

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/27/2012 02:02 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	0	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Significance		
1. Significance	25	0
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	24
Sub Total	100	24
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CCP 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CCP 7	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. CPP 8	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. CPP 9	1	
Sub Total	1	

Competitive Preference Priority 10

Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. CPP 10

Sub Total 1

Total 105 24

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Validation Panel - 4: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

Reader's Score:

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 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 Validation grant.

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

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Strengths:

N/A - reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A - reviewed and 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 extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(3) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths:

N/A - reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A - reviewed and 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 complex projects.

(3) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

N/A - reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Weaknesses:

N/A - reviewed and scored by another reviewer.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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 include a well-designed experimental study or a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) 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.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

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

Strengths:

The applicant has identified an independent evaluator to conduct a quasi-experimental study to determine the extent to which the project positively impacts student outcomes of interest (page e48). The evaluation will strengthen an interrupted time series design with the inclusion of comparison schools (page e50). The comparison design is further strengthened by selecting two comparison schools per each of 10 treatment schools (5 in Texas, 5 in Colorado) matched first by a three-year pre-intervention pattern on outcomes of interest, then by demographic characteristics (page e50).

The evaluation plan includes appropriate information regarding power analysis, sample sizes, and minimum detectable effect sizes per state (pages e50-51). Both implementation and impact research and evaluation questions are explicated (page e49).

Data on outcomes of interest will be secured by each state's longitudinal state-level data systems, for both the project treatment years and for the three years prior to project implementation (page e52). Analysis will focus not only on comparing results for treatment and comparison schools during the treatment implementation period, but also on comparing project results to the same schools prior to implementation (page e52).

The applicant demonstrates how the study design components will offset threats to internal and external validity (page e53). And, recognizing the possibility that results might be limited only to similarly-motivated schools, the applicant will collect data on reasons for school participation and school attitudes toward the intervention, in order to better understand relevant school characteristics.

The independent evaluator will examine program implementation by focusing on services provided and implementation fidelity (page e53). A comprehensive mix of qualitative and quantitative methods is identified to secure implementation data (participation records, observations of professional development, school staff surveys on participation as well as use of project elements) (page e54). The independent evaluator will also examine implementation of different project elements by conducting site visits to six treatment schools (three per state) in Years 2 and 4 (page e55). Such a case study approach, involving interviews and observations, should help illuminate how each school is implementing the proposed project services, as well as identify supportive and/or inhibitive factors.

Informal feedback will take place throughout the five-year project via quarterly meetings with program staff (page e55). The evaluator will prepare annual reports; the first two will focus more on implementation and the next three on outcomes/impact.

The applicant includes narrative describing how the evaluator will work project staff to identify "indicators of implementation" (page e56) that will be incorporated into subsequent data collection instruments to better measure implementation. Additionally, they intend to document via one of the annual evaluation reports "how" the project elements are implemented across schools and what supports are necessary for effective implementation. Further, by linking level of implementation to student outcomes, the subsequent analyses should reveal critical information related to key elements and outcomes that will facilitate replication in other settings.

The applicant states that a total of \$1,545,621 will be allocated from the requested federal funds of \$15M for the independent evaluator. At approximately 10%, that amount seems ample to cover all evaluator costs, including securing consultants to conduct the school site visits (page e133).

Weaknesses:

Based on the timeline shown on page e44, along with the statement on page e52 that student data will be collected for Years 1-4, and the statement on page e55 that school visits will take place in Years 2 and 4, it does not appear as if the independent evaluator will be actively collecting any data in Year 5. If Year 5 is intended solely for data analysis and preparation of the final report, the budgeted amount for that year (shown on page e133) seems excessive.

Reader's Score: 24

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

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 7 - Competitive Preference Priority 7

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 8 - Competitive Preference Priority 8

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 9 - Competitive Preference Priority 9

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 10 - Competitive Preference Priority 10

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:

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Last Updated: 08/02/2012 12:19 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	0	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Significance		
1. Significance	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	23
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	100	73
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CCP 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CCP 7	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. CPP 8	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. CPP 9	1	
Sub Total	1	

Competitive Preference Priority 10

Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. CPP 10

Sub Total 1

Total 105 75

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Validation Panel - 4: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

Reader's Score:

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 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 Validation grant.

