

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/24/2010 11:57 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lehigh University -- Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, (U363A100069)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. N/A	45	41
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. N/A	25	25
Significance		
1. N/A	20	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. N/A	10	8
Sub Total	100	93
Total	100	93

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SLP Review Panel - 7: 84.363A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Lehigh University -- Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, (U363A100069)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a description of-**
 - 1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**
 - 2. The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.**
 - 3. The extent to which the proposed project is apart of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.**
 - 4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.**
 - 5. The extent to which project participants are to be selected on the basis of academic excellence.**

Strengths:

Strengths: The proposal successfully identifies a holistic, research-based and comprehensive approach to the further development of existing principals and identification and training of the aspiring leaders. The underlying conceptual framework, of the systems change model that emphasizes innovative preparation programming, principal practices connected to student achievement and identified and systematized turnaround strategies, is comprehensive and well-described (pgs e10-e12). Moreover, that framework translates clearly to a coherent and sustained program of training and activities for the participants. The aspiring leaders aspect of the program gives selected participants access to a strong cohort of peers and coursework designed by multiple partners, ultimately giving those participants training in a broadened spectrum of leadership (related to instruction, transformation and entrepreneurship) and the skill development of communication and problem solving (pgs e2-e3). There appears to be a careful and considered balance between academic coursework and access to intellectual resources, coursework (e21) and practical school-site experiences. The applicant nicely contextualizes the program to district identified needs (e4) and to the particular Individualized Learning Plans (e19) of each participant. There is clear identification of the intentional long-term impact on student achievement and teacher instructional knowledge (e7). Replication success is likely given the already existing partnership between the applicant and the Philadelphia public schools and the applicant's particular interest in cultivating leaders from Hispanic and African American backgrounds. Lastly, the process for selection for the aspiring leaders cohort appears rigorous and well-designed (e23-e24).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: There do appear to be some missed opportunities in terms of connecting the aspiring leader cohort and the practicing leader cohort in periodic, larger group sessions. The intended cohort size for the aspiring leaders group is also regrettably small given the opportunity and structure offered (pg e6). More information regarding the structure of the internship experience and the mentoring component would have been helpful (pg e19).

Reader's Score: 41

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers-

1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Strengths:

Strengths: The applicant has identified a reputable objective outside evaluator (Temple University's ISS) with demonstrated experience evaluating other school leadership initiatives in the region (pg e0). The implementation study and the impact study are carefully differentiated, and numerous instruments are indicated that will be used to collect both formative and summative data, such as the 360 LSA, NASSP one day principal assessment, VAL-ED and others (pgs e2-e3). Descriptive benchmarks and successful indicators are also included. Ultimately, the applicant's approach to "test the proposition" that there is linkage between effective principalship to teacher outcomes and student outcomes is an excellent approach (pg e8), leading to the likelihood of increasing knowledge in the field and achieving systematic change in the Allentown school district.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors-

1. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

2. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

3. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

Strengths: The applicant does a fine job contextualizing the demographics and instructional/leadership needs of the Allentown School District. The identification of the current lack of diversity in the school district's administration is also clear and an important issue to address. Furthermore, the intention to systematically and persistently use research-based instruments is an approach, if yielding data that is subsequently acted upon, that is likely to become a model for other school districts around the country.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: It is unclear that the project will have the ability of the proposed activity to involve 100% of the currently practicing principals and assistant principals in the school district (pg e2). If the school district does not agree to this requirement as these administrators' employer, it is reasonable to believe the impact might be lessened.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan 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.

2. How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

3. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Strengths: The management plan features a clear description of each member's primary responsibilities with specific understandings that "significant input" from all partners will be taken into strong consideration (pg e0). The qualifications of the proposed staff and partners, through the provided CVs and supporting letters, are excellent.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: It is unclear in the budget why the terms of service for the principal investigators is limited to the summer months throughout the course of the proposed grant activities. More information regarding the cost of the development of case study materials (pg e2 of Budget narrative) would have been helpful to justify the costs presented. A larger diversity of perspectives for the operation of the proposed project would have included more explicit opportunity for evaluation feedback from parents, students (perhaps in the form of attitudinal surveys) and community members.

