Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Berea College -- GEAR UP, Academic Adminstration (U215P100052)
Reader #1: **********

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**Sub Total** 100 96

**Total** 100 96
Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. a) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.
   b) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers—
      i) The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators;
      ii) The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described; and
      iii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project.

Strengths:
The applicant has provided a compelling need for this planning grant and has described in great detail the degree by which the community has poverty rates that are higher than state and national averages, low levels of student academic achievement, high obesity rates, high teenage pregnancy rates and a large need for medical resources to address the unmet medical and health needs. The data and information presented is current and is based from research, reports and local surveys. The geographic area to be served is well described in terms of population, the number of schools and the socio-economic status of its residents. Examples of current gaps in services include a lack of medical services for the community (e.g., immunizations) and the lack of parent skills to assist in career and education planning for their students.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. a) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.
   b) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
      i) The extent to which the applicant describes how it will plan to build a continuum of solutions designed to significantly improve the academic and family and community support indicators in this notice;
      ii) The extent to which the continuum of solutions includes a strategy, or a plan to develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
      iii) The extent to which the applicant describes strategies for using data to manage program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;
      iv) The extent to which the applicant identifies and describes academic and family and community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;
      v) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to work with the Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national
evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees; and

vi) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Strengths:
The applicant has proposed a detailed planning grant that will offer a continuum of solutions to improve the educational continuum for students birth to college (p.11). A number of areas are identified that will be focused on during this planning. The applicant specifies that the needs assessment and data collection process will be conducted in two phases during the planning grant year. Details regarding when and how this will be completed as well as who is responsible are provided. The applicant provides adequate details regarding its current involvement in other programs and initiatives as well as its partnerships with other organizations that will be instrumental in the successful implementation of this project. It is evident that this applicant has experience working with other federal programs and that this project will be appropriately coordinated with other related efforts (e.g., GEAR UP, mentoring p. 20).

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1.a) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.
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   i) The extent to which the applicant describes proposed solutions to be provided by the proposed project that are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence;
   ii) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards; and
   iii) The extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.

Strengths:
It appears that the student strategies proposed in this project were also tested in Berea College’s GEAR UP Program with significant results. The applicant provides data to substantiate the success.

Weaknesses:
The applicant did not adequately support through research and best practices that the selection of training and support for teachers is proven effective or has had success in other settings.

Although the applicant states that it will employ a segmentation analysis to analyze the needs of student subgroups, it does not fully describe how this will be done or what this process consists of (e.g., software program that needs to be developed, etc).

Reader's Score: 11
Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. a) The Secretary considers the quality of the project personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

   b) In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the applicant, including the project director, and the prior performance of the applicant on efforts similar or related to the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

   c) Relevant experience includes the applicant's experience in and lessons learned by:

      i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
      ii) Serving the neighborhood and its residents;
      iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;
      iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to achieve results; and
      v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

Strengths:

The proposal offers a detailed description of the role of the project director in terms of needed experience and this position's roles and responsibilities (p. 25). The leadership team is comprised of individuals with substantial experience with data collection and with working with the target community.

The applicant has thoroughly demonstrated its ability to manage this grant based on experience with working with other federal grant programs. These are described in terms of number of students served and the size of the budget. Furthermore, the applicant details its experience with working with underachieving schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. a) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

   b) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers--

      i) 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;
      ii) The extent to which the memorandum of understanding described in paragraph 5 of Absolute Priority 1 describes each partner's financial and programmatic commitment; how each partner's existing vision, theory of action, and theory of change, and existing activities align with those of the proposed Promise Neighborhood; and the governance structure of the proposed Promise Neighborhood;
      iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of families, school staff, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and
      iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain and scale up the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Strengths:

The applicant has developed a detailed monthly timeline of activities and milestones specifically referencing collecting and analyzing data (p. 34). The applicant describes its plan to develop an advisory council that will consist of a diverse membership to ensure that all perspectives of the community are heard. This council will meet quarterly...
to review progress and provide input (p.35). The applicant identifies its plan for sustainability and substantiates its plan based on its ability to sustain other initiatives such as GEAR UP after its funding ended.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. a) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
   b) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:
      i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in long-term systems change or improvement;
      ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population;
      iii) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies; and
      iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of settings.

Strengths:
The applicant has focused its plan to have long-term system change based on its strategy of educational supports for families regarding college preparation for their students. It also plans to pilot four strategies for improved student learning. It plans to disseminate its findings on a state and national level (p. 38).

