

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2013 01:56 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Relay Graduate School of Education (U363A130096)

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement (Optional):</b>		
1. Summary Statement:	0	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	42
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Quality of Project Eval	15	15
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	25	24
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality of Mgmt Plan	15	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 1</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 1</b>		
1. Building Leadership	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Invitational Priority 2</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 2</b>		
1. Moderate Evidence	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>96</b>

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Relay Graduate School of Education (U363A130096)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement (Optional):

#### 1. General Comments:

##### General:

Reader's Score:

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project design of the proposed project. In determining quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1.) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (2.) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.
- (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.

##### Strengths:

The grant application has a strong focus on principal leadership. The project is drawing from research based programs (page 2) and examining charter models that have been successful. The backward design model on page 4 points out the process for identifying gaps and being able to address them where and when they are found rather than waiting. The applicant's logic model with inputs and outputs on page 8 and 9 gives a good graphic idea of what is expected in this project.

##### Weaknesses:

A concern appears to be in creating a program that is for one year only. It appears there will be 5 cohorts for five years. The intensive professional development is very good but it is unclear as to what follow-up will be offered to those moving through the program on pages 10 and 11. This leads to a second concern as to the sustainability if each cohort is followed for only one year. To strengthen this, the project could point out more clearly what and how the follow up will occur.

Reader's Score: 42

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project evaluation of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1.) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the 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 provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.
- (3.) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

### Strengths:

The evaluation specifically focused on both the summative and formative assessments. There is adequate support for both forms of assessment. It is detailed as to how the results will be used (page 32-34) and how they will be viewed for organizational improvement. As the assessments are further developed greater depth will be given to the formative assessments so as to determine course corrections necessitating any changes which need to be acted upon.

### Weaknesses:

No apparent weaknesses

Reader's Score: 15

## 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 grant is projecting the potential outcomes and points out 5 major system-wide changes. The implementation of the project has the potential to show significant changes which in turn could lead to comprehensive changes in how principals receive professional development in the future. It is clear that this program is a follow up to principal induction programs which in turn could have the potential for a long lasting impact. The structure as point out on page 40 is developed in such a way that it can be shared in a more global perspective.

### Weaknesses:

A concern lies in the information shared as to what the follow-up will be after the one year of training for each cohort. The application could be strengthened if the applicants can establish the supports for the leaders that completed the cohort programming.

Reader's Score: 24

## 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 the Secretary considers:

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

### Strengths:

There is a focus on the course work, in house training as well as the practice situations. Page 48 lays out a clear plan. The objectives are pointed out on 14 and 15 (pages 46 and 47 and what the milestones and timelines are. On pages 43-45 are the members of the leadership team and what the role is that each will play in the grant as well as what they will be responsible for.

### Weaknesses:

No apparent weaknesses

Reader's Score: 15

## Priority Questions

### Invitational Priority 1 - Invitational Priority 1

1. Projects that implement professional development for current principals (including assistant principals), especially in schools that the State educational agency (SEA) has identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools, or in schools that the SEA has identified in accordance with its approved ESEA flexibility request as priority schools or focus schools to: (1) Help them master essential school leadership skills, such as evaluating and providing feedback to teachers, analyzing student data, developing school leadership teams, and creating a positive school environment; and (2) enable them to support instruction in their schools aligned to college- and career-ready standards.

### General:

Identified Priority 1

Reader's Score: 0

### Invitational Priority 2 - Invitational Priority 2

1. Projects that provide principal preparation, professional development, or both that are supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness.

### General:

Identified Priority 2

**Reader's Score:** 0

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/15/2013 01:56 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/14/2013 08:23 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Relay Graduate School of Education (U363A130096)

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement (Optional):</b>		
1. Summary Statement:	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	42
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Quality of Project Eval	15	15
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality of Mgmt Plan	15	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 1</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 1</b>		
1. Building Leadership	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Invitational Priority 2</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 2</b>		
1. Moderate Evidence	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97</b>

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Relay Graduate School of Education (U363A130096)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement (Optional):

#### 1. General Comments:

##### General:

The applicant presents a project that has strong potential to increase the competencies, skills, and knowledge of principals. The proposed Academy will consist of training sessions led by experts in data-driven instruction, expectation-setting, and character building and will include job-embedded assignments. Principal supervisors will also participate in the training. Participants will engage in cohort activities to ensure maximum impact of the training.