Reader's Score: 8

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lehigh University -- Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, (U363A100069)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. N/A	45	40
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. N/A	25	25
Significance		
1. N/A	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. N/A	10	8
Sub Total	100	93
Total	100	93

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SLP Review Panel - 7: 84.363A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Lehigh University -- Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, (U363A100069)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a description of-**
 - 1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**
 - 2. The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.**
 - 3. The extent to which the proposed project is apart of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.**
 - 4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.**
 - 5. The extent to which project participants are to be selected on the basis of academic excellence.**

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant outlines an adequate framework for the proposed project. The project will provide lessons and implications for broader, national research efforts urban school reform (page 2), including a system change model to drive the curricula design and learning activities, cultivation of a comprehensive turnaround skills set that includes instructional, transformational and entrepreneurial leadership competencies, and partnerships that enhance the capacity of districts to improve and grow. The conceptual framework for the project is clearly specified and appropriately guided by strands of clearly defined research literature pertaining to the core elements in innovative preparation programs in developing highly qualified and committed individuals for principal positions; exemplary principal practices associated with improved student achievement and the systemic turnaround strategies. Specific and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes are outlined for the project (pages 9-10)

Major project components are outlined to develop and train project participants (page 3-6). Some components will include assessment of leadership skills, collaboratively designed coursework in five core domains, seminars, school based-projects, ongoing and effective mentoring and coaching, and a full-time, year-long internship (pages 18- 22). Components are appropriate to develop aspiring and existing school leaders.

The proposed project is part of a district 2008-2014 Integrated Strategic Plan initiative to improve the school system (pages 16-17). In the Plan, the District leaderships defined professional learning and collaboration among leaders, teachers, and staff as one of the five core strategies to ensure effective practices and success. Specifically, the project is aligned with priorities in the organization practices to facilitate the transformation of current administrators into instructional leaders. Some priorities include implementing a professional development plan focus on guiding educators toward meeting professional practice standards, implementing an induction program, and ensuring professional development meets those pedagogical needs identified through staff observation and evaluation.

The proposed project will provide appropriate results for replication (page 17 and 36). The detailed description of the project's curriculum content, delivery methods, structure, and measurement outcomes will enable easy replication of the program in other school systems. Additionally, the research-based content will be delivered through a variety of methods to best meet the needs of adult learners.

The applicant outlines a clearly specified selection process for candidates. The process is comprised of three stages, of which stage one is the application phase. The second stage consists of a rigorous writing test and oral interview with panel interviewers, and during the final stage a sample lessons will be conducted in front of a team of evaluators with expertise in instructional observation and evaluation.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide a description of the method of delivery or how it will make available the products of the project for replication.

While a selection process is clearly defined, the applicant fails to elaborate on the academic excellence of the candidates in terms of initial acceptance into the project.

Reader's Score: 40

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers-

1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant will employ a mixed methods evaluation that will adequately measure the success of the project. An external evaluator identified for the project will provide the project with an implementation (formative), and an impact evaluation (summative) of the project. A clearly defined logic model for leadership development and evaluation are outlined to highlight inputs, processes short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes (page 27) Performance measures outlined for the SLP program as measures by the VAL-ED and NASSP assessments are accounted for in the evaluation. Additionally, multiple data sources and analytical techniques are described that will produce both quantitative and qualitative data on the project. Project goals, success indicators, data sources, and a timeline are outline to help guide evaluation (pages 30-33).

The evaluation will provide appropriate performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of the project. Evaluators will provide annual reports that will include comprehensive information on performance measures defined by the project. Formative findings will be aligned with the activities of the grant. Evaluators will also convene bi-annual meetings with project leaders to share data and findings pertaining to progress toward stated goals (pages 35-36).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors-

1. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

2. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

3. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

Strengths:

The proposed project will further the body of research and increase knowledge on issues and challenges by identifying strategies that become the engine to drive a project to develop school leaders (pages 39-40). For example strategies are identified such as intensive internships and hands-on learning in the development of new principals to prepare them for realities faced in urban schools.

The proposed project is likely to result in system change, as the proposed project will ensure candidates exhibit the potential necessary to lead low-performing schools. Candidates will be trained to employ research-based knowledge and skills gained from the project that are important to urban school improvement (page 40). Additionally, the District is guaranteed a pool of highly competent future leaders that have the potential to elevate other leader at the same level (page 41).

The applicant presents a sufficient description of how the outcomes of the project are important to teaching and learning. The project has been designed to ensure that participants have the knowledge and skills which research show will result in the greater academic achievement (page 41). The initiatives guide the development of principals and assistant principals as instructional leaders of their schools and therefore play a critical role for students. Multiple indicators will be used to measure student achievement and the mediating variables including school learning climate, school instructional quality, and teacher instructional practices.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan 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.**
- 2. How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.**
- 3. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant outlines a sufficient staff management structure and plan to effectively guide the implementation and operation of the project. The project will be guided by a multi-institutional collaboration among project partners, with clearly define roles and responsibilities. A Leadership and Management team comprised of Co-Principal Investigators and Curriculum Leadership Team will comprise the management structure to support the project (page 43). Time commitments, roles and responsibilities of staff assign to the project are appropriate to ensure proper management of the project. The five-year program implementation timeline is outlined to guide the project.

