

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2012 09:41 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Sub Total	0	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	20
Sub Total	100	20
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 20

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Validation Panel - 7: 84.411B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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

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 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

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 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

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

For an evaluation to be effective there must be a clear statement of the project goals, objectives, and outcomes. These form the basis for any evaluation. This proposal provides project goals (P4, P15, P23) with some elaboration and there is also a logic model connecting treatment with outcomes (P24). These help to provide the framework needed for the evaluation.

Research questions to be used for the evaluation are given in the table on P46. Along with the research questions the table gives the data sources. These are necessary components for the evaluation.

According to P47 districts will be randomly assigned to treatment and control groups and fidelity of implementation is to be monitored. On P47 and 48, the proposal notes that the control districts may have professional development of their own and thus the exact nature of the control classrooms cannot be known during the time of the study. They propose to examine activities in the control districts at the end of the study. It is a strength that the proposal recognizes the need to have descriptive information about what takes place in control classrooms. Assuming no differences across all control districts would be unreasonable and would limit both the generalizability of the study and limit replication.

On P48-50, the data sources are discussed. The student achievement data sources to are measurable. The power analysis is provided on P51 indicating an acceptable level of power.

Evaluation is to be done by SRI International s Center for Education Policy which can be expected to have the appropriate expertise and has experience with large-scale evaluation projects.

The proposal calls for feedback and monitoring meetings that will facilitate identification and addressing needs for project modification. The evaluation team will also provide formative feedback at the summer institutes (P10-11, P26). These are strengths

The evaluation team proposes to facilitate replication by developing case studies that identify the model s features, implementation strategies, and ways to leverage supports and overcome barriers. It is a strength the facilitation of replication (P29).

Weaknesses:

Although the proposal refers to outcomes there is no indication of how these are to be measured or what the target values are. The logic model on P24 begins with treatment when it should begin with goals and objectives, and indicate measurable outcomes.

The research questions stated on P46 are not articulated with the goals stated earlier in the proposal. There is also no discussion of what level of gain is expected or needed to judge that project is successful, though data sources are discussed. A stronger proposal evaluation plan would provide a clear articulation of goals to objectives to research questions to measurable outcomes, and would provide targets.

There is some confusion as to who will actually conduct the evaluation. On P43 only SRI International's Center for Education Policy is mentioned as the evaluation agency. At other times Inverness Research is also mentioned. A stronger proposal would not leave the connection between these two agencies in doubt.

Evaluation budget is given on P53 in excess of \$4 million, which is considerably above what one would expect for evaluation costs. Moreover there is no evaluation budget justification. While it is possible that the large budget is justified, it is a significant weakness of the proposal that no justification for a budget of this size is given.

Reader's Score: 20

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 09:41 AM

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

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	24
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	100	74
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
1. CCP 6	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
Competitive Preference Priority 7		
1. CCP 7	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
Competitive Preference Priority 8		
1. CPP 8	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
Competitive Preference Priority 9		
1. CPP 9	1	0
Sub Total	1	0

Competitive Preference Priority 10

Competitive Preference Priority 10

1. CPP 10

	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Total	105	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Validation Panel - 7: 84.411B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

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 proposed project provided a comprehensive and strong plan with three clear outcomes (goals) and accompanying strategies focused on Absolute Priority 5. For example, the proposed project will work with 40 rural districts in eight states (page 1). The applicant proposed the importance of improved writing skills for students to successfully complete high school and college (page 3). The outcomes will be to improve teachers skills in teaching academic writing to students in rural districts and thus improve the writing skills of rural students as well as develop teacher-leaders to sustain the improved instructional practices (page 4). The applicant developed comprehensive strategies to achieve the identified outcomes of the proposed project. For example, improved teacher skills will be developed through intensive, two-year long professional development (page 5). Strengths of the professional development included use of an adaptive approach to design local plans that fit the needs of the local sites (page 6), a partnership with local schools and National Writing Program (NWP) state sites to develop the professional development plan (page 7), alignment of the training with the Common Core State Standards for writing (page 7) and delivery of professional development through face to face and online training (page 7). Another strength will be the involvement of expert NWP teachers and university faculty for the professional development planning and implementation with the local site teams (page 8).