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

The Secretary considers the quality of the project design of the proposed project. In determining quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1.) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (2.) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.
- (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.

##### Strengths:

1)

Goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable. A logic model is an adequate tool drive the program's performance (pages 8-9, and the Abstract). Project goals address the selection of project participants and training of participant enrolled in the project.

2)

The applicant presents a strong explanation of how the project will meet the needs of the target population. For example, project focus will be on developing the instructional leadership skills of sitting principals through main inputs. The alignment of project inputs with the Recovery District's governance model, which is designed for autonomy and empowerment, is and strong method of enabling principals to shape their own school cultures, tailor how they exercise instructional leadership to meet the needs of their unique student populations, and make nuanced operational and personnel decisions (page 12). practice-based courses led by renowned education leaders is an innovative way to cover key components of school leadership, to include Instructional Leadership, Cultural Leadership, Strategic Leadership, and Strong Instruction (Pedagogy and Content). Course components are the foundations for student growth and achievement (page 13). The feedback-intensive, practice-based, job-embedded element of the design is adequate to help participants

develop an actionable strategic plan that they will adapt as the school year progresses. This also arms participants with the necessary tools to implement their learnings in their school environments.

The applicant describes a strong partnership to deliver the program design. Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay GSE), New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO), and New Schools for Baton Rouge (NSBR) propose to work with high-need LEAs in New Orleans and Baton Rouge to train 50 principals and their supervisors (principal managers) over a 5-year period through Relay GSE's National Principals Academy (the Academy) (paged 1-2). Each of the three partners will serve multiple purposes in project implementation and in ensuring that the Academy's components are of relevance and impact for the participating principals (page 26). Each partner will address a specific component in the project of which reflects their expertise. Expertise includes recruitment and selection, intersessions and site visits, intensive training, cohort building (page 26). Roles and duties as outlined are sufficient as partners.

The applicant presents information that indicates the project is part of an effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. The fact that the project springs from a confluence of three events: the post-Hurricane Katrina transformation of the New Orleans school system through structural reforms; the scaling of these reforms to Baton Rouge; and the founding of a higher education institution whose innovative methods draw from the practices of the nation's highest-performing schools serving high-need students (page 1) documents events to address improved instruction to students. The proposed project is an addition to these efforts to improve the provision of education to students in the state. Additionally, three of the CMOs partnering on this project were selected to serve as Lead Partners by The Achievement Network in work addressing Common Core State Standards (page 28). This will offer K-8 schools interim assessments to gauge students' readiness for the Common Core.

4)

The applicant presents explanation of appropriate ways the project has potential for replication (page 30). It is the long-term vision of project partners is to spark transformative change in principal development that can be broadly replicated. The project will produce and disseminate information about the outcomes of the Academy. Findings will be disseminated through the development of a leadership development "how-to guide", which will detail program successes, lessons learned, and implementation guidelines. The guide will be published on the project website, shared with other leadership development programs, and partners and staff will commit to presenting the guide at a minimum of three national conferences. Faculty may also incorporate findings into future publications.

**Weaknesses:**

1)

No weaknesses noted.

2)

The applicant does not demonstrate how up to date knowledge and effective practice is being used to develop leaders. Without a stronger research-base to support the project design or the elements of project components, it is difficult to determine how well the project will successfully meet the needs of its target population

3)

No weaknesses noted.

4)

No weaknesses noted.

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project evaluation of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1.) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the 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 provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.
- (3.) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

#### Strengths:

1)

The applicant outlines an evaluation effort that is sufficient to measure the impact of the project. The project evaluation will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence, which is a viable method of demonstrating the effect of the project on teaching and learning (pages 31). The evaluation will be comprised of two components: a summative assessment that will assess whether the program has had the desired effect of increasing student achievement, principal performance, staff satisfaction, and principal retention; and a formative assessment which will enable the project implementation team to assess program quality and make data-driven refinements as necessary (page 32). The external evaluator will collect data relevant to both outcome and process effectiveness measures that the partners will use to support program development. Additionally, five measurable performance measures are appropriate to produce quantitative and qualitative data on the performance of the project (pages 32-34). The performance measures will assess whether the program has had the desired effect of increasing student achievement, principal performance, staff satisfaction, and principal retention.

