there is mention of monthly management team meetings, the proposal would benefit from more information on communication mechanisms between partners and with sites. Additional detail on plans for sustainability and scalability would also further strengthen the proposal.

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

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:

Very strong and both research- and reality-based understanding of the unique literacy needs of targeted population and age groups. Project approach seems well-suited for effectively engaging both students and families who have limited English proficiency.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 1

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:

E-mentoring between peers is an interesting area to explore, more likely to be successful with this age group (than adult-youth models which have had many challenges).

Weaknesses:

The use of technology within the family engagement project components is not as clear.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/24/2012 03:29 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 02:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

Reader #5: *****

	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	15
Sub Total	100	15
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	15

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Full Development Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: California League of Middle Schools (U411C120095)

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

According to page 25, CLMS already has an external evaluation team that they will contract that has over 20 years of experience in evaluation and reporting. Based on the description, the ERC Evaluation team seems to have a lot of experience in evaluation and reporting that would be beneficial to CLMS; for instance, Dr. Price has experience evaluating the English Learner Access program for LAUSD. This experience would be relevant considering the project description of CLMS.

The evaluation design involves a mixed methods evaluation with focus groups of students and parents, which is important when looking at this type of project and the qualitative data is definitely needed considering the research questions that they are looking at. The data that they are going to use is detailed and when these data are collected is also clear.

Comprehensive quasi-experimental design that describes the matching protocol that includes both demographics and prior academic achievement.

There will be ongoing evaluations that will help improve the program and will inform the leadership team.

This allows for CLMS to change certain aspects of the program that aren't working as these issues arise.

Research questions were very clear and aligned with the objectives that were listed. The research questions were very detailed and it shows how the evaluation plan addresses these questions. The alignment between the two is needed in order to see how the evaluation is responding to the project outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The funding for the evaluation could be clearer. The only portion that is clear is the amount going to ERC, so it is unclear if the amount in the budget is enough to carry out the full evaluation plan. They only give the overall amount without providing the cost breakdown for the evaluation plan. It would be really helpful to have a breakdown of the money per year and what the funds are going to. It is unclear how many hours the external evaluators will work and how much of that can be covered by this amount.

Furthermore, the sample for the evaluation is unclear. This is important information to have because if the sample is not large enough, the findings will not be generalizable. Not only that, but the more statistical analyses other than ANOVA will be necessary. The details of why certain statistical analyses are needed and how they will be used should also be included.

While the quasi-experimental design described on page 24 describes that students will be matched based on demographics and previous academic performance, it is not clear where the students are attending school. It should be clear if the students are from schools within the district or not to account for any other differences.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/21/2012 02:22 PM