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

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant set a clear set of goals and provided the project design as a logic model to clarify their schema. Within the logic model were the activities, design elements, and proposed student outcomes, based on evidence of previous successful programs. (pp. 3-11) All of the activities, project design elements, and student outcomes relate directly to the absolute and competitive priorities established by the applicant. The applicant will ensure that the common core standards are aligned with appropriate coursework and formative assessments in selected schools to enable students to access college courses through dual enrollment and wrap-around services (to address issues related to college access and readiness). The project will particularly target LEP students and provide teachers with strategies that promote effectiveness of instruction with this target group. (pp. 1-3)

(2) The applicant indicates that each LEA partner has committed to scaling early colleges district-wide by the end of the grant period while establishing the foundation for further in-district expansion and scaling across their own regions. (p. 11) As the project ends, the applicant working with its partners, will codify the project design so that delivery will be easily accessible to other districts. (pp. 11-12)

(3) Considering the potential benefits to the students and society at large, the cost of the project at \$500 per

student is modest. According to the data provided by the applicant, this cost is 5% of the average public educational expenditure per student per year. (pp. 12-13) Bearing in mind that the project intends to serve 30,000 students, many of which will increase their potential earning power with advanced college training, and the fact that early college coursework decreases the need for cost heavy college remediation (p. 13), this is a cost-effective approach to the goal of a head start for college access.

(4) The applicant estimates the cost per student at \$500 over the course of the five years of the grant - \$16.5 million minus evaluation costs divided by 30,000 students. (p. 13) They indicates that the bulk of this one-time cost covers intensive summer and after-school professional development and specialized on-site coaching to support the implementation of the early college high school instructional program. Due to the economic efficiencies that regional scaling can achieve, the applicant reduces the cost per student to \$400 for additional scaling - \$40,000,000 for 100,000 students; \$100,000,000 for 250,000 students, and \$200,000,000 for 5000, 000 students. (pp. 13-14)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

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 extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(3) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths:

(1) The project is an exceptional, comprehensive approach to enabling students to access early college courses a transitioning from high school to college. The project provides an instructional framework that helps school districts align their teaching standards to the common core college readiness standards and provides students with coursework for dual enrollment credit. Embedded in this design is the use of formative assessments to help students "stay on track" in their coursework, wrap-around tutoring, mentoring, and counseling on college-related issues of expectations, college affordability, and the financial aid and college application processes. Districts benefit from the project by using the college ready framework (alignment, dual enrollment, technical assistance, and professional development) to prepare students, particularly LEP and low income students, for college success. (pp. 14-16)

(2) The applicant provides a large body of current research on effective practice to justify their program design model. In particular, the applicant cites a 2009 AIR/SRI evaluation report that shows that early colleges consistently outperformed district schools on state assessments by an average of 7 percentage points. The report also indicated that this type of program is particularly valuable for students from homes where a language other than English dominates. (p. 16)

(3) The applicant points to studies by SERVE (2006) and SRI (2010) to confirm the success of the design in increased student performance, attendance, participation in college coursework, closing the achievement gap, and improved social and behavioral effects. (Appendix D, pp. e77-e82) Due to the findings of these and other

cited studies, the applicant proposes their project intermediate outcomes: ten percent increase in students taking and succeeding in college preparatory courses, ten percent increase in graduation rates over the comparison group of students, and 90% of all students in the project receiving some college credit. (p. 6)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 25

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 complex projects.

(3) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant provides a clearly delineated organizational/management chart outlining the chain of command of the project. (p. 23) Leadership roles include the project director and a multi-partner project leadership team. As part of the project's leadership team, each superintendent has designated a senior official to direct their district's scaling efforts and to serve on the leadership team. The project leadership team will be convened monthly to review activities and accomplishments, upcoming milestones, and trouble shoot to ensure that project objectives are achieved on time and within budget.

The applicant provided an implementation chart that clearly outlines quarterly and yearly milestones, parties involved, and persons responsible to ensure that the milestones are accomplished. (pp. 23-25) It is important to note that year 4 includes activities designed to provide sustainability to the districts in the project and year 5 is devoted to gathering and disseminating data and information relative to sharing the project's accomplishments with the larger educational community and studying "what works" and lessons learned from the project.

(2) Within the project, individual leadership roles have been assigned, except for a JFF Project Manager and an Instructional Trainer. The applicant provided extensive information within the narrative on the qualifications and training of the project director and the identified multi-partner project leadership team. (pp. 21-23, e84-e87) These individuals represent many years of experience in managing complex projects and expertise in their individual fields as noted on their extensive resumes. (pp. e88-e108)

(3) Over the last ten years, the applicant has established their Early College High School design which they have implemented in over 100 schools in the last five years. (p. 4) The applicant has replicated the early college high school design in other districts in Massachusetts, Ohio, and North Carolina (p. 5) and has developed a well-honed process that includes technical assistance and professional development. Included in this expansion are activities in year 5 of the project devoted to accomplishments with the larger educational community, studying "what works" and lessons learned from the project as they open the gates for further expansion. (p. 25) Using this established process, the applicant is well poised to scale the project to other regional levels and beyond.