2)

The methods of evaluation are sufficient to measure the effectiveness of the project. The formative evaluation will focus on collecting data that will enable the partners to assess the quality of program implementation and identify both positive and negative outcomes during, rather than after, program implementation (page 35-36). The evaluator will collect data throughout the grant period to assess both the nature and quality of implementation methods and understand the full, appropriate context in evaluating the summative effectiveness of the program. The qualitative and quantitative data help assess the quality of program implementation. The external evaluator is a strong collaborator collecting and analyzing information about how things are going and assisting the partners in collecting and analyzing data about their respective components of the program.

3)

The applicant clearly outlines how the evaluation approach will provide ways to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment. An evaluator assess changes in the program implementation data over the course of the grant period, which is likely to determine which strategies and components of the program, and have the greatest impact on participants' growth as instructional leaders (page 37). Further, the evaluator will develop mid-year and end-of-year reports that summarize the results of participant surveys and interviews with principals, principal supervisors, and teachers and quantitative data on student outcomes, program participation, participant grades, principal effectiveness, participant and teacher surveys and principal retention (page 37). Annual reports will serve both a summative purpose for reporting and the formative evaluation allows the project partners to make data-driven modifications to program design and implementation in a way that maximizes the Academy's positive impact on student achievement.

**Weaknesses:**

- 1)  
No weaknesses noted.
- 2)  
No weaknesses noted.
- 3)  
No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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:**

- 1)  
The proposed program has strong potential to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies (pages 37-38). This project's evaluation plan results will contribute to the body of evidence that describes the association between specific leadership practices and student outcomes. The project will also contribute to increased understanding of effective strategies for educator development by examining the correlation between the project's course mastery and student achievement gains; and (b) the impact of combining a national instructional leadership development program with local cohort activities. Contributions allows for the determination of the correlation between principals' grades in specific Academy courses and schools' student achievement scores. The research findings will inform the Academy's future programming and be published in the leadership development "how to guide" that will be available to the general public.
- 2)  
The proposed program is likely to result in system change (page 29). Project partners expect the project to drive system-wide changes across schools in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and the surrounding region. The program is a innovative method of achieving five major system-wide changes to include development of the next generation of high-performing principals, with current principals modeling effective leadership and providing aspirational proof points for current teachers and administrative staff; and Principal managers extend the impact of the training to other principals in their organizations through the implementation of a common framework for identifying and cultivating excellence in instructional leadership (page 39). By training and cultivating collaborative relationships with the managers of participating principals who are often senior decision makers in each LEA, the partners will adequately extend the reach of the program beyond the ten principals who participate each year and increase the likelihood that the project will result in system-wide improvements.
- 3)  
The applicant presents information demonstrating the magnitude of a project. The design of the project allows improvements in the targeted schools by providing trained staff. The content of each course offered through the

Academy will help drive increases in student achievement. Cumulatively, over the course of a student's K-12 education, the magnitude of this impact would be nearly a year's worth of additional learning (page 40). Additionally, the project presents an opportunity for New Orleans and Baton Rouge to prove that when combined, educator autonomy and accountability, high-quality instructional leadership training for principals can lead to improved student outcomes (page 41). The opportunity in this project is of major significance to the nation. If New Orleans succeeds, urban centers across the country will have data available that indicate what is needed to replicate the reforms and change the life outcomes of millions of at-risk children. Improvement in these areas of instruction and instructional leadership is critical to continued academic growth in New Orleans in terms of designation of low performing schools (page 42).

**Weaknesses:**

- 1)  
No weaknesses noted.
  
- 2)  
No weaknesses noted.
  
- 3)  
No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

**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 the Secretary considers:**

- (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.) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

- 1)  
The proposed program has strong potential to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies (pages 37-38). This project's evaluation plan results will contribute to the body of evidence that describes the association between specific leadership practices and student outcomes. The project will also contribute to increased understanding of effective strategies for educator development by examining the correlation between the project's course mastery and student achievement gains; and (b) the impact of combining a national instructional leadership development program with local cohort activities.
  
- 2)  
The proposed program is likely to result in system change (page 29). Project partners expect the project to drive system-wide changes across schools in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and the surrounding region. By training and cultivating collaborative relationships with the managers of participating principals who are often senior decision makers in each LEA, the partners will extend the reach of the program far beyond the ten principals who participate each year and increase the likelihood that the project will result in system-wide improvements.