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/16/10 9:31 PM
Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Berea College -- GEAR UP, Academic Administration (U215P100052)
Reader #2: **********

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Technical Review Form

Panel #28 – Panel - 28: 84.215P

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

Applicant: Berea College -- GEAR UP, Academic Adminstration (U215P100052)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

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described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators;
      ii) The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described; and
      iii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or
opportunities will be identified and addressed by the proposed project.

Strengths:
The applicant provides a clear description of the severity of the problems to be addressed, using extensive referral to data. Pages 2-7. The geographically defined area is clearly described on page 7, including a map of Kentucky districts. The applicant describes to great extent the gaps or weaknesses and the opportunities to be addressed by the proposed project. Pages 9-10.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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indicators in this notice;
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develop a strategy, that will lead to significant improvements in one or more schools
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program implementation, inform decision-making, engage stakeholders, and measure success;
      iv) The extent to which the applicant identifies and describes academic and family and
community support indicators to be used for the needs assessment during the planning year;
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Department and with a national evaluator for Promise Neighborhoods to ensure that data
collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national
evaluation of the Promise Neighborhoods Program during the implementation phase and of
specific solutions and strategies pursued by individual grantees; and
      vi) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or
related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.
Strengths:
This section provides evidence that the applicant has clearly thought through the quality of their plan. For example, the applicant provides clear a description of their plan to build a continuum of solutions regarding Academic & family & community support on page 11. The applicant provides a clear and thorough strategy based on the needs assessment as well as a strategy for using data to manage implementation.

The timeline presented on pages 12-15 is thorough and includes thoughtful inclusion of and coordination with similar efforts, leveraging Federal investments such as GEAR UP, Upward Bound, WEEA, OJJDP Mentoring, and Talent Search, page 20.

The applicant provides a clear description of how data will be used to develop and implement their plan. Pages 14-15.

Resources/Partners are introduced and briefly described:
Collaborative for Teaching and Learning
Pearson Working Samples System
Kentucky Historical Society

The applicant provides thorough evidence of a clear identification and description of indicators to be used for the planning year. Pages 15-19.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria – Quality of Project Services

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      iii) The extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.

Strengths:
The applicant provides a balanced plan for solutions including training and support for ELA teachers, art and literacy programming, college coaches, a parent empowerment program and a community arts program.

The applicant provides a reasonable description of past success with student achievement and growth, closing and reducing the achievement gap and increasing high school graduation and college going rates. Page 23-24

Weaknesses:
To improve the strength of the proposal, the applicant should provide more information to describe what makes these programs evidence-based. Only one reference was made. Page 21. The information on page 23 is helpful, but it is unclear how it links back to the
Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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c) Relevant experience includes the applicant’s experience in and lessons learned by:
   i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
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   iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;
   iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to achieve results; and
   v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

Strengths:
The applicant provides a thorough description of key positions to lead the project, including qualifications required. Pages 25. Existing staff are described on page 26.

The applicant and staff have demonstrated that they have prior experience operating similar projects, including Upward Bound, GEAR Up, and Juvenile Justice Mentoring. Page 27.

The applicant has a sound grasp of working with low performing schools and students and serving the Appalachian neighborhood and its residents. Page 27-28.

The applicant has thoroughly documented that they have experience collecting, analyzing and using data for decision making and program improvement and management. Page 29.

The applicant has clearly documented detailed description of ability to create formal and informal relationships and generating community support. Pages 30-31.

The applicant will have a grant writer on staff designated to pursue public funding to continue the educational outreach programs.

Weaknesses:
The applicant did not provide a detailed description of their ability to secure and integrate funding streams from multiple public & private sources. The applicant has experience with diverse programming and it would have been good to read more about how they would use that experience to seek other or similar funding. Page 31.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of families, school staff, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and

iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain and scale up the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Strengths:
The applicant’s description of a management plan appears to be sound, well thought through and complete, including all points required in this section. Their timeline is fairly detailed. Pages 31-32

There is a good description of the development of a feedback loop that relies on the collection of evidence or data. This is a very good idea and it is woven into the timeline. Page 34.

The applicant clearly describes that members of the Management Board collaborated to develop the preliminary MOU that includes an outline of a theory of change that is consistent with each partner’s way of conducting their work, engaging in the community, and supporting governing structure. This section provides a clear outline of the organizations contribution to the PN project. The supportive MOU is included in the appendix. Page 34

The applicant thoroughly describes how they will ensure that diverse perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the PN. Page 35

The applicant provides a sound description of potential for continued support of the project after federal funding ends and they have demonstrated experience in doing this in the past. Page 36.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found.