A key strategy for incorporating and sustaining the proposed project will be the third outcome of developing teacher-leaders (page 9). The proposed project will identify leading teachers to receive additional training in leadership development to sustain the learning from the professional development in their classrooms as well as develop and implement future professional development for their peers (page 10). Additionally the applicant will work with local site teams and the participating teachers to plan strategies to continue and sustain the learning (page 11). Additionally the proposed project will scale up the efforts and offer professional development training to the control site at the completion of the initial two year trainings in the experimental sites (page 11).

The budget and budget narrative appeared comprehensive and fully included the costs outlined in the proposed strategies. For example, the budget included proposed salary costs for project team leaders and managers; costs for travel for the required Washington DC grant meetings as well multiple partner meetings between local sites and national NWP leaders; Summer Institutes; Scoring Conferences (budget narrative page e162) and implementation site visits (budget narrative page e163). A large portion of the budget included the contractual costs with the local school sites to plan and implement trainings and offer training to teacher-leaders which is a key strategy for the sustainability of the budget(budget narrative page e163).

The applicant estimated that the professional development will include 80 % of teachers at the local district and therefore reach 25,000 students in grades 7 10 (page 12). The per pupil cost, excluding evaluation costs, will be \$765 (page 12). These costs appeared appropriate and in line with the proposed objectives. The applicant indicated the high costs necessary to bring high quality professional development with experienced writing teacher trainers to a rural area (page 11 & 12). The per pupil costs to scale up the proposed project was estimated at \$569.00 (page 12). It was estimated the project costs of \$56,893,530 to reach 100,000 students; \$142,233,824 to reach 250,000 students and \$284,467,649 to reach 500,000 students (page 13).

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:

The proposed project provided an exceptional approach to Absolute Priority 5. The proposed project described how students have not been taught to use effective writing skills and how this limits student achievement. Improved writing skills will increase student achievement across all curriculum areas. The proposed project will provide customized professional development for teachers in rural schools (page 13) to

improve teacher writing skills and thus be able to more effectively teach a variety of writing skills. The professional development will be comprehensive and include effective strategies. For example, training will include demonstration teaching in the classroom, developing teacher understanding of effective instructional practice and developing local teacher-leaders to support ongoing professional development after the completion of the proposed project (page 14).

The proposed project provided justified and strong research for the plan. For example, the NWP's College Ready Writer's Program (CRWP) has included elements backed by research. As well, the adaptive theory of scale-up has demonstrated the effectiveness of including local sites in the planning (page 15). The proposed project included research based professional development strategies of demonstration lesson; mentoring and job embedded learning that link curriculum development with effective practices developed over time (page 16). Another key research based strategy will be the use of professional learning communities in the rural sites (page 16).

The importance and magnitude of the proposed project will be significant. The applicant described how the professional development of the CRWP has improved student writing skills and student achievement and increased students' readiness for college (page 22). For example, NWP conducted 20 studies over eight years (page 16). Four of the studies provided evidence that CRWP improved student writing (page 17). Additionally the CRWP will develop teacher-leaders, and studies have demonstrated increased student achievement in classrooms of teachers trained with leadership for professional development (page 20). Another example of the importance and magnitude of the proposed project is that the 40 schools identified to participate in the proposed project have identified writing as an area of improvement for students to be successful in high school and college (page 22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The proposed project included a comprehensive, well developed management plan to ensure completion of the goals on time. The applicant provided a chart of specific activities with definite timelines for completion (page 23). The plan included the initial planning with local sites, national training, local training, evaluation and scale up/sustainability. The proposed project included an appropriate and comprehensive management team with clear responsibilities for identified tasks (page 23). The activities included biweekly meetings of the Co-directors, Director of Research and Evaluation, and the two Senior Research Associates (page 23).

The identified team members have extensive training and experience in the field of writing as well as working with professional development and grant implementation. For example, the .5 FT Co-Director has been the

National Director for Site Development since 2007 and an Associate Director for Site Development since 1999 (page e120). As well, she has taught English in middle, high and post-secondary (page e121). The .4 FTE Co-director teaches writing at the university level and has held administrative positions with the NWP since 1986 (page e111) and has worked with NWP grants since 1993 (page e117). The two identified independent evaluators with SRI International's Center for Education Policy have extensive experience and expertise in research and evaluation (page 25). The co-directors have experiences leading and managing large, complex projects.

