

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/15/2011 12:52 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Berea College (U215N110015)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	21
Quality of Project Services		
1. Qual. of Project Services	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	43
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
CPP4 Early Learning		
1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
CPP5 Internet Access		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	
CPP6 Arts and Humanities		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	1
CPP7 Affordable Housing		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	
Invitational Priority		
Adult Education		
1. Adult Education	0	
Total	105	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Tier II Panel - 3: 84.215N

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Berea College (U215N110015)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Need for Project.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear description of the rural nature of the community to be served, within a large 961 square mile area of Appalachia. (p. 1-3) Descriptive statistics provided included socioeconomic data (p. 2), the lack of a medical home for children, (p. 4), kindergarten readiness (p. 4), college readiness (p. 8), the lack of physical education in schools (p. 10) and other comparative data showing that the target area's residents are lower on indices than the county and the U.S. The applicant's data gathering included walkthroughs in classrooms (p. 6) and interviews with school personnel.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear description of the rural area to be served, including counties, population and school enrollment. (p. 1-4) The applicant indicated the area to be served is 961 square miles within three contiguous counties of Clay, Jackson, and Owsley. (p. e23)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Design.

Reader's Score: 21

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the continuum of solutions is aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.**

Strengths:

The applicant intends to focus on all of the public schools in the target area. MOUs have been signed with these schools. Schools will receive training in data use via ASSIST. (p. 16) An early warning system will identify students at risk of leaving school prior to graduation. (p. 17) Professional development will be provided by the partner agency CTL in reading, functional literacy, math literacy, technology integration, and instructional coaching. (p. 18) All high school teachers are to be trained in Pre-AP if they teach math, science, or English. After school programming will be provided.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear what the school personnel will be trained to do with the data, nor which particular data would be collected and used. (p. 16)

It is not clear that the professional development is targeted to specific needs of specific groups or individual teachers, nor if the professional development includes ongoing support for implementation. (p. 18) The general (non-AP) professional development appears to be targeted only to teachers of reading and math, and the specific grade levels to be served are not indicated. It is not clear if any teachers of courses other than reading and math would participate or benefit from professional development. It is not clear how the skills necessary for students to succeed in academically challenging AP courses will be developed in target low-achieving students, or what ongoing student supports or parent supports for these courses would be. Given the rural nature of the neighborhood, it is not clear how students will be able to participate in the after school programming unless transportation is provided, but transportation is not addressed. It is not clear what activities relate specifically to implementing a transformation model in the PLA schools.

Reader's Score: 7

- 2. The extent to which the applicant describes an implementation plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps, that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career, and that will significantly increase the proportion of students in the neighborhood that are served by the complete continuum to reach scale over time.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a graphic which clearly illustrated the identified needs, continuum of solutions, and short and long term goals. (p. 21). The solutions identified address early learning, pre-K through 12th grade, postsecondary and career, and family and community supports. Annual goals are provided along with longer-term expected outcomes. (p. 21)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant provided a listing of existing programs in the neighborhood, including programming for after school and summer youth activities, physical activities, mentoring services, health education workshops, and other services. (p. 22) The sources of assets and programs include federal, private, and other such as health agencies. (p. 22-23)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the applicant describes its implementation plan, including clear annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources as described in paragraph (2) of Absolute Priority 1.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear link between the needs assessment and the segmentation analysis to identify needs and solutions. (p. 1-10). This link is shown in the graphic on p. 21. Figure 20 on p. 24 provides a listing of annual goals based on improvement indicators. For example, a 25% annual improvement goal is indicated for the number of partners using the data system.

Weaknesses:

The target improvement goals for systems are not sufficiently explained. For example, the applicant indicated a 25% goal in additional policies each year, which does not make sense unless there is a clear reason for continuing to add policies each year. (p. 24)

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Services.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, were used to determine each solution within the continuum.