The applicant demonstrates that a diversity of perspectives is being brought to the projects through a description of individuals from each project partner, committing a reasonable amount of time to the project (page 47).

The applicant describes procedures to ensure feedback and continuous improvement (page 48). Project leaders and stakeholder groups will be formally on a quarterly basis during meetings of the Leadership and Management Teams to review data and findings from the ongoing program evaluation, and to discuss issues as they arise and engage in collaborative problem-solving.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide a sufficient description of how a diversity of perspectives will be brought to bear on the project.

Reader's Score: 8

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lehigh University -- Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, (U363A100069)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. N/A	45	41
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. N/A	25	25
Significance		
1. N/A	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. N/A	10	8
Sub Total	100	94
Total	100	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SLP Review Panel - 7: 84.363A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Lehigh University -- Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, (U363A100069)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project consists of a comprehensive plan that includes a description of-

1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

2. The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.

3. The extent to which the proposed project is apart of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

5. The extent to which project participants are to be selected on the basis of academic excellence.

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant presented a thorough and detailed description of its project design, which is an integrated leadership development model focusing on instructional leadership community engagement, and results-driven management. The program design is based on three strands of research literature: the core elements, the exemplary principal practices, and the systematic turnaround strategies. The research references were provided to support the design. (Appendix) Principal Leadership Initiative (APLI) will work with its current principals and two cohorts of seven aspiring principals for each cohort. The applicant provided the specific and measurable goals, objectives and outcomes for both components - the aspiring leaders and the practicing leaders. The applicant addressed all sub-criteria in an efficient and succinctly manner. The project design has the potential to be replicated, to make a positive contribution towards creating competent instructional, transformational, and entrepreneurial leaders. Applicants are selected on the basis of academic excellence, and the applicant demonstrated that the project will improve teaching and learning. The model table captures and the critical logic and key elements of the APLI's program design in a nutshell. (p. 5, pp. e1 - e 22)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The applicant only plans to recruit and select 14 aspiring principals with seven participants each in two cohorts. The number of aspiring principals affected by this project is somewhat small. The project could be more comprehensive if more leaders were included.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers-

1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant presented a thorough evaluation plan addressing both criteria succinctly. The applicant is using an experienced external evaluator - Temple University's Institute for Schools and Society (ISS) at the College of Education. The applicant provided a detailed description of its implementation study and the impact evaluation, their formative and summative evaluations respectively. The logic model flow chart for Leadership Development and Evaluation the captures various elements of the plan. It highlights inputs, processes, short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. The applicant presented a summary of the evaluation activities including the program goals and success indicators with data collection methodology and timelines in a table format. The program goals are aligned with the success indicators, data sources, and the timelines. The success indicators are stated in measurable terms. The applicant made provisions for performance feedback and program modifications. The assessment findings will be shared with the program staff, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. The applicant plans to disseminate assessment findings via its websites, at outreach events, at the bi-annual meetings, and at annual conferences.

(pp. e 0 -- 1)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Significance

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1. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

2. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

3. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant presented a detailed description of the various contributions and its impact on teaching and learning for the improvement in student achievement. This project should make a stronger minority representation among the school leaders in the District. It should create a standards-based principal performance appraisal system, and it should increase the number of principals in the District with advanced training. (pp. e0 - e4)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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2. How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

3. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

Strengths:

The applicant presented a detailed description of its management plan, which will be used to guide the activities of the project that will meet the budgetary, timelines, objectives, and milestones. The letters of support and commitment from the project's partnerships were included to substantiate their intended project contributions. The Allentown School District will provide a cadre of experienced educators and school administrators. The National Association of Secondary School Principals will provide the leadership skills assessment, an online tool to assess leadership capacity; the Dexter Baker Institute for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation will develop the curriculum and identify faculty to lead the leadership seminar. Temple University's Institute for Schools and Society (ISS) at the College of Education will conduct the evaluation. The resumes were included to support the experience and qualifications of its key personnel. (e 0 - e 4)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

While many of the parts of the management plan were well described, the applicant failed to provide specific milestones and benchmarks. (Appendix, Budget Narrative).

Reader's Score: 8

Status: Submitted

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