Weaknesses:

Job descriptions of the Project Manager and the Instructional Coach to be hired should be provided to enhance the clarity and transparency of the management plan.

Reader's Score: 23

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 include a well-designed experimental study or a well-designed quasi-experimental study.
- (2) 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.
- (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

- 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 7 - Competitive Preference Priority 7

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 applicant addresses all three sub-criteria of this competitive preference priority in their proposed project. Through the Early College Expansion Partnership the applicant assists its partner schools align their standards and teaching resources to Common Core Standards for college readiness. They embed information to help students know what to expect in college, actually taking college-credit courses while in high school. Wrap-around services, including mentoring and tutoring are available and students are counseled on issues related to college affordability, financial aid and the college application processes. (p. 2)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Competitive Preference Priority 8

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 a targeted focus on professional development to teachers on successful teaching strategies that help LEP students to learn effectively. The program is enhanced by a common instructional framework that embeds college-readiness standards and formative assessments in the instruction. In addition, the program includes tutoring and supplemental instruction to students as needed. The applicant provides a large body of evidence to support the effectiveness of their professional development and early college

readiness program. (pp. 2-3)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Competitive Preference Priority 9

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 10 - Competitive Preference Priority 10

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
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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/26/2012 12:37 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	0	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	25
Significance		
1. Significance	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	21
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	100	71
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CCP 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CCP 7	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. CPP 8	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. CPP 9	1	
Sub Total	1	

Competitive Preference Priority 10

Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. CPP 10

Sub Total 1

Total 105 73

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Validation Panel - 4: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

Reader's Score:

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 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 Validation grant.

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

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Strengths:

The applicant has identified two goals which demonstrate focus within the proposed project (p. 3-4). Along with the goals are desired outcomes that are stated in measurable terms. For example, the applicant seeks at least a 10 percentage point increase in students taking and succeeding in core college preparatory courses (p. 6). The measurable outcomes provide a gauge by which to measure progress toward the desired state.

The applicant provides evidence of potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the eligible applicant. For example, the applicant includes specific plans to convert several high schools and their feeder middle schools to an early college design as a component of the proposed project (p. 8). This action is based on previous work in establishing early college in secondary schools (p. 4). Expanding services to other areas demonstrates replication and coordination with existing work of the same scope that has been ongoing for a decade (p. 8).

The applicant has included a cost per student that is reasonable given both the potential short-term and the potential long-term benefits (p. 12). Not only is the project projecting a 10 percent increase in graduation rates, but the possibility for achieving long-term benefits for both the students and society are articulated using the cost per student amount (p. 13).

The applicant includes an estimate of the costs to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students (p. 14). The cost used to calculate these amounts is smaller and represents greater efficiency in the future because of economies of scale that can be achieved in regional scale up efforts (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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 extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(3) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths:

Evidence of exceptionality is seen in the proposed structure and design of the project. Through a variety of strategies, the applicant presents an opportunity to seamlessly integrate high school and college (p. 14). This approach could potentially support under-represented student populations with access to and success in an academically rigorous program that includes college courses without the high cost associated with college coursework (p. 14). Rather than simply relying on the traditional method of counting high-school seat-time, the proposed project accelerates students to college-ready standards and coursework in a more innovative, student-centered manner (p. 15).

The applicant references several studies including evidence from What Works Clearinghouse, to demonstrate a connection between Early College and research (p. 17). The applicant also draws upon research on effective professional development and the early college for all approach (p. 18). This demonstrates an attempt to build a program with multiple strategies from research and best practice.

The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project are evident in statistics offered from the existing program. For example, 93 percent of Early College students graduate from high schools compared to 76 percent of students in their respective districts (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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 complex projects.

(3) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

A timeline is included with a summary of main activities for each year (p. 24). Accompanying each of the major activities is an individual who is responsible for the completion of that specific activity (p. 24). This delineation helps facilitate knowledge of roles and responsibilities. In addition, if questions should arise about a particular project component, it is apparent who the main contact is for each major activity.

