

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/14/10 9:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County -- Partners for Community Change,N/A
(U215P100282)

Reader #1: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Selection Criteria

Need for Project

1.Need for Project	10	10
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Quality of Project Design

1.Project Design	20	20
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Quality of Project Services

1.Project Services	15	15
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Quality of Project Personnel

1.Project Personnel	25	23
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Quality of the Management Plan

1.Management Plan	20	17
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Significance

1.Significance	10	10
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Sub Total	100	95
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Total	100	95
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Technical Review Form

Panel #19 - Panel - 19: 84.215P

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County -- Partners for Community Change,N/A
(U215P100282)

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 application contains a well-defined and articulated statement of need with a number of indicators of neighborhood distress explored (i.e., poverty, low rate of homeownership, high school dropout rate, description of social conditions) (e2-e6).

The application is very thorough in its approach with appropriate statistics included for each indicator described. For example, page e3 and e4 provides an excellent overview of neighborhood statistics as well as statistics for poverty, rate of home ownership, high school drop-out rate, and number of individuals in community that maintain college degrees.

Weaknesses:

N/A

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 plan is comprehensive and includes a number of stakeholders who are necessary in developing a continuum of solutions (e9-e10).

The project has articulated a plan for the completion of a needs assessment and execution into a continuum of solutions (e11) while citing specific examples.

The project gave examples of evidenced-based programs which will support this project. One notable example provided includes the Family-School-Community Partnership (e14).

The project has a well-articulated plan for using data to track program and project indicators.

Weaknesses:

n/a

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.
- b) In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers
 - 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:

The application included a logic model which provided an excellent presentation of the service models which will be executed throughout this project and the intended outcomes of the services delivered.

Solutions addressed provide adequate evidentiary support (e30). One aspect of this that was very significant was how this project described each solution identified in the logic model and the research evidence of the described models.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 15

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:

This project identified a strong lead agency (United Way) with deep roots in the community. This is evidenced by United Way leading similar community initiatives (e34).

There appears to be solid collaboration among a number of community and civic leaders.

Weaknesses:

The applicant is actively working on a community engagement process to solicit participants in an advisory capacity; however, no evidence was presented which demonstrates a participant serving in a leadership capacity (e45).

Reader's Score: 23

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 of 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 management plan is clear and comprehensive with actionable steps and timelines (e47-e48).

The MOU is complete and addresses each area identified through this Request for Proposals process.

The management plan reflects a diversity of perspectives from the professional community.

The project also highlights plans for "scaling up" and sustainability (e52), including

applying for other sources of funding.

Weaknesses:

The absence of participants on the advisory board is significant and noted. Given the efforts put forth with responding to this plan, solidifying the community response would have further strengthened this response

Reader's Score: 17

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 considersâ
 - 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 degree to which this project identifies key systems leaders (i.e., City of San Antonio, United Way, Urban Land Institute) is impressive. The applicant is well positioned for the development of long-term systems change and the building local capacity.

The project builds on solid models (e56)and include the Family-School-Community Partnership, the Model Classroom Project, Over-age middle school project were the specifics described which will build on the development of innovative solutions throughout the pipeline.

The commitment of the Mayor to "scale up" and offer this type of solution to other neighborhoods positions this initiative for success in building long-term local capacity and systems improvement (e56).

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/14/10 9:31 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/12/10 12:10 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County -- Partners for Community Change,N/A
(U215P100282)

Reader #2: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Selection Criteria

Need for Project

1.Need for Project	10	10
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Quality of Project Design

1.Project Design	20	19
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Quality of Project Services

1.Project Services	15	15
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Quality of Project Personnel

1.Project Personnel	25	22
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Quality of the Management Plan

1.Management Plan	20	20
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Significance

1.Significance	10	10
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Sub Total	100	96
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Total	100	96
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Technical Review Form

Panel #19 - Panel - 19: 84.215P

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County -- Partners for Community Change,N/A
(U215P100282)

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 uses data very powerfully in describing the levels of need on the Eastside of San Antonio; the table comparing the Eastside to San Antonio as a whole is effective. The statement on p. e3, that demographers believe that San Antonio reflects America's future as a country with a young and under-educated workforce makes clear the need to begin addressing some of the problems facing San Antonio. That fact that over 20% of all births are to teens in the two Eastside zip codes (p. e7) is startling, as is the median household income in Wheatley Courts subsidized housing: \$5,306.

