

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/04/2011 11:35 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Corporation of Mercer University (U215P110187)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Services</b>		
1. Qual. of Project Services	20	18
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	44
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>CPP4 Early Learning</b>		
1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
<b>CPP5 Internet Access</b>		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	1
<b>CPP6 Arts and Humanities</b>		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	
<b>Competitive Preference Priorities</b>		
<b>CPP7 Affordable Housing</b>		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	
<b>Invitational Priority</b>		
<b>Adult Education</b>		
1. Adult Education	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Panel - 13: 84.215P

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

Applicant: The Corporation of Mercer University (U215P110187)

## 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 describes the city of Macon as the 7th poorest city in America, in which one in three of the city's residents live in poverty. Both poverty rates and unemployment rates in Macon exceed those of the state of Georgia. Academic indicators of need are also described and disaggregated by school in tables 1, 2, and 4. Almost all (93%) of the students in the four target schools qualified for free and reduced meals. Student achievement scores are low at the Kindergarten readiness level and continue on a downward trajectory in elementary, middle, and high school. The most recent graduation rate of Southwest High School is 47%, making it one of the lowest performing schools in the nation. Family and community need indicators include crime rates, unemployment levels, and renter-occupied housing units, as illustrated in Table 4.

Importantly, the applicant also acknowledges gaps or weaknesses in services (p.6), such as the lack of a shared data system.

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant describes the city of Macon as located in Bibb County, 75 miles south of Atlanta. The graph on page 3 clearly shows the school district boundaries, which are the boundaries for the Promise Neighborhood as well. The location of each district school is indicated.

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Sub Question

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: 20

Sub Question

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

**Strengths:**

The Bibb County School System has recently undergone new leadership that has created a research-driven theory of change. As shown in the table on page e28, the school system (BCSS) and the Macon County Promise Neighborhood (MCPN) share a theory of change that is founded on three strategic principles supported by research. These include the importance of students and parents' mindsets rather than socio-economic status; risk factors can subvert students' success, but protective factors can mitigate risk; and parent engagement and education is associated with increased student achievement.

The applicant explains reform efforts underway at each of the four target schools. Southwest High School has perhaps the most intensive reform effort, as it is implementing a Transformation Model under a state SIG (school improvement grant). The applicant states that the proposed MCPN continuum of solutions align with the school improvement strategy at Southwest. In addition, the applicant discusses efforts underway at each of the three feeder schools to Southwest. It is particularly impressive that several schools are piloting key MCPN solutions. For instance, Ingram/Pye Elementary is piloting integrated student services through a site-based community support coordinator. MCPN will also collaborate with the school system to pilot student, parent, and teacher leadership training through the Efficacy Institute.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the applicant describes a proposal to 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.

**Strengths:**

Solutions, as well as the lead partners responsible, are displayed in the chart on page 16. Solutions address needs from early learning to college and career-readiness. For instance, solutions proposed for addressing the indicator of "Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school" include increased access to comprehensive maternity counseling by the Medical Center of Central Georgia and provision of quality early learning training by MU Tift College of Education. Solutions for students at school age include enhancing classroom and supplemental instruction as student-centric and increasing the number of trained mentors for "at-risk" elementary and middle school students, and increasing the number of graduation coaches. Indicators for students at the post-secondary level are addressed through increased student joint enrollment in vocational programming and the creation of a full-tuition and room and board scholarship to MU for highly qualified Southwest High graduates.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 3. The extent to which solutions leverage existing neighborhood assets and coordinate with other efforts, including programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds.**

**Strengths:**

The MCPN neighborhood has received major investments for the past decade, including two HUD Community Outreach Partnership Center grants to Mercer University (MU); federal-stimulus modernization grants to Macon Housing Authority; and city bond issue and tax credits awarded to Macon Housing Authority (MHA).

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

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

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Sub Question**

- 1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine each solution within the continuum.**

**Strengths:**

The needs assessment and segmentation analysis are described on pages 26-28. Data collection methods will include parent interview surveys, neighborhood focus groups, personal interviews with partners, and the collection and analysis of demographic data (p.26). The applicant has identified published expertise and 'toolkits' that will help the data collection process (e.g., Sharma, 2000 and Moore, 2009). The applicant will conduct the research under a Federally-mandated Institutional Review Board (IRB), which will ensure ethical and rigorous data handling. The applicant describes the specific statistical tests (e.g., Paired Comparison Techniques) that will be conducted to determine highest areas of need for the segmentation analysis.

Importantly, the applicant has already identified a case management approach to target the highest need children as identified through the comprehensive needs assessment and segmentation analysis. This forethought demonstrates that the applicant will take seriously the results of the segmentation analysis.