The applicant illustrates relevant experience for the key staff members. For example, the project director has ten years of experience in the development and expansion of the Early College High School Initiative (p. 25). This demonstrates knowledge and familiarity with the proposed design which is critical in a leadership role.

Evidence of capacity is demonstrated by two decades of experience managing complex, multi-year education reform projects on the part of the applicant (p. 20). The use of a virtual management tool enhances the potential for effective project management across states (p. 22).

Weaknesses:

Some of the activities are stated in vague terms. For example, one activity listed is LEA-COL PD program planned & launched (p. 24). There are no details about what this process entails. More specific, incremental milestones are not included for some of the larger tasks.

Reader's Score: 21

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 include a well-designed experimental study or a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) 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.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

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 7 - Competitive Preference Priority 7

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 applicant provides tools to help students become better prepared for college expectations. For example, the proposed project includes an instructional framework aligned to college-ready standards (p. 2). Also included is an aligned sequence of college courses and supports as part of the high school program of study (p. 2). Students are also provided information about college application and financial aid advising and assistance (p. 2). Wraparound academic supports, which include tutoring and academic advising, are provided to students and represent needed support as students face the transition from high school to college (p. 2).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Competitive Preference Priority 8

- 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 proposes to use strategies that have been determined effective for limited English proficient students. For example, collaborative group work, writing-to-learn, and oral inquiry and questioning strategies, will be incorporated, which research has shown to support achievement gains for LEP students (p. 2). Findings from the existing program with these supports in place indicate that the LEP students are thriving in early college schools (p. 3). This finding suggests that these combined strategies could potentially impact student achievement for LEP students over time.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Competitive Preference Priority 9

- 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 10 - Competitive Preference Priority 10

- 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: 07/26/2012 12:37 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/30/2012 07:13 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	0	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	0
Significance		
1. Significance	25	0
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	25
Sub Total	100	25
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CCP 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CCP 7	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. CPP 8	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. CPP 9	1	
Sub Total	1	

Competitive Preference Priority 10

Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. CPP 10

Sub Total 1

Total 105 25

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Validation Panel - 4: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

Reader's Score:

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 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 Validation grant.

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

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Strengths:

NA

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 extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(3) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths:

NA

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 complex projects.

(3) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

NA

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 include a well-designed experimental study or a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) 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.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

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

Strengths:

This is a well-designed and clearly articulated evaluation design that plans for an independent evaluation of the scale-up of High Schools That Work by evaluators at SERVE in Greensboro, NC. A tight logic model is presented on page 30 that makes explicit connections between the planned program activities, school implementation strategies, and anticipated intermediate- and long-term student outcomes.

A QES study will assess ECEP impact on student outcomes associated with college readiness (pp. 31-33). The sample includes students in 10 treatment high schools that will be matched with two comparison schools within each of the projects' implementation states of Texas and Colorado. Strategies for addressing attrition or sample variations are noted (p. 31). An effect size of .23 is anticipated with an 80 percent power level. Samples of approximately 200 students per grade are anticipated in all participating schools.

The study is using established data collection measures (p. 32) to examine the school- and student- level outcomes and project impact. The analysis plan uses data from three years prior to the start of the intervention through each year of the intervention. Comparisons will assess deviation from the baseline, using interrupted time series analyses for the matched comparison schools (p. 33). Threats to validity due to selection bias and to external context factors (e.g., differences in state policies and reform histories) are addressed (p.34).

Evaluation data collected throughout years one through four measure program impact and implementation, including the nature and quality of supports provided to teachers in schools and the extent to which the intervention is implemented as intended (p. 34). Both qualitative (surveys, observations, interviews, site visits) and quantitative (formal assessments) strategies will provide multi-participant/multi-level feedback data on implementation pp. 34-35. Evaluators will report annually to managers with data that can help revise and improve programs. Evidence from all dimensions of the evaluation will be reported continually and will inform plans for replication and scale up (pp. 36-38).

The project's evaluation budget of \$1.54 million, representing approximately 10 percent of the total requested grant award, is sufficient to accomplish the tasks described in the plan. An experienced team of lead independent researchers in North Carolina will work with local evaluators within the Texas and Colorado to obtain and conduct analyses of administrative data (p. 38). The team intends to disseminate findings within and across the programs and to national audiences.