3)

The applicant presents information on the magnitude of a project designed to result in improvements in the targeted schools, particularly in the areas of teaching and student achievement. For example, the proposed Academy will train 50 principals, reaching over 35 percent of the principals of high need schools in New Orleans and 20 percent of the principals of high-need schools in Baton Rouge in just five years. Content of each course offered through the Academy has been shown to drive increases in student achievement in environments that are similar to those that exist in New Orleans and Baton Rouge schools. Cumulatively, over the course of a student's K-12 education, the magnitude of this impact would be nearly a year's worth of additional learning (page 40). Additionally, the project presents an opportunity for New Orleans and Baton Rouge to prove that when combined, educator autonomy and accountability, high-quality instructional leadership training for principals can lead to improved student outcomes (page 41). The New Orleans opportunity in this project is of major significance to the nation. If New Orleans succeeds, urban centers across the country will have data available that indicate what is needed to replicate the reforms and change the life outcomes of millions of at-risk children. Improvement in these areas of instruction and instructional leadership is critical to continued academic growth in New Orleans in terms of designation of low performing schools (page 42).

**Weaknesses:**

1)

No weaknesses noted.

2)

No weaknesses noted.

3)

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Priority Questions**

**Invitational Priority 1 - Invitational Priority 1**

- 1. Projects that implement professional development for current principals (including assistant principals), especially in schools that the State educational agency (SEA) has identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools, or in schools that the SEA has identified in accordance with its approved ESEA flexibility request as priority schools or focus schools to: (1) Help them master essential school leadership skills, such as evaluating and providing feedback to teachers, analyzing student data, developing school leadership teams, and creating a positive school environment; and (2) enable them to support instruction in their schools aligned to college- and career-ready standards.**

**General:**

The proposed program will train five cohorts of 10 sitting principals and their supervisors over a 5-year period (50 principals total) in an instructional leadership program, thereby meeting Invitational Priority 1, implementation of professional development for current principals to help them master essential school leadership skills and enable them to support instruction in their schools aligned to college- and career-ready standards (page e20).

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Invitational Priority 2 - Invitational Priority 2**

- 1. Projects that provide principal preparation, professional development, or both that are supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness.**

**General:**

The applicant states each course is based on research that links educator and school-wide practices and student performance. By supporting practices and strategies for which there is at least moderate evidence of effectiveness, the proposed program meets Invitational Priority 2. Little evidence is presented beyond the a few research citations to support moderate evidence of effectiveness.

**Reader's Score: 0**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/14/2013 08:23 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2013 11:30 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Relay Graduate School of Education (U363A130096)

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Statement</b>		
<b>Summary Statement (Optional):</b>		
1. Summary Statement:	0	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	45	45
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Quality of Project Eval	15	14
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality of Mgmt Plan	15	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 1</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 1</b>		
1. Building Leadership	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Invitational Priority 2</b>		
<b>Invitational Priority 2</b>		
1. Moderate Evidence	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Relay Graduate School of Education (U363A130096)

## Questions

### Summary Statement - Summary Statement (Optional):

#### 1. General Comments:

General:

Reader's Score:

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project design of the proposed project. In determining quality of the project design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1.) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (2.) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.
- (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.

#### Strengths:

The proposed grant appears to be grounded in a thorough and solid understanding of research-based practices and emerging promising practices that are deliverable in a timely and cost-efficient manner. The project design includes well-defined project goals, measurable objectives, and related activities as evident in the detailed quality program logic model presented on pages 8(e27) and 9(e28). The program model highlights the project goals and objectives in alignment with specific project outcomes such as 75% of the Principal participants will continue on as leaders in their school for a minimum of 2 years after completion of the proposed school leadership program. The program strengths also include the specifics in the coordination and cooperation of partners and national experts, and making project outcomes publicly and freely available. The educators discuss assessment of the state and local LEAs needs, support their implementation of the Relay GSE National Principal Academy, and sustain the evaluation there of as initiatives moving forward to accomplish improving student outcomes and the quality of instruction and leadership across and within participating LEAs.

