

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/24/2010 07:48 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: North Mississippi Education Consortium -- North MS Education Consortium, (U363A100007)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. N/A	45	45
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	7
Sub Total	100	97
Total	100	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SLP Review Panel - 1: 84.363A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: North Mississippi Education Consortium -- North MS Education Consortium,
(U363A100007)

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:

The overall project design is really solid because it differentiates the support that it will give to the lowest performing school.

In addition, the superintendents of the all of the included districts have pledged to participate in and support the program.

The overall impact of this project should be strong since all of the principals and assistant principals of the projects schools will participate.

The conceptual framework of this project is well argued and researched. The framework focuses on creating a principal preparation program that is based on the idea that school leaders must be instructional leaders in addition to managers. (e7)

As a result, the program's curriculum content includes coursework about specific subjects including literacy, math and science. This will ensure that the principals will become more knowledgeable about various content instruction. (e9)

Program is carried out over an 18 month period. This will allow participants to go into greater depth in the various situated learning experiences they will participate in.

The project proposal requires that the NISL trainers have to teach the content and pass several screenings before they become certified teachers for the program. This screening should ensure high quality control. (e 19)

Weaknesses:

There are not weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 45

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:

The project evaluation plan is strong because it will measure program success by measuring teacher attrition rates (e0), and student attendance and graduation rates. (e2)

The evaluation plan is strong because it includes very detailed criteria for evaluation how principal leadership will impact teacher instruction. (e2)

The evaluation team will compare data from participant schools to non participant schools. This will allow the project to assess the impact of their program. (e3)

Evaluation plan includes the collection and analysis of a variety of different quantitative and quality data to measure the impact of the project. (e4 to e6)

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses.

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:

The project should provide important data about the significance of quality professional development for principals at rural schools. (e2)

The project has the support of all the participating superintendents. In addition, all of the superintendents and some of the central office staff will participate. This broad participation by key figures, should forge a new quality framework that should lead to systemic improvements throughout the region. (e3)

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses.

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:

All of the key positions have already been assigned a qualified candidate. (e2 to e4)

The evaluation plan is strong and inclusive because the District Learning Teams will report and receive feedback from the school boards and parent groups. (e8)

Weaknesses:

In the timeline chart, proposal should have included the positions for each of the persons listed under "Person Responsible". (e5 to e7)

The project evaluation plan does not elicit feedback from students. (e8)

Reader's Score: 7

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/24/2010 07:48 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/21/2010 11:52 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: North Mississippi Education Consortium -- North MS Education Consortium, (U363A100007)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. N/A	45	36
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	10
Sub Total	100	91
Total	100	91

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SLP Review Panel - 1: 84.363A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: North Mississippi Education Consortium -- North MS Education Consortium,
(U363A100007)

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 part 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 proposed project intends to develop a partnership between eight Mississippi districts with some of the lowest performing schools in the state with the University of Mississippi, the National Institute for School Leadership, and the North Mississippi Education Consortium to develop and improve the effectiveness of existing school administrators (pp. 1-5). Training will be provided over 18 months through a cohort model (p. 12). In addition, the project includes an alternate route program that may be completed within 18 months for aspiring administrators within or outside of the field of education (p. 20). Administrators that remain with a partner LEA for at least two years will receive a performance bonus at the end of the second year (p. 21).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: While the proposal contains clear performance indicators (pp. 14-16), some indicators may understate the level of expected performance. In particular, the applicant expects to raise graduation rates at schools participating in the project a mere two percentage points (p. 16). This meager improvement may be attributed to number of factors and may draw into question the effectiveness of the project.

The proposal identifies professional learning communities and coaching as key strategies for improving teacher and administrator effectiveness (p. 16). While the proposal states that the lowest performing school will receive 18 months of coaching, there is no consideration of coaching or mentoring for all other participants.

Also, the proposal includes a performance bonus for administrators that are trained and remain employed with a partner LEA for at least two years (p. 21). The proposal, however, does not specify any performance criteria that must be achieved other than continued employment.