This reviewer offers the following observation to the applicants as the project goes forward. Throughout the evaluation section, the discussion implies comparisons across five years (e.g., pp. 24-25). By contrast, in the data collection section (p. 33), the applicant refers to a data collection period that runs from the three years prior to implementation and for Years 1 - 4 of the intervention. The applicant would be well advised to clarify the exact data collection years in future communications and planning. This minor concern is not considered sufficiently problematic to take away from the overall 25 evaluation score.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation component of this proposal has no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 25

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

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 7 - Competitive Preference Priority 7

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 8 - Competitive Preference Priority 8

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 9 - Competitive Preference Priority 9

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 10 - Competitive Preference Priority 10

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: 07/30/2012 07:13 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/30/2012 12:40 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	
Sub Total	0	
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	22
Significance		
1. Significance	25	20
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	100	60
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CCP 6	1	
Sub Total	1	
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CCP 7	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. CPP 8	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. CPP 9	1	
Sub Total	1	

Competitive Preference Priority 10

Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. CPP 10

Sub Total 1

Total 105 62

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Validation Panel - 4: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Jobs for the Future, Inc. (U411B120049)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

Reader's Score:

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 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 Validation grant.

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

(4) The eligible applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student per year (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project. The eligible applicant must include an estimate of the costs for the eligible applicant or others (including other partners) to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.

Strengths:

This project shows an overall good design with regards to goal statements, objectives, and budget estimation.

With clear understanding of LRG Valley in Texas and the Denver region in Colorado, this project aims at district-wide secondary school improvement strategy and college readiness, and building these districts as exemplary cases. The PIs present the ongoing early college for all programs very convincingly with clear outcomes.

In their presentations of anticipated outcomes, the PIs show the detailed and clear expectations and their ample experiences in this project. In the logic model, activities, school-level implementation, and outcome are directly linked each other, having well-conceived plans for all parts of the project.

The PIs plan for design consultation and technical assistance from the district, college, and community considering various components of the project design.

The professional development is planned thoroughly including community practices to cover school, districts, and colleges. This way, the PIs seek to facilitate knowledge sharing connecting all partners.

Weaknesses:

The activities are not described fully. In other words, the strategies to reach the project outcomes are missing in this project. For example, the project describes that students can complete from 12 to 30 college credits while they in high school. However, there is no description about the courses. It seems all the decisions are leaving to school counselors. The detailed outcomes of the project are not clearly connected from the goals and program activities.

Reader's Score: 22

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 extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(3) The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, or increase college enrollment and completion rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the eligible applicant to support the proposed project.

Strengths:

The project deals with practical, specific programs to reach clearly stated goals. In the descriptions of anticipated outcomes, the PIs list the specific figures of targeted graduation rates, college credit attainment in high school, college enrollment, and persistence rates which are all impressively presented with exact figures. This presentation gives an assurance to the reviewer about the PIs capability and experience in this validation project. Moreover, the targeted levels of outcomes are remarkably high. If the project turns out to be successful, this will contribute to the field tremendously.

Weaknesses:

The project lacks information about the descriptions, availability, and types of courses. In particular, there is no description about the quality of college courses that students can take during their high school years. If the courses are too watered down too much to meet high school students levels, the college courses may bring reverse effects, causing the low performing students to prevent from learning knowledge. In addition, there is not enough description about what types of courses are available for students in each location.

Reader's Score: 20

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 complex projects.

(3) The eligible applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the results of the proposed project) working directly, or through other partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.

Strengths:

This multi-site, multi-year management plan is well laid out keeping balance for budget and staff assignment for each site.

The project leading team indicates enough credentials and experiences in this type of projects.

The detailed reports on previous projects on Appendix D indicate the strong evidence of the programs. The effect sizes of the project outcomes are practically large.

Weaknesses:

There is no enough detailed description regarding management plans to evaluate their efficacy. The table figures indicate only location and time assignments, but do not have intended activities or budge plans.

The project does not present a strong capacity for the scale-up projects. On pages 27 -29, the PIs provide the structure of each site in an unorganized way, failing to connect their capacity for previous project to upcoming large scale 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 include a well-designed experimental study or a well-designed quasi-experimental study.

(2) 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.

(3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.

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

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Competitive Preference Priority 6

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 7 - Competitive Preference Priority 7

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 project contains a college-ready academic program that meets college standards and aligns college courses.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 8 - Competitive Preference Priority 8

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 program contains innovative features to increase the academic outcomes of ELL students. Using the features, teachers emphasize literacy having collaborative group work, writing-to-learn, oral inquiry and questioning strategies.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 9 - Competitive Preference Priority 9

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 10 - Competitive Preference Priority 10

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: 07/30/2012 12:40 PM