Strengths:

Within Appendix F the applicant provides a clear description of how segmentation analysis was applied to each solution. For example, segmentation analysis determined that all middle and high school students would benefit from teachers being provided with pre-AP training so it was determined that all teachers would participate. (p. 10)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

- 2. The extent to which the applicant documents that proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence.**

Strengths:

The information in Appendix F indicates which type of evidence supports each of the solutions. For example, the evidence supporting the Pre-AP and AP professional development is stated to be strong and is based on research from the College Board. (p. 10) For another example, the evidence supporting the Rural Literacy Program is stated to be moderate and is based on RLP outcomes in other locations. (p. 6)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. The extent to which the applicant describes clear, annual goals for improvement on indicators.**

Strengths:

Numbers to be served on an annual basis is indicated in the solutions discussion in Appendix F. Figure 25 indicated annual goals for growth on each indicator. For example, a 15% increase annually is targeted for students to have a medical home. (p.38)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of the Management Plan.**

Reader's Score: 43

Sub Question

- 1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.**

Strengths:

The management team is comprised of individuals representing a variety of constituencies including the college, the state Council on Postsecondary Education, Save the Children, and others. These individuals have extensive experience working with the neighborhood as well as with other state and federal agencies. (p. 42-44) The applicant described the engagement with residents during the planning phase, including meetings, focus groups, summits, and other activities. (p. 46)

Weaknesses:

None found

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicated it had learned from its GEAR UP program data use to expand its services. (p. 52) During the planning year the applicant identified REACH as a data partner to design a data system for the project. (p. 53) The new data system is expected to be operational within six months of project implementation. (p. 53) The data will include downloads from the KY Department of Education and the KY Council on Postsecondary Education with observance of privacy laws in the process. (p. 53) Lessons learned were addressed on p. 51 concerning lessons learned during the planning process and on p. 46 concerning lessons learned regarding the neighborhood advisory board.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 15

3. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a copy of the MOU which describes the commitment of each partner. The MOU indicates the theory of change, documents the financial support of each entity, and includes the governance structure for the project.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear that the project has a system for holding the partners accountable. The applicant states it does not have the power to compel or commit action by any signatory to the MOU. (p. 58) Lessons learned are not addressed.

Reader's Score: 8

4. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicates it has experience raising funds and integrating funding streams, including scholarships, a pending Talent Search application, and regional grants. (p. 61-62) A lesson learned was that more assistance was needed by partners in grant writing for raising funds. (p. 61)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4 Early Learning

1. **To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.**

Strengths:

The applicant intends to expand the existing network of early learning providers by building capacity with current providers and encouraging new early learning programs. (p. 63) The current planning group will be expanded to include representatives from private child care centers, Save the Children, Early Head Start, and others. (p. 62) Professional development will be offered so that more children can take advantage of available state child care subsidies. (p. 63)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5 Internet Access

1. **To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP6 Arts and Humanities

1. **To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.**

Strengths:

During the planning year the project worked with a local folklorist from the Historical Society (p. 64) along with three community scholars. These individuals will help plan and develop a schedule of arts programs. (p. 65)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP7 Affordable Housing

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Invitational Priority - Adult Education

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include a plan that is coordinated with adult education providers serving neighborhood residents, such as those funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, as amended. Coordinated services may include adult basic and secondary education and programs that provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for student educational achievement. Examples of services and programs include preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test; English literacy, family literacy, and work-based literacy training; or other training that prepares adults for postsecondary education and careers, or supports adult engagement in the educational success of children and youth in the neighborhood.

No

Reader's Score:

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Berea College (U215N110015)

Reader #3: *****

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Questions		
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1. Quality of Project Design	25	24
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1. Qual. of Project Services	15	15
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1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
CPP5 Internet Access		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	
CPP6 Arts and Humanities		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	1
CPP7 Affordable Housing		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	
Invitational Priority		
Adult Education		
1. Adult Education	0	
Total	105	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Tier II Panel - 3: 84.215N

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Berea College (U215N110015)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Need for Project.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a wealth of information detailing the challenges facing the residents of the three counties included in this proposal. The counties are three of the most economically distressed counties in the nation, see page 3. Only 13 percent of the children in the Neighborhood were seen at the area's clinic in the past year, with most children lacking a medical home, see page 4. Most of the children eligible for pre-school learning are not accessing those resources. Analysis of reading and math scores for third through sixth grade students shows that students eligible for free or reduced price lunch scored significantly lower than their peers, who also scored lower than state average on the tests, see page 6. Only 12 percent of parents responding to a survey during the planning year indicated that their child could afford to attend a public college should they choose to attend, see page 14. Almost 1/3 of residents over 25 years of age have less than a ninth grade education. The information provided by applicant, tied to the project's indicators, clearly demonstrates the challenges facing the residents of this area.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

Strengths:

Three contiguous counties in Kentucky comprise the geographic area targeted for this Promise Neighborhood Initiative. They are Clay, Jackson and Owsley Counties, which are all rural areas in the Appalachian area. Together the area is 961 square miles. The area is very rural, without major highways, only one town large enough to host shopping facilities, and with schools situated so that parents have significant drive times to reach them. The 39,533 residents are homogenous with the majority of the residents living outside the three towns within the Neighborhood.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Design.