Reader's Score: 36

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 proposal states that interrupted time series design with matched pair individuals and schools will be used with a range of data to evaluate the project's effectiveness and fidelity of implementation (pp. 19-20). The proposal has identified clear performance indicators and measures that are aligned to the project's objectives (pp. 1-2).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are identified.

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 proposal identifies the challenges that rural LEA's may face in recruiting and retaining talented administrators. With this in mind, the focus of the project is to develop the knowledge and skill of existing administrators (p. 2). A significant commitment to change has been made on the part of each of the partner LEA's, which is critical for system change to actually occur (p. 3). Also, the participants in this project expect to realize an increase in student achievement that is three percentage point higher than the control group (p. 5).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are identified.

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 management plan and timeline are adequate for achieving the identified objectives (pp. 0-10).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses: No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/21/2010 11:52 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/25/2010 12:15 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: North Mississippi Education Consortium -- North MS Education Consortium, (U363A100007)

Reader #1: *****

	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	10
	Sub Total	95
	Total	95

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SLP Review Panel - 1: 84.363A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: North Mississippi Education Consortium -- North MS Education Consortium,
(U363A100007)

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

1. A clear conceptual framework is well articulated in the applicant's proposal that focuses on intensive treatment interventions for low-achieving, poor schools in the target districts (p. Project Design e15). Barriers that plague academic success are identified, namely that several of the schools targeted are some of the lowest performing in the state and nation. The proposal's framework takes into account the area plight on many levels and is primed to implement a program that will incorporate: best practices curriculum in teaching and learning, subject-area content knowledge, and leadership knowledge and practices. Specifically, the use professional learning communities and job-embedded learning are two strategies that should prove to provide a large impact on the success of the project. (p. Project Design e7-9)
2. The applicant proposes excellent activities that constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field. These include an intense 18-month program of 27 days of classroom instruction, 40 hours of online learning, and several research action projects. Participants, which include principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders, will also receive an additional 18 months of coaching to further build their skills and to assist with implementing best practices. Special courses, such as creating school wide programs for English Language Learners and Instructional Leadership will also be available ongoing to assist with specific needs for school sites. (p. Project Design e16-17)
3. The proposed project is designed to improve teaching and learning as evidenced by the creation of district learning teams and project learning groups who will focus their efforts on district wide teaching reforms. (p. Project Design e3) During quarterly meetings, these groups will identify needed changes to support student achievement and discuss program results. Additionally, a Project Learning Group, will be created to monitor and review evaluation results for program recommendations specific to improving teaching and learning which should be helpful in collaborative efforts for turnaround strategies and increased interventions. (p. Project Design e17)

4. The proposed project design, implementation and evaluation have sound sustainable strategies for replication. Efforts include: the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) curriculum which is already available nationwide and the use of a train-the-trainer model for districts to share knowledge provided to training representatives(p. Project Design e18). The evaluation component of the program is also designed to gather findings on successful implementation procedures and supports that can be shared throughout the national NISL organizations. Summary articles in trade journals and presentations at education conferences will also ensure that the other low-income, low-performing districts have access to program results.

5. The applicant's selection process is well defined and inclusive to yield strong results across the eight partner districts to be served. Accordingly, all principals and assistant principals in the 43 schools in the target area will receive the intensive training program. More importantly, educators in the 10 worst documented low-performing schools will receive an additional 18-month coaching program, in which they can also send additional school staff to help improve overall school results. An alternate route training program for aspiring principals should also prove effective as it uses the state approved Mississippi Alternate to Quality School Leadership Program (MAPQSL) in combination with the NISL Leadership Development Program to train both educators and non-educators. Selection criteria include a master's degree, proven leadership potential, and high academic credentials.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

3. It is unclear how specific improvements will be made to guide teaching and student achievement. While the formation of District Learning Teams and Project Learning Groups will lead discussions on improvements, activities centered around programmatic changes are not clearly delineated that define how teaching and student achievements will occur. (p. Project Design e3)

5. Clarity on the selection criteria for the alternate school leadership component would have strengthened this section. While applicants will be screened for high academic success, it is unclear how non-educators will be judged. (p. Evaluation e10 and brochure)

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

1. The applicant provides a thorough evaluation plan that incorporates a quasi-experimental design and identifies clearly defined, objective performance measures tied to the intended outcomes of the project. Performance measures are targeted to gauge improvements across the board, including teacher attrition, professional development gains of

participants, and student achievement on standardized tests. Both quantitative (school performance data) and qualitative data (online survey instruments such as VAL-ED) will be utilized to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the program across districts. Comparative cohorts should also be an effective tool in measuring program success.