Even though maps are often helpful in painting a picture of a potential Promise Neighborhood, the description of the Eastside offered on page e5 evokes an image of the community's location, ethnic diversity and housing stock.

The table on page e8 clearly lists the gaps in service and infrastructure and correlates with the needs detailed in the rest of this section of the proposal.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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 - 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 strong commitment of the mayor, city manager and school district superintendent bode particularly well for project success (provided their involvement remains strong throughout the planning process!).

The Advisory Board's planning goals listed on page e10 represent a holistic approach to improving student achievement and building Eastside neighborhoods, though the applicant recognizes that improving student academic achievement remains the primary focus (p. e18).

The intent to create a comprehensive cradle-to-college-to-career needs assessment (p. e11) that focuses on the attendance zone for Wheatley Middle School and its four feeder elementary schools and early childhood center is directly in line with Promise Neighborhood priorities. Of particular interest to this reviewer was that the needs assessment will seek to quantify how non-parental caregivers can be supported, given that 30% of Eastside children are being raised by family members or friends due to parental incarceration or unfit parenting. (p. e11)

The Program Needs indicators mentioned on page e12 address students' academic achievement and other important indicators such as teacher effectiveness, over-age middle school students, and students who feel hopeful and engaged in school.

The continuum of solutions related to child development, school improvement and neighborhood revitalization (listed in the table beginning on page e13) is very thorough. The importance of better housing and livable neighborhoods as a factor in student success is highlighted in several places.

Weaknesses:

Parents and neighborhood associations are mentioned as members of the advisory board, but it is not clear how they will be recruited or involved. It is true that Concordia Consultants, working through Trinity University, will be conducting focus groups to learn more from Eastside families about how they are faring and how they feel about local schools (p.10), but beyond providing that input, it is not clear how these community members will have an ongoing role in Advisory Board decision making.

Reader's Score: 19

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 fully addresses each of the selection criteria requested.

The logic model presented on pages e27-e30 clearly illustrates how the vision of self-sufficient students graduating ready for college and careers in a revitalized neighborhood can be achieved. The effectiveness of proposed solutions from the Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Board (pages e30 through e35) - expanding early childhood services, increasing parent engagement, teacher training, using a small school model, implementing community linked schools, lengthening the school day, building an out-of-school zone, and improving Eastside housing - is clearly described for each solution, based on research and practice.

The likelihood that services provided will lead to improvements in student achievement is addressed convincingly on pages e36-e38.

Finally, the plan for Trinity University students to collect primary program and project indicators along with asset inventory data seems likely to provide the Advisory Board with the information it needs to identify the geographic areas of greatest need in the Promise Neighborhood zone, as well as the characteristics of students who are thriving and those who are struggling. (p. e38)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

As the lead applicant, United Way is a good choice for this project given the organization's level of respect in the community, local fundraising acumen, experience administering other large grants (Robert Wood Johnson and Federal DOE) and "unmatched track record in improving outcomes for children." (p. e39-e40) The project co-directors from the United Way also appear to have useful, complementary skills.

Additionally, the Mayor's Office and City of San Antonio are both deeply experienced in grant management and the administration of major projects. (p. e40)

Dr. Drennon, the head of Urban Studies at Trinity University, is also an asset with her experience in Urban Education and Transforming Communities.

Weaknesses:

The listed lead personnel do not appear to have community organizing experience, which would be a plus. However, the proposal does mention that the lead partners are actively working on a community engagement process.

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. a) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.
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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 proposed management plan has clear steps involving concrete deliverables along the yearlong planning timeline (p. e47-e48).

