

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development -- Education & Early Development Teaching and Learning Support (S371C110014)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	21.5
Sub Total	37	21.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	18
Sub Total	28	18
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	9
Sub Total	15	9
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	2.5
Sub Total	5	2.5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	70.0

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SRCL - 7: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development -- Education & Early Development Teaching and Learning Support (S371C110014)

Questions

Quality of State-level activities - Quality of State-level activities

1. In determining the quality of State-level activities, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 21.5

Sub Question

1. How the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities (described in the Additional Requirements section of the NIA) and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State literacy plan.

Strengths:

The applicant details how proposal and state literacy plan will be aligned. The proposal gives a clear sense of focus on objectives and expectation that this focus will be required at all levels of implementation (p. 4).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a clear picture of what actions are occurring as a part of the state literacy plan (i.e., Blueprint). Only broad goals of Blueprint are stated, making it difficult to ascertain the proposal's unique contribution. Additional details regarding