Reader's Score: 24

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the continuum of solutions is aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

Given the rural area that comprises this Neighborhood and the lack of resources, this applicant centers the focus of this initiative on the three public school districts serving the area's children and youth. The continuum of solutions identified aligns with a school improvement strategy that includes accreditation of all schools, increased use of data in school planning including development of a longitudinal early warning system, professional development for staff, increased access for students to rigorous coursework, extended learning opportunities and use of college/career readiness targets, see pages 15-18. Each of the PLA schools participating in this initiative are employing the Transformation Model as their school improvement strategy, see page 47.

Participating organizations in this initiative include the local school districts, enabling alignment with school improvement strategies during the project. A representative of the Kentucky Dept. of Education, Dr. Susan Allred, serves on the Neighborhood's Management Team to ensure coordination with state-level services for low-performing schools, see page 47. Dr. Allred leads is the state's Education Recovery Director for PLAs in eastern Kentucky, including the targeted school districts.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the applicant describes an implementation plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps, that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career, and that will significantly increase the proportion of students in the neighborhood that are served by the complete continuum to reach scale over time.

Strengths:

On page 21, the applicant provides a graphic aligning the needs to be addressed with the proposed continuum of solutions, short and long-term goals and the Neighborhood's vision for change. The continuum of solutions includes strategies targeted to impact all students, such as increasing teacher effectiveness, as well as targeted strategies, such as mentoring, intended to address a need identified through segmentation analysis.

The applicant also included summary information on the first year implementation timeline in Figure 21 on page 25, identifying key activities provided either weekly, monthly, quarterly or during the summer.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions.

Strengths:

The applicant conducted asset mapping to identify community programs and assets during the planning year for this initiative,. This process resulted in the identification of resources detailed in Figure 19 on pages 22 and 23. The list includes federal, private and blended-source resources that align with the proposed continuum of solutions. The applicant used the mapping process to involve more community leaders in the planning process to strengthen the likelihood of continued engagement. Given the rural nature of this Neighborhood, gaining access to the assets identified is a key step in implementing the continuum

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the applicant describes its implementation plan, including clear annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources as described in paragraph (2) of Absolute Priority 1.

Strengths:

The applicant's goals for improving systems and leveraging resources are detailed in Figure 20 on page 24. The goals include identification and elimination of policies that are barriers to student success, increased use of data to drive continuous improvement, increased submission of proposals to support the Neighborhood and strengthening of formal and informal partnerships supporting the initiative. These systems improvement and resource leveraging strategies are linked to the continuum of solutions and seem appropriate to the Neighborhood.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant provided an implementation plan on page 25 related to operational activities, the information provided in the narrative and in Appendix F lacked specificity related to implementation of the project's solutions.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Services.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, were used to determine each solution within the continuum.

Sub Question

Strengths:

In addition to the information provided in the needs assessment section of the application describing the linkage between needs assessment information and project indicators (see pages 4-15), information was also provided on the needs assessment data gathering process on pages 30-31. These included analysis of existing data indicators measuring quality, health and well-being, school climate surveys and other school data; implementation of a student health and wellness survey, focus groups engaging 665 individuals, and ethnographic research targeted to gather input from under-represented groups. Data was segmented by gender, income, school level, grade level and county of residence. Two community meetings were held to gather feedback on the Management Team's prioritization of data. The process described was thorough, used existing data and gathered new data to fill information gaps.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

2. **The extent to which the applicant documents that proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided an extensive description of available evidence in Appendix F of the application. Key program activities were detailed with information on the evidence (strong, moderate, best practice) supporting selection for implementation. When available, the applicant provided information on the usefulness of the proposed intervention in rural communities. The analysis provided demonstrated the inclusion of the proposed activities in the project implementation plan.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

3. **The extent to which the applicant describes clear, annual goals for improvement on indicators.**

Strengths:

In Figure 25, pages 38-41, the applicant lists, by indicator, the annual goals for growth and the method for measuring growth. Measures reflect areas where segmentation of data was identified as appropriate during the needs assessment process, such as a targeted improvement goal in graduation rate for males, see page 39. The annual goals for improvement link to the continuum of solutions and the intent of this initiative.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of the Management Plan.**

Reader's Score: 43

Sub Question

1. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.**

Strengths:

Berea College, the applicant agency, has extensive experience partnering and providing resources to schools and communities in the project area. Examples of these include student internships, gardening projects, a leadership training institute, and community improvement focused fund providing resources to nonprofit and community agencies, see pages 45-46, 49-50. The management team leading this initiative comprises post-secondary representatives, representatives from the Kentucky Dept. of Education, juvenile justice representatives, and staff from Berea College with skills directly related to the initiative. All members bring a history of working with schools and residents in the area.

On pages 50-51, the applicant identifies lessons learned during the planning year process that informed identification of solutions and/or indicators. One of the lessons learned, identified on page 46, was the need to form a PN Youth Advisory Board and to add youth representation to the Management Board, which will provide youth opportunities for leadership and voice in decisions that directly impact them. Included in the budget for the project are dedicated funds to provide Leadership Team and Management Board training related to best practices, see budget page 6.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements.**

Strengths:

The applicant, Berea College, has experience gathering, analyzing and using data to inform project implementation in the Eastern Kentucky area comprising the Promise Neighborhood, see pages 52-53. In particular the applicant describes the scaling up process related to the GEAR UP initiative which began at one school district and has been expanded regionally using lessons learned from the initial project. The process allows for gathering data at the individual student level. A firm has been identified to develop the longitudinal data system for the initiative, which is expected to be operational in the first year of the implementation cycle and will allow for integration of data from a variety of sources and disaggregation of data and include student level data. The same firm will serve as the project evaluator and work the project staff to ensure compliance with all data collection requirements. The applicant will comply with all data privacy regulations, see page 54, and will ensure availability of rapid time data for project, school and stakeholder organization staff. An Associate Director of Data and Evaluation will be hired with expertise in evaluation and data management to provide leadership for these efforts, see appendix-position description and page 27.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 15

3. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding,**

Sub Question

and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.

Strengths:

As lead agency for this initiative, Berea College will hold partners accountable for complying with the commitments identified in the MOU agreement and in the partner letters of commitment included in the appendix, see page 58. The key partners signing the MOU have worked together during the planning year for this project, which provides a foundation for continued collaboration. The MOU provided clearly identified partner roles and commitments, which directly tie to the project implementation plan. Alignment of the visions, theories of action and change are also detailed in the MOU agreement.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how Berea College will hold partners accountable for delivering on their commitments in relation to this initiative, especially the 28 partners providing letters of commitment, see appendix. More information on the intended scope of responsibility for the Management Board in relation to significant adjustments to the implementation plan could have clarified the process to be employed when a commitment is not actualized. Information was not provided on lessons learned in earlier partnerships that informed the development of the MOU.

Reader's Score: 8

- 4. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

On pages 59 and 60, the applicant provides information on the long history of fund raising and fund support at Berea College. This knowledge and experience will be made available to assist in the development of a strategic fundraising plan for the Promise Neighborhood Initiative through the assistance of the College's fund development staff, see page 60. On page 61, the applicant provides a list of current pending requests for funding submitted during the planning year that align with the intent of the initiative as well as three current awards of new funds completing the project. The applicant cites the planning year mapping process as a successful method for identifying high-quality programs in the area for inclusion in the initiative and scaling-up during the project, see page 61.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4 Early Learning

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to expand access to high-quality early learning experience based on the needs analysis conducted during the planning year, see page 32. An early learning network will meet quarterly, led by the Eastern Kentucky child Care Coalition and include representations from school, community, and home-based childcare providers. One of the intended outcomes are to increase providers' knowledge of Kentucky's STARS rating system and to increase the number of STARS sites in the area. Activities will also include opportunities for professional development in the areas of school readiness, incorporating the arts to engage children in learning and training on starting up an in-home childcare program, see page 32.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5 Internet Access

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP6 Arts and Humanities

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

On pages 63 through 65, the applicant describes the project's plan to incorporate arts into school and after-school learning opportunities. The Folklorist and community scholars engaged in the planning year activities will work with the project's Arts Content Specialist to develop a schedule of arts programs appropriate for use that utilize local artists. Activities will also include professional development for K-12 teachers and early learning providers on incorporating the arts into their learning curriculum.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP7 Affordable Housing

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Invitational Priority - Adult Education

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include a plan that is coordinated with adult education providers serving neighborhood residents, such as those funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, as amended. Coordinated services may include adult basic and secondary education and programs that provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for student educational achievement. Examples of services and programs include preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test; English literacy, family literacy, and work-based literacy training; or other training that prepares adults for postsecondary education and careers, or supports adult engagement in the educational success of children and youth in the neighborhood.