**Weaknesses:**

It is not clear who will conduct the data collection or the role the community might have in collecting the data.

In addition, although the applicant describes how various stakeholders will examine the needs assessment results, it is not clear how decisions about allocating money will be made.

**Sub Question**

**Reader's Score: 9**

- 2. The extent to which the applicant describes how it will determine that solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and ensure that solutions drive results and lead to changes on indicators.**

**Strengths:**

Key proposed solutions in all areas from cradle to college are based on evidence of effectiveness. For instance, the MCCG Beginnings program has been piloted at MCCG in the past with evidence that the program reduces risks associated with youth crime and antisocial behavior. Numerous other existing programs are described on pages 28-31, and they each are accompanied with evidence of their effectiveness. Examples include high quality extended day and summer programs, intentional dropout prevention programs, college preparation programs, and continued mentoring through college.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not address how it will determine the extent to which new solutions (not yet considered) will be based on evidence. It would have been helpful if the applicant had specified a review process (e.g., literature review) or even listed the parties responsible for assessing new programs for evidence-based results.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

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

**Reader's Score: 44**

**Sub Question**

- 1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the 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 applicant describes a diverse governance system that includes public agencies, non-profit organizations, business community, civic organizations, local government, and youth. The inclusion of students, or youth, is especially notable given that this population is often excluded from decision making, but are this population is often excluded from decision making, but is affected profoundly by the services. The Partners Council, composed of 50 stakeholders, has been meeting since January 2010, demonstrating an existing commitment among stakeholders. The applicant has also established a partnership with the BCSS Superintendent and his management team, a key relationship for effecting change in the school system.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

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.**

**Strengths:**

A Design Team composed of community stakeholders will consult a local MU evaluation group, who are experienced faculty and researchers in the area of Education, Community Medicine, and Sociology. MCPN will share a longitudinal database currently being developed by the University of Georgia for another state Promise Neighborhood (p.37). Travis Blackwell, the executive director of Community Partnership who will supervise the survey design, has extensive experience in working with residents (p. 37).

**Weaknesses:**

None.

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:**

Representatives from 31 entities have committed time and expertise to MCPN planning activities (see MOU in Appendix C). Based on preliminary focus groups, partners have agreed that the sustainability of MCPN is critical beyond the funding period. Additionally, the partners have been involved in the planning for the present proposal and have already identified critical activities, roles, and responsibilities that will enhance sustainability that can be used as non-federal match contributions. As a proposal to build capacity in this area, the applicant states that deliverables communicating the MCPN vision, theories of action and theories of change will be created (p. 37).

**Weaknesses:**

None.

Reader's Score: 10

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:**

Partners have already committed more than \$241,000 to support the planning team, which includes commitments of time and effort in participating on the Partners Council and/or Design Team. The applicant plans to identify opportunities and implement an action plan to reallocate established funding streams that may be a barrier to services.

Foundations and corporations have been invited to be part of the planning efforts, including the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the United Way of Central Georgia. Additionally, the applicant has already secured \$150,000 to support the Community Facilitator and Advocates.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant plans to seek funding sources from specific foundations and corporations (including John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the United Way of Central Georgia, and others), the applicant has only "approached" these entities to be a part of the planning effort (p. 40). It is unclear which (if any) of these listed groups will be able and willing to support MCPN.

**Reader's Score:** 9

**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 will establish an early learning network by first convening early learning providers to participate in a needs assessment to determine focus areas. The applicant proposes to enhance the existing early learning programs with professional development workshops on language/literacy and mathematical and scientific conceptual development in children. Additionally, MU Tift College of Education offers standard-based certification programs for early childhood teachers in the area.

**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:**

MCPN will partner with the Knight Foundation's Internet initiative to ensure that neighborhood students and adults have an upgraded technology center for digital literacy classes and employment opportunities. Additionally, the applicant will broaden access to computers throughout the neighborhood by working with the Boys and Girls Club and local elementary schools to provide access to and structured activities using the Internet.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score:** 1

**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:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

**Competitive Preference Priorities - 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:**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 11/04/2011 11:35 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/04/2011 12:02 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Corporation of Mercer University (U215P110187)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Services</b>		
1. Qual. of Project Services	20	20
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	45
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>CPP4 Early Learning</b>		
1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
<b>CPP5 Internet Access</b>		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	1
<b>CPP6 Arts and Humanities</b>		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	
<b>Competitive Preference Priorities</b>		
<b>CPP7 Affordable Housing</b>		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	
<b>Invitational Priority</b>		
<b>Adult Education</b>		
1. Adult Education	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>103</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Panel - 13: 84.215P

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

Applicant: The Corporation of Mercer University (U215P110187)

## 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 target neighborhood experiences many challenges, as evidenced by the share of households (47.5%) below the poverty level (e22) and the fact that 2/3 of adults do not have a high school diploma. Low high school graduation rates, absentee rates, school performance, and high free/reduced lunch rates are also strong and sobering indicators of need. (e22-25) The educational statistics show that academic concerns begin even before the students arrive for school. (e23)

One of the district's high schools has the dubious honor of being cited in 2010 by Johns Hopkins and America's Promise as one of the 2000 lowest-performing schools in America.(e30)

Infant mortality rates and low birthweight percentages, among other child well-being indicators, paint an area of multiple challenges (e26).

#### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

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

#### Strengths:

The chart on page e23 shows the geographic boundaries of the area.

#### 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: 20**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

The MCPN plans to operate their schools within an evidence-based theory of change and strategy based on the works of Dweek, Howard, Benard, Warner, Christenson, Davis-Dean, Dearing, and Magnuson (e28). The strategic plan is opportunity-based, student/parent-centric, and learning-focused. (e28).

Seven key initiatives drive the plan, including accountability, professional development, and increased family and community engagement. (e31) Students, parents, and teachers will receive leadership training through the Efficacy Institute (pe31). The Efficacy Institute, with 25 years of experience, will introduce its Turnaround Initiative to the schools.

The proposal also plans "protective interventions" to help students through high-risk situations. (e29)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**2. The extent to which the applicant describes a proposal to 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.**

**Strengths:**

While acknowledging the resilience and strength of children, the applicant recognizes the need for a continuum of solutions that support the child's home environment as well as academic success. (e29)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**3. The extent to which solutions leverage existing neighborhood assets and coordinate with other efforts, including programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds.**

**Strengths:**

The MCPN can draw on numerous community assets, including Mercer University (MU) and Central Georgia Technical College (CGTC) (e22), a nearby Community Center, and the Boys and Girls Club (e27).

For the last decade, HUD projects, Knight Foundation grants, Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta housing grants, city bonds, and tax credits have supported the area. School buildings have been rebuilt and other buildings repurposed to serve community needs.

Area service providers offer prenatal care, Early Head Start and Head Start, after-school and summer

**Sub Question**

programs, mentorships, housing assistance, GED classes, vocational training, and scholarships.(e34-5)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

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

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Sub Question**

**1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine each solution within the continuum.**

**Strengths:**

The CNA will utilize parent interview surveys, neighborhood focus groups, interviews with partners, and the collection and analysis of demographic data, based on the work of Sharma and Moore. (e46)

Various tools will be used in the segmentation analysis, including Nominal Group Processes, Paired Comparison Techniques, Interrelationship Diagramming, and Force Field Analysis. Nonetheless, identifying high-risk children will be done through caseworker referrals. (e48)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**2. The extent to which the applicant describes how it will determine that solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and ensure that solutions drive results and lead to changes on indicators.**

**Strengths:**

As cited above, the evidence-driven education strategy is built off the work of numerous educators; the applicant's school/community collaboration model is based on research from the Harvard Family Research Project (e29).

The segmentation strategy and data collection is based on research of others (e46). A detailed discussion of some of the currently-utilized and proposed solutions and their base of evidence is provided on page e49-e52.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the 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:**

Focus groups with neighborhood residents resulted in a commitment to project sustainability and strong ongoing communication with residents. (e58-9) One of the Co-PIs was a national finalist for the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty of the Year in 2009 and has a certificate in Community Building from the University of Miami.

**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.

**Strengths:**

The MCPN will partner with a database currently being developed by the University of Georgia for the Athens/Clark County 2010 PN grantee. A member of the application team, who has significant experience working with residents in neighborhood development, will supervise the survey design. (e57)

The evaluation team will work under the guidance of an external evaluator (e57)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

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.

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

: The excellent charts on pages e36-e45 show the various indicators and outcomes, proposed solutions, and lead partners in that effort. The charts also show what is distinctive about the effort being put forth by MCPN.

One element of distinction, for example, is that one of the partners' programs is recognized as the premier drop-out prevention program in the country. (e38)

An impressive list of key Partners is highlighted under their area of expertise on page e54.

### Weaknesses:

None.

Reader's Score: 10

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 is devising methods to redirect existing funds to plan priorities, identify new funds from grants and donations, and refinance services paid with public funds. (e58)

The partners have leveraged over \$70 million in economic impact.(e33) Partners have committed more than \$240,000 in in-kind support to the planning grant in terms of time. (e58) Others have committed \$150,000 to support the Community Facilitator and Advocates.

### 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:

The applicant will leverage the Head Start programs within the neighborhood to provide a continuum of support, including that to parents within the areas of child development, home-to-school connections, and strategies for family success. (e66)

Professional development and a curriculum that offers early learners academic enrichment is planned, and the programs will be assessed for their efficacy. (e67).