The capacity to scale up the proposed project to a national level will be significant. The NWP national office has the expertise in disseminating learning from large initiatives, and the proposed project included six months of national staff time to disseminate learnings and plan for scale up (page 27). The scale up will be achieved through the NWP network of 200 local, university-based sites (page 27) which will be able to conveniently connect with schools in their region. Through these sites professional development can be brought to a national level (page 27).

Weaknesses:

For the proposed project to achieve the outcomes, a full time Program Director to oversee and manage the entirety of the project would be important. More details for interaction and operations of the management team and communications with local site teams would be helpful.

Reader's Score: 24

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

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:

The proposed project included the NWP's online community of practice, NWP Connect (page 1). The NWP Connect will extend the face to face professional development with real time opportunities for coaching from experienced writing teachers as well as provide online professional learning communities between rural educators. NWP Connect will utilize multiple online tools for rural teachers to connect and develop online learning communities through blogs, wikis, discussion forums, social bookmarking, Twitter and multimedia (page e157). NWP Connect will be supported through a well-qualified, .5 FTE Program Associate (page e123).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/02/2012 12:36 PM

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

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	20
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	100	70
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

	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Total	105	71

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Validation Panel - 7: 84.411B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

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 proposed project has a clear set of goals with specific strategies that are expected to result in increased student achievement (pgs. 4- 10). The professional development model includes intensive professional development, summer institutes, and online communities of practice.

The purported professional model affords 90 hours of content specific professional development for all teachers and 120 hours for summer leadership institutes. This aligns with nationally recommended standards from Learning Foreword which consists of at least 100 hours of explicit content in subject area PD. This has been tied to increased implementation of professional development content (p. 7).

The proposed project incorporates two year customized plan for professional development, mentoring, coaching, and other support activities centered on key concepts in the Common Core Curriculum State Standards (p. 7).

The proposed plan incorporates a peer review process for program accountability, to ensure fidelity, and to provide technical assistance (p. 10).

The applicant has identified plans to incorporate the project into its ongoing work through sustainability

meetings with participating LEA s after the initial two years professional development. The plan also incorporates plans to utilize personnel from the initial pilot sites to train and assist in taking the project to scale in other states (p. 11).

The largest portion of budgeted costs is for professional development and stipends for participating districts. The proposed costs for implementation of the project appear reasonable in relation to the objectives, overall design and potential significance (p. 12). The professional development costs are comprised of stipends, travel, materials, and substitute teachers. A significant portion of the professional development occurs during the summer months for teacher participation in institutes.

The applicant provided scale up costs which are reasonable given the anticipated scope of the proposed project and activities planned. The costs and activities are incremental with scale up occurring throughout the initial 8 states, followed by scale up activities in high needs areas in other states, and plans for nationwide implementation. This includes face to face professional development, on line professional development, summer institutes, and travel related expenses (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

None

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:

The content specific professional development proposed in the model is aligned with current research, specifically professional development on effective practices for teaching writing, conducting demonstration lessons, mentoring, teachers collective participation, and online and in person professional development

The proposed project also aligns with current research which purports that student achievement should be aligned with professional development. This project will employ pre-post test evaluation strategies related to student achievement (p. 16).

The proposed project provides an intense focus on improving writing scores in students in rural area through job embedded focused professional development for teachers. Based on research provided through several successful studies, the proposed project has demonstrated a positive impact on student achievement (pgs. 17-22).

The proposed project provides successful approaches through a model for professional development and represents an exceptional approach as established by this competition (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

The proposed project provides successful approaches through a model for professional development but it does not represent an exceptional approach as established by this competition (p. 13). The focus of the model is on teaching teachers how to teach and access writing skills. The model is comprised of job embedded professional development, followed by summer institutes. A significant portion of the professional development is also online format.

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:

The management plan proposed by the applicant has clearly defined responsibilities, timelines as well as tasks related to sustainability of the project after the grant period (P. 23). The management team is comprised of individuals who have successfully implemented the model in several districts for many years. The applicant has also partnered with SRI and Inverness for an independent evaluation of the proposed activities.