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 11/15/2011 01:05 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/15/2011 05:56 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Berea College (U215N110015)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
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Selection Criteria		
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1. Need for Project	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	23
Quality of Project Services		
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1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	43
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1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	0
CPP6 Arts and Humanities		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	1
CPP7 Affordable Housing		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	0
Invitational Priority		
Adult Education		
1. Adult Education	0	0
Total	105	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Tier II Panel - 3: 84.215N

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Berea College (U215N110015)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Need for Project.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

Extremely detailed data from the applicant's needs assessment and segmentation analysis for each required indicator illustrate the extent of the challenges faced by the neighborhood (pp. e25-e36). Applicant provides statewide and national context for the data, and describes the results for each indicator (for example, by explaining the reasons for the findings, and/or the specific risks that the data implies). Additional findings are also discussed. Applicant's thorough use of data demonstrates a commitment to designing a continuum that is based on the real needs of the community.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

Strengths:

Applicant defines the geographic area it proposes to serve and describes factors including local schools, income, population density, and geographic features (pp. e23-e25). Applicant notes that the identified area is considered a "neighborhood" because of the similar challenges faced by its residents.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Design.

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1. **The extent to which the continuum of solutions is aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.**

Strengths:

Proposal lists several school reform strategies that address school improvement in a meaningful way (e.g., guidance for data-based decision making; high-quality professional development) (pp. e36-e40). Each strategy is described in a way that shows the applicant's careful consideration of how it would be implemented, and the MOU indicates the participating school districts' willingness to collaborate in implementation. The applicant has secured partnerships with organizations that bring relevant experience. The four target schools that are classified as "persistently low-achieving" are implementing a transformation model (p. e68). The applicant demonstrates consideration of how project leaders would be involved with this process, and how the work at these schools would align with state-level initiatives (pp. e68-e69).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the professional development described in Appendix F would be differentiated to address the needs of different groups of teachers and/or of different schools. Proposal does not explain how the proposed solutions would address the fact that high school students currently demonstrate much lower achievement (in percentage of students at or above grade level) than elementary students in the neighborhood (p. e26).

Reader's Score: 9

2. **The extent to which the applicant describes an implementation plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps, that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career, and that will significantly increase the proportion of students in the neighborhood that are served by the complete continuum to reach scale over time.**

Strengths:

Proposal describes the key assumptions and the logic model that drive the proposed continuum (pp. e40-e42). The plan to work with all public schools in the defined area means that all students would be served once the project reached scale, and additional solutions would reach young children and adults in the community, thereby spanning the continuum from early learning through college and career readiness. The applicant has developed short- and long-term goals based on the needs it has identified in the community (these are aligned with program indicators) (p. e42). The applicant's list of standards for a college-going culture (p. e57) provide a useful framework for the overall continuum.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. **The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

Applicant identified existing programs and organization, as well as the type of funding they draw upon to serve the community (pp. e42-e44). Many of these are included in the applicant's list of partners or community partners (MOU), demonstrating that the applicant is drawing upon existing resources to

Sub Question

create the proposed continuum.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the applicant describes its implementation plan, including clear annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources as described in paragraph (2) of Absolute Priority 1.

Strengths:

Applicant has developed a month-by-month implementation plan for Year One of the grant period and a detailed staffing plan (pp. e44-e51). Attention has clearly been paid to the human, financial, and logistical resources that would need to be put in place for the project to be successfully implemented.

Weaknesses:

Proposal does not specify particular policies or systems the applicant plans to address or improve. The goal of a 25% annual increase in the number of policies and systems that support youth outcomes (p. e45) is not specific enough to provide guidance for this aspect of the project.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Services.

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, were used to determine each solution within the continuum.