2. The applicant provides ongoing and specific methods of evaluation which will result in performance feedback and assessment of progress toward achieving program goals. Data collection is in-depth and ongoing. Methods of evaluation are varied, including strong formative and summative components that incorporate participant, partner, and teacher input which establishes a strong annual feedback loop (p. Evaluation e8 - e10).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

1. While some explanation is described on the inability to provide for evaluative efforts in various areas of the plan due to lack of funding, etc., performance indicators are not presented in Table 8 outlining teachers changing instruction or student achievement outside of standardized tests (p. Evaluation e1). As improving teaching and student achievement are proposed to be a significant element of the proposal, explanations in how these aspects will occur would have strengthened this section. (p. Evaluation e6)

2. The applicant presents a strong plan for data collection and analysis, however, feedback only seems to be provided annually in reports. More frequent feedback would seem more appropriate in guiding consistent changes for improvement, particularly for a project of this massive size and scope (p. Evaluation e11).

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:

1. The proposed project is likely to moderately increase knowledge and understanding of obstacles facing educational problems in under-performing, rural districts. The emphasis of the proposal is centered around educating and training existing school leaders aka "sitting principals" as an effective means of school transformation. As recruiting strong, high-caliber leaders in these low paying districts is challenging, this strategy could prove greatly successful for the region. Inherent in this approach is the theory that existing principals can be reformed instead of replaced, and should this program be successful, it will be a model program illustrated to potential schools nationwide.

2. A sound likelihood exists that the project will result in some systemic changes and improvements in the districts' instructional and administrative practices in some areas. This is based primarily on the fact that each district's superintendents have agreed to personally attend training and support principals in implementing changes. As evidenced-

based models are learned, this support system should help for implementation on the local level.

3. The results of the program could provide moderate improvements in teaching and student achievement across the eight districts to be served. Significantly, the program has a proven track record with excellent results in various districts across the county. The magnitude of likely results in preparing stronger leaders from existing principals and assistant principals is well-demonstrated with case studies (p. Significance e6-8). Theoretically, because the program will be implemented district-wide in all eight districts, improvements should prove advantageous to the region.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Np weaknesses cited.

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

1. The applicant's management plan is well constructed and extremely plausible to achieve the proposed objectives on time and within budget. An excellent and well qualified team is in place with each key staff role defined and supported with resume documentation. Partner roles are also sufficiently defined and include the University of Mississippi Institute on Education and Workforce Development, who will manage the project and facilitate most training sessions.(p. Management plan e0). A 5-year timeline is also included specifying key project tasks, responsible staff and benchmarks to ensure the project efficiency and effectiveness.

2. The applicant will ensure that a strong diversity of perspectives is brought to bear in the planning and ongoing implementation of the program in several ways. Namely, the creation of District Learning Teams and Project Learning Groups will be comprised of a variety of school administrators on various levels throughout the 8 districts who will have input .(p. Management plan e8). These groups will be accountable to local constituents (i.e. school boards and parent groups) for further input. Teachers, school administrators and other educator posts from individual LEA sites to host a planning team is one strategy to ensure a diverse collaborative effort. Teachers will also be encouraged to provide input, particularly in the evaluation phase.

3. The applicant provides details of a variety of procedures to ensure that continuous feedback and improvements will take place. These include: ongoing participant surveys after each completed NISL unit, annual teacher surveys, and

student data and achievement. As a result, mid-course corrections will be identified and implemented to increase positive project outcomes (p. Management plan e8).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses cited.

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/25/2010 12:15 AM