The project director and key staff have technical expertise, experiences, and possess the requisite skills to bring the project to manage large complex projects (pgs. 24-26).

This includes training and experiences in writing and implementing the College Ready Writers Program. Team members have partnered with several large philanthropic organizations, coordinated national education programs, and have provided professional development for many years in school districts (pgs. 24-26).

The applicant has established an infrastructure and supporting partners to bring the project to scale. The project has been successfully implemented through the work of the management team and scale up activities have been clearly identified in the grant application (p. 23). This includes continued use of online platforms for communities of practice, and alignment of instructional methods and materials with the Common Core State Standards (p. 23).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 25

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

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:

The applicant identified plans to utilize technology as a means of providing on line development courses, utilization of a national online community of practice, and sharing of open education resources to support instruction initializes (p. 9). This is a major benefit to teachers and building level administrators in rural school districts.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2012 07:32 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2012 05:56 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

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	20
Sub Total	100	20
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 20

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Validation Panel - 7: 84.411B

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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:

Not applicable

Weaknesses:

Not applicable

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 proposes a well-designed cluster randomized trial, using districts as the unit of randomization to prevent spillover effects (p. 28). The evaluation design appropriately includes a delayed treatment model (pp. 12, 29)--which is an effective incentive for enlisting cooperation of the control group--and balances the design at a local level to ensure comparisons are valid and meaningful (p. 29). The design includes a replication study of the control group in Year 3 of the study, which is likely to provide important information about the key elements and approach of the project so as to facilitate replication and testing in other settings (p. 29). Inverness Research will provide case studies to further support replication possibilities (p. 29).

Research questions are well-thought out, with multiple measures addressing each (p. 28). The logic model successfully connects inputs with measurable proximate and distal outcomes and identifies possible moderators and mediators (p. 6).

The evaluator is scheduled to semi-annually provide quantitative and qualitative implementation data (p. 12). Inverness Research is specifically charged with developing case studies that have the potential to provide high-quality implementation data including description of the model, implementation strategies, problem solving, and replication in rural settings (p. 29).

The project timeline of activities reflects a reasonable data collection plan, and allocates multiple opportunities to present and discuss implementation data, performance feedback, and periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes (p. 23). The applicant acknowledges that control districts may have some writing professional development to support the multi-district adoption of new assessments; this is not a weakness for replication purposes since it can be assumed that any future districts within these state groups will have the same writing professional development support (p. 29). The Analytic Writing Continuum (AWC) is a reliable and valid student assessment measure that is appropriate for use in comparing effects on treatment and control students (pp. 30, e99-e102). Treatment and control teachers will complete teacher logs that are likely to produce high-quality implementation data (p. 31). Semi-structured teacher interviews are likely to inform implementation and performance feedback as well (p. 31).

SRI International's Center for Education Policy and designated co-principal investigators and staff are well-qualified to conduct the independent evaluation (pp. 25-26). The inclusion of Inverness Research to collect and analyze qualitative data strengthens the likelihood that the evaluation will provide sufficient data about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate replication (p. 26). The data analysis procedures are robust, and likely to provide important information on the success of the project in achieving intended student outcomes (pp. 32-33).

Weaknesses:

The Partnership Monitoring Protocol (PMP) is not sufficiently described to ensure that it is a valid and reliable measure of fidelity (p. 32). Classroom observations and PMP ratings will not be completed for control classrooms for the first two years; these local level data would strengthen the validity of the matches at the local level (p. 32). It is unclear whether the survey data and log data will provide sufficient information on differences between treatment and control teacher knowledge and skill acquisition (p. 33).

No measure of teacher leadership comparing treatment and control groups are included in the evaluation plan. This is a serious weakness, as Goal 3 of the project is "Increase the number of rural teacher-leaders in participating schools and districts." (p. 4).

The evaluation budget of \$4,400,888 seems rather high. There is no budget justification given to explain the total cost of the evaluation.