Strengths:

Proposal clearly describes the process used for the needs assessment and segmentation analysis (including thorough quantitative and qualitative data collection), and links each proposed solution to the findings for each program indicator (pp. e51-e56). The proposed continuum is clearly designed to meet the specific needs that the applicant identified.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

2. The extent to which the applicant documents that proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence.

Sub Question

Strengths:

Appendix F includes a thorough discussion of the evidence (including specifying the level of available evidence) supporting proposed solutions. In addition to evidence supporting specific solutions, applicant provides evidence supporting the more general outcomes of the solutions. (For example, evidence is provided that specifically supports the National Math & Science Initiative Advanced Placement Training and Incentive Program, and evidence is also provided that supports the effect of AP exam success on college matriculation and graduation). This demonstrates the applicant's consideration of the reasons for implementing each solution as well as the selection of particular solution models.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant describes clear, annual goals for improvement on indicators.

Strengths:

Proposal includes specific goals, representing annual increases in the number and percentage of residents served, along with the way each indicator will be measured (pp. e59-e62). The proposal includes deadlines by month for the collection of specific data in order to measure progress on indicators in a timely way.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear why the applicant is not using the data collected through the needs assessment to inform the development of more specific goals for improvement on indicators. The goals established for Indicator 4 are not differentiated to account for the varying levels of performance across grade levels (as noted on p. e26).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of the Management Plan.

Reader's Score: 43

Sub Question

1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

Strengths:

Proposal describes the expertise and experience of the applicant, the Project Director, and the Management Board, as well as lessons learned in working with the community and the way those lessons informed the project plan (pp. e63-e68). Specific information about the applicant's collaboration with the target schools and state level education agency, and the plan for building its capacity in this regard, is also described (pp. e68-e69). The applicant also demonstrates experience and success working with students (pp. e69-e70). Overall, the applicant illustrates its longstanding involvement with a wide range of community stakeholders and a commitment to continuing to learn about how best to serve neighborhood residents.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

- 2. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements.**

Strengths:

Applicant describes its experience tracking and using data, as well as the data system it plans to use for the project. The selection of a data partner (p. e74), the planned Early Warning System (p. e38), and the specific data the applicant plans to collect (p. e74) indicate that the applicant has carefully considered how it would use data to guide and inform the project. The MOU clearly describes the data-sharing plan for the project, including the school districts' commitment to providing student-level data.

Weaknesses:

Proposal does not explain the applicant's lessons learned related to collecting, analyzing, and using data. This makes it unclear how its past experience would inform its work with data related to this project.

Reader's Score: 14

- 3. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.**

Strengths:

Applicant describes its experience working with service providers from the community, as well as lessons learned (pp. e67, e70-e72). The MOU clearly describes the applicant's theories of action and change, as well as the theories of project partners. Current and future roles of the applicant and project partners are described.

Weaknesses:

Accountability mechanisms are not described. It is unclear how the applicant envisions using data to improve programming.

Reader's Score: 9

- 4. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

Applicant brings extensive fundraising experience, has successfully raised funds during the planning year, and describes a plan for continued fundraising (pp. e80-e82). Applicant also plans to integrate existing high-quality programs in the continuum in order to leverage existing funding (pp. e82-e83). By securing, utilizing, and pursuing diverse funding, the applicant demonstrates a commitment to the sustainability of the proposed project.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4 Early Learning

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.**

Strengths:

Applicant describes a plan to increase the number of children served by early learning programs in the neighborhood, as well as to increase the quality of existing early learning programs. Applicant has convened a team of early learning professionals to guide this process, with the goal of school readiness for children from the community.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5 Internet Access

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.**

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP6 Arts and Humanities

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.**

Strengths:

The integration of findings from a local folklorist and community scholars into Promise Neighborhood planning (pp. e84-e86) illustrates the applicant's interest in incorporating local art, culture, and history into the proposed continuum. The applicant's plan to provide arts programming to students, teachers, and the broader community is a compelling way to draw upon assets and to instill pride in the neighborhood.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP7 Affordable Housing

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Invitational Priority - Adult Education

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include a plan that is coordinated with adult education providers serving neighborhood residents, such as those funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, as amended. Coordinated services may include adult basic and secondary education and programs that provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for student educational achievement. Examples of services and programs include preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test; English literacy, family literacy, and work-based literacy training; or other training that prepares adults for postsecondary education and careers, or supports adult engagement in the educational success of children and youth in the neighborhood.

No

Reader's Score: 0

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