During the first months of the project period, additional leadership and advocacy training will be provided to allow the new parent and neighborhood representative to participate fully in the Advisory Board's work and decision making. (p. e50)

The MOU lays out the collective vision, theory of change, and theory of action for the Eastside Promise Neighborhood and also states the cash commitments -- which are significant -- and in-kind contributions of each partner, as well as each partner's planning period time and staffing commitments.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

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- 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 Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Board includes a diverse array of civic leaders and institutions working together to create an Eastside Promise Neighborhood. (p.e9)

This thorough and thoughtful proposal indicates convincingly on page e55 (and throughout) that the Eastside Promise Neighborhood will address core community problems that are likely to create long-term improvements for the residents and the agencies that serve them.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/12/10 12:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/12/10 2:16 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County -- Partners for Community Change,N/A
(U215P100282)

Reader #3: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Selection Criteria

Need for Project

1.Need for Project	10	9
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Quality of Project Design

1.Project Design	20	20
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Quality of Project Services

1.Project Services	15	15
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Quality of Project Personnel

1.Project Personnel	25	23
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Quality of the Management Plan

1.Management Plan	20	20
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Significance

1.Significance	10	10
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Sub Total	100	97
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Total	100	97
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Technical Review Form

Panel #19 - Panel - 19: 84.215P

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County -- Partners for Community Change,N/A
(U215P100282)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

- 1.a) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.
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 - 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 Eastside geographic area is well defined and its issues outlined. The chart on pages e5-e8 connects need indicators to current levels of need for Eastside San Antonio. This facilitates project design and measurement of future progress. Most, of the six "core problems" to be solved by the plan, flow from the indicators. (Pages e8, e12)

Weaknesses:

The school achievement data (pages e5-e6) appears to be a criterion reference and does not have a listed data source. The reader does not know if the assessment is created by the district, state of Texas, or national entity. Low-performing schools are listed as a core problem and it would be helpful to know what standard is being used.

One of the six core problems, "Neighborhood resources and revitalization efforts are siloed," requires additional background information concerning relevant gaps, infrastructure, and indicators.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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 - 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 Eastside Promise Neighborhood Advisory Board includes decision makers from multiple groups that can enhance community impact. (Pages e9-e10)

The proposal contains an excellent plan to gain community input through surveys and focus groups as part of the planning process. (Pages e10-e11)

The plan includes strategies to improve achievement at multiple schools that enroll students of all ages.

Some data sharing already exists to facilitate the use of data while helping to resolve privacy issues. (Page e21) The lead agency makes a commitment to work with the national evaluator. (Page 22-23)

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses Noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

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 - 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:

The project outlines an organized series of solutions supported by evidence, including high quality early education, small school and community school models. (Pages e30-35)

The multiple coordinated services are likely to improve achievement, including expanded early childhood education, school instructional improvement, a longer school day, and increased after school opportunities. (Pages e25-e39)

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses Noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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 - 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 has experience in the community, the target school district and with similar projects such as the Family-School-Community Partnership. Other participating agencies have worked with similar projects as well. (Pages e39-e44)

Project co-directors have extensive experience and expertise in community work.

The applicant's data partner has current experience integrating data sources from multiple agencies.

Weaknesses:

Lead personnel do not have experience with community organization. The project would be stronger if there was more evidence that parents participated in proposal development and residents were in leadership roles.

Reader's Score: 23

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 single MOU outlines the vision, theory of change and commitments of major partners.

The proposal has a clear 5-step work plan and timeline with responsible entities and work

groups delineated. (Pages e45, e46, e50)

A plan exists to use surveys and focus groups to increase community input. (Pages e10-e11)

There is strong support from the city, housing authority, school district and agencies to assist with sustainability. The proposal outlines a planning process to begin system change to improve future sustainability. (Pages e52-e55)

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses Noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Significance

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 - 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 project unites government, agencies, the school district and community in a unified project.

The range of partners, a well thought out service plan and an extensive community needs assessment increase the likelihood of success.

The success of this diverse partnership will assist future efforts in other communities.

Weaknesses:

No Weaknesses Noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/12/10 2:16 AM