### 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:**

The MCPN plans to build on Macon's basic internet infrastructure to expand availability to more students and families, through an upgraded technology center and fun classes at the Boys and Girls Club to interest children in computers. (e68) The lead applicant's Computer Science Department will sponsor programming competitions and Summer Computer Camps. (e68)

**Weaknesses:**

None.

Reader's Score: 1

#### 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:**

**Weaknesses:**

Reader's Score:

#### Competitive Preference Priorities - 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:**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 11/04/2011 12:02 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/21/2011 03:57 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Corporation of Mercer University (U215P110187)

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

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<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
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1. Qual. of Project Services	20	20
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	45
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<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
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1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
<b>CPP5 Internet Access</b>		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	1
<b>CPP6 Arts and Humanities</b>		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	
<b>Competitive Preference Priorities</b>		
<b>CPP7 Affordable Housing</b>		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	
<b>Invitational Priority</b>		
<b>Adult Education</b>		
1. Adult Education	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>103</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Panel - 13: 84.215P

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

Applicant: The Corporation of Mercer University (U215P110187)

## 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:

Macon is described as the 7th poorest city in the US. The applicant makes a strong case for the problems that need to be addressed in the area. These include poverty (one in three of the city s residents live in poverty). Educational outcomes are included and are comprehensive. There are four schools in the Promise Neighborhood target area, and they are: Ingram-Pye Elementary, Hartley Elementary, Ballard-Hudson Middle School, and Southwest High School. Gaps in services are outlined, and are tied to how these affect children and families.

#### Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

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

#### Strengths:

The geographic area is depicted graphically, and the schools in the zone are outlined.

#### 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: 20**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

Guiding strategic principles have been created and drive the proposal. These engage students, the schools and parents. There are 7 initiatives in the proposed continuum of solutions, listed on page 10, and they each include specific goals.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 2. The extent to which the applicant describes a proposal to 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.**

**Strengths:**

The proposal is comprehensive and complete. Gaps in services for high risk children and youth will be identified through the needs assessment. An aggressive community information campaign is part of the effort to ensure that the community is actively engaged. Services already offered by project partners will be integrated into the continuum.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 3. The extent to which solutions leverage existing neighborhood assets and coordinate with other efforts, including programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds.**

**Strengths:**

The existing projects and their sources of funding are listed- they have been linked to the Promise Neighborhood initiative and include private, state and federal funding. The neighborhood itself is mentioned throughout the proposal as playing an active role in these partnerships.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**

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

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Sub Question**

- 1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, will be used during the planning phase to determine each solution within the continuum.**

**Strengths:**

Strengths:

The plan for the segmentation analysis is clear and well presented. Three strategic goals will guide the process, and it will involve the participation of parents, the schools, and partners. Beginning on Page 16, a table presenting the continuum of solutions is included. Education outcomes, & indicators, possible solutions, and responsible partners for each is outlined. There will be multiple tools used for the segmentation analysis, so that everyone involved can participate.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 2. The extent to which the applicant describes how it will determine that solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence, and ensure that solutions drive results and lead to changes on indicators.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's proposed solutions will be clearly based on best practices. The indicators listed include the continuum from healthy birth and outcomes, school readiness, reading on grade level by 3rd grade, high quality after school care, and support for academic transitions of middle school to mentoring through college and ending with stabilizing the neighborhood.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

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

**Reader's Score: 45**

**Sub Question**

- 1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of the 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.**

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The management for the project is described as tripartite, as it is made up of the Partners Council, the Design Team planning group and the management team. Each entity will have its own scope of work and focus and these are outlined on page 37. The community will be recruited continuously.

**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.**

**Strengths:**

A detailed Work Plan is included beginning on page 43. It specifies the Activities, who the responsible party and timelines. These are divided by each major component of the planning effort, such as : Needs Assessment, segmentation analysis, plan for continuum of solutions, gathering and leveraging resources, strategies for building high-quality academic and family supports, piloting key solutions, building community support, partner commitments for long term-implementation, data management system, national evaluation, and community practice.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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:**

A shared theory of change between the school system and the community partners is outlined early in the proposal (page 8). The partnership structure is presented on page 33 and includes not only the family/community but also student representatives. Team building activities are planned to increase understanding and collaboration among the different committees and groups that will be established during the planning phase.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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:**

Partners have already committed \$241,000 in in-kind support to the planning grant. There is strong participation demonstrated already in this planning effort, and programs that are already in existence have been integrated in the planning proposal, as stated above.

**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:**

**Weaknesses:**

**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: 1**

**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:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:**

**Competitive Preference Priorities - 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:**

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