Reader’s Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

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iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of settings.
Strengths:
The applicant provides an outstanding summary of their vision of results for the PN grant:
--The school system will have new resources and knowledge of effective strategies for involving low-income Appalachian parents.
--Teachers will gain knowledge that will lead to improved instruction.
--Parents and students will have experienced a variety of arts programming and will understand connection between the arts and their community.
--The Neighborhood will have a college going culture.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10
# Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Berea College -- GEAR UP, Academic Administration (U215P100052)  
**Reader #3:** **********

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**Total**  
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Strengths:
The applicant makes a strong case for the educational, economic, and health-related stressors in its neighborhood. The descriptions of the various factors and how they are related to the neighborhood’s lack of educational achievement, adequately proved the applicant’s case for need.

The applicant’s use of charts and tables inserted into the narrative of the proposal illustrates its statistical information in a way that is easy to understand and digest.

The applicant gave a clear explanation of what it has determined as the top three problem areas in its neighborhood and what solutions it believes will work best in addressing these problems (p. 9-10).

Weaknesses:
The applicant failed to include demographic information of its neighborhood. There was no information on the racial or familial makeup of the area. Including insight on this type of information would have given more insight into the needs of the residents of this neighborhood.

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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vi) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

Strengths:
The applicant identified specific goals and strategies for its project design based on the statistical information found in the Needs section of the proposal. It also included a detailed description of its needs assessment and analysis process, which includes obtaining feedback and information from many of the neighborhoods stakeholders (i.e. students, parents, and schools).

The applicant's partnership with the Kentucky Historical Society to determine and document local traditions will not only result in findings that will educate the neighborhood, but will also hopefully give it a sense of pride regarding its culture and history.

Weaknesses:
There were no noticeable weaknesses in this section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

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   iii) The extent to which the applicant explains how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis will be used to determine that children with the highest needs receive appropriate services to meet academic and developmental outcomes.

Strengths:
The applicant's decision to implement small pilot programs to gather more data and information on its top problem areas will give them firsthand knowledge on whether or not it is moving in the right direction for addressing the pressing issues in the neighborhood. This is a strong strategy that goes beyond doing research and meeting planning.

It is clear that the applicant has experience in working with low-performing Appalachian schools. The applicant's GEAR UP 1999 program has achieved key educational goal in the neighborhood, including improving student achievement and growth, closing achievement gaps, and high school graduation and college-going rates (p. 24).

The applicant mentions its plan to use segmentation analysis to focus on the needs of student subgroups. The fact that it lists possible subgroups to focus on, such as
students at the greatest risk of school failure, families with the least resources and greatest health needs, displays that the applicant is familiar enough with the neighborhood and its data to anticipate which areas will need the most attention (p. 24).

Weaknesses:
The applicant did not make a strong case for whether or not the proposed project would lead to improvements in the achievement of students in its targeted neighborhood, as measured against rigorous academic standards.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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      i) Working with the school or schools described in paragraph 2 of Absolute Priority 1;
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      iii) Collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and ongoing improvement;
      iv) Creating formal and informal relationships, and generating community support to achieve results; and
      v) Securing and integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources.

Strengths:
Although, the applicant has not yet selected a Project Director, it has listed the requirements and responsibilities of the position.

The applicant has selected a strong Leadership Team with significant experience in working with the PN. Also, the fact that the Principal Investigator is a product of the neighborhood will give further insight into the needs, challenges, and strengths within that community.

Weaknesses:
There were no noticeable weaknesses in this section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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iv) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to sustain and scale up the proposed Promise Neighborhood.

Strengths:
The applicant effectively describes a month by month outline of the planning period, what is expected to be achieved, and what parties are responsible for carrying each responsibility.

The applicant has identified that diverse perspectives will be necessary in carrying out its PN planning phase. It has listed the various perspectives that will prove to be beneficial to the project.

The applicant has identified the Management Board as being responsible for identifying additional funding for the project. The MB will also work with the Project Director to identify additional resources, which leads to a two-fold approach for securing funding.

Weaknesses:
There were no noticeable weaknesses in this section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

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   iv) The potential to sustain and apply the model of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation of the model in a variety of settings.

Strengths:
The applicant has a detailed plan of how it will disseminate and share its findings with the community and lists various opportunities to do so. Through its Leadership Team's fundraising strategies and its replicable small scale pilot programs, the applicant has displayed that it has a strong plan and system for sustainability.

Weaknesses:
There were no noticeable weaknesses in this section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 10