Reader's Score: 20

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: 08/01/2012 05:56 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2012 05:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Statement		
Summary Statement		
1. Summary Statement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	25	24
Significance		
1. Significance	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Mgmt Plan and Personnel	25	25
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	25	0
Sub Total	100	74
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

	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Total	105	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Validation Panel - 7: 84.411B

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: National Writing Project (U411B120037)

Questions

Summary Statement - Summary Statement

1. Summary Statement (Optional):

General:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

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:

Intervention proposes to provide rural teachers with "place-sensitive" professional development to help improve writing pedagogy. There is a growing body of research that supports the use of place-based pedagogy in facilitating or understanding the socio-cultural influences of living or working in a rural environment;

Proposed intervention is aligned with national writing standards;

Project proposes to use an online community of practice, which is a proven and appropriate research-based professional development strategy for rural teachers;

Number of face-to-face professional development programming is quantified (e.g. 90 hours over 2 years). Knowing the dosage and timeframe of the intervention helps project implementers to be able to see how (and what aspects of) the intervention is being integrated into teaching practice;

Proposed project is designed to improve the writing of rural middle and high school students which most reform-based strategies do not address. Unfortunately, most schools are not addressing or focusing on how to ensure that students are prepared to meet the requirements of state and national writing standards;

The place-based design of the teacher training and student exercises will help both groups to establish a culture of standards-based writing;

The NWP Rural Sites Network (p. 14) has been in operation since 1992, and functions in order to provide rural based research and technical assistance to rural sites. Therefore having a rural-related NWP clearinghouse demonstrates that the intervention is designed to be sustainable and scalable;

Weaknesses:

Estimated costs for the intervention and scale up appear to be significantly high for the proposed intervention. The proposed intervention appears to focus more on face-to-face professional development strategies (e.g. training institutes, planning meetings, stipends, travel, etc.) which increases the costs of the intervention and the cost per student significantly;

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 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:

Proposed project is designed to adapt to local contexts. There is a great deal of diversity among rural communities that is based on historical, cultural, social, racial/ethnic, economic, and geographic boundaries. Therefore, proposed intervention models, such as NWP need to be able to navigate or accommodate these socio-cultural influences on teaching and learning; say more, why do you like this?

Research cited on rural education is relevant and current; should this be moved under significance?

Proposal notes both proximal and distal outcomes for the intervention. The outcomes of most interventions do not happen overnight. Therefore, having proximal outcomes can help schools and school districts to see what progress is being made; should this go under significance?

Proposed intervention is designed to create a "grow your own" network of professional development trainers. Grow-your-own programs help rural districts to build internal networks of experts, rather than paying significant costs to bring external experts to remote rural locations;

Project proposes to implement a reflective practice a strategy of reflective practice within the professional development program. Rather than a one-time demonstration of professional development strategies, reflective practice gives teachers the opportunity to actively engage in the strategies and then reflect upon what did and didn't work and why;

The proposed project includes research that supports an "adaptive theory of scale up" as a means of addressing issues of local context (place-based pedagogy) to respond to the diversity and complexity of rural

communities;

The proposal is supported by the use of current and relevant research on effective writing pedagogy;

The proposal is strengthened by suggesting the use of online and in-person teacher professional learning communities as a means of continuing professional development support both within and beyond the grant;

Research on the intervention by independent evaluators indicate that pre- and post-intervention data suggests that there is moderate evidence of impact on students' writing achievement;

Similarly, the College-Ready Writers component of intervention showed statistically significant improvements in students' writing achievement with effect sizes that ranged from .22 to .81 (moderate to high);

Weaknesses:

None.

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:

Proposed project and evaluation staff appear to have a great deal of experience with implementing, managing, and evaluating large scale projects;

Roles of proposed project staff are clearly detailed;

Proposed project appears to have an extensive network of university- and school-related relationships that can facilitate the scale up of additional intervention sites. Local and national resources can help in the interpretation of data, the replication of strategies, and understanding of school or community contexts; Explain.

The timeline and milestone activities listed in the project timeline lists component-related tasks by time period, type and location of the intervention strategy, staff members responsible, and expected time needed to implement the strategy;

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 25

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:

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:

The project uses current research-based strategies with current available technologies to increase student writing levels in the middle and high schools. Providing rural teachers with online learning communities and other professional development resources gives teachers the opportunity to learn to use the intervention tools without having to leave his or her remote community.

Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2012 05:24 PM