The proposal was strengthened by concrete examples of the national experts and practitioners use of related projects that warrant well-versed, cutting-edge research and novel Principal leadership tactics. The applicants cited robust and relevant research supporting their approach and claims throughout the grant proposal. For example, the applicant made inferences and implications from recent research literature on adult and student culture, teacher development, instructional pedagogy, and data driven instruction (Bambrick-Santoyo). In addition research was cited from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2013) several times documenting and substantiating the need to improve student outcomes among persistently lowest achievement schools/students. This is compelling research that supports the need to address

the invitational priority on assisting low performing schools to master essential school leadership skills, teacher feedback, analyzing of student data, and to promote the development of support instruction in their schools aligned to college- and career-readiness for transition to college/career. Additional strengths included building on lessons learned and best practices of previous research-based endeavors.

The applicant appears to have a plan in place to address sharing of resources and other material such as best practices, associated policies, cutting-edge research with LEAs, schools, districts, and other stakeholders. The applicant discussed development and implementation of a deliberate and explicit approach that included timelines for sharing of resources to include written documents and a continuous feedback loop around those processes that should encourage replication.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses noted in the project design of this grant proposal.

**Reader's Score: 45**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project evaluation of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:**

**(1.) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the 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 provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.**

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

**Strengths:**

The objectivity of the evaluators is clear with an external evaluator assigned to the project. The evaluation plan for this grant proposal includes thorough explanations and illustrations of survey instruments, and formative and summative assessments appropriate for the scope of the proposed activities. The data collection sources such as the focus groups, surveys and interviews are discussed and clearly outlined. The mixed method use of instruments strengthens the evaluation and supports the triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative data. There is an in depth logic map provided that clearly delineates the program inputs, outputs and outcomes expected from the data collection instruments. The evaluation plan provides a comprehensive explanation of the performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the intended outcomes. This comprehensive evaluation does include all the necessary components of an exceptional approach that will likely result in an evaluation of efforts to build capacity and effective implementation strategies that will improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, improve the quality of instruction and improve school leadership.

**Weaknesses:**

This evaluation plan does not include evaluation questions aligned with the project goals to guide the evaluation research proposed. There is also a lack of detailed description and discussion of the data analysis tools which if more details were provided would strengthen the quality of the project evaluation plan. The evaluation would be strengthened if an evaluation goal(s) were set and the performance measure chart included the project goals in alignment with the evaluation

goal.

**Reader's Score: 14**

#### **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:**

A major strength in this proposed project can be noted in this section of the grant proposal which includes an abundance of evidence to support the claim that this professional development and training targeted for Principals will lead to improved student outcomes, closing the achievement gap, improved quality of instruction, and improved leadership. The illustration in Appendix D is useful in understanding the logic and magnitude of the grant proposal in their comprehensive efforts to build leadership capacity and increase student achievement. The level of specificity needed was provided and it appears that impact of system change and improvements are more than likely to occur should this grant proposal be funded, implemented and replicated as the researcher/writers propose. The local, regional, and national impact of this study on leadership, instruction, and student outcomes has been thoroughly explained.

#### **Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses.

**Reader's Score: 25**

#### **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 the Secretary considers:**

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

#### **Strengths:**

The project tasks, responsibilities of the proposal project team, and reasonable timelines are clearly delineated. The applicant's description of the FTEs, personnel position, proposed staff, and relevant experiences are also clear. The time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate for meeting the

objectives of the proposed project as evident by the roles and responsibilities being in correlation to the salaries and FTEs outlined in the budget. The management plan aligns with the information specified in the budget for allocation of resources and the project goals and objectives outlined in the project design and evaluation of the grant this grant proposal. The execution and implementation of the management plan as proposed also includes well-defined and effective strategies for the reinforcing feedback and continuous improvements throughout the study.

**Weaknesses:**

There does not appear to be any major weaknesses in the management plan of this grant proposal.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Priority Questions**

**Invitational Priority 1 - Invitational Priority 1**

- 1. Projects that implement professional development for current principals (including assistant principals), especially in schools that the State educational agency (SEA) has identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools, or in schools that the SEA has identified in accordance with its approved ESEA flexibility request as priority schools or focus schools to: (1) Help them master essential school leadership skills, such as evaluating and providing feedback to teachers, analyzing student data, developing school leadership teams, and creating a positive school environment; and (2) enable them to support instruction in their schools aligned to college- and career-ready standards.**

**General:**

The invitational priority one was addressed

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Invitational Priority 2 - Invitational Priority 2**

- 1. Projects that provide principal preparation, professional development, or both that are supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness.**

**General:**

The invitational priority two was addressed

**Reader's Score: 0**

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/18/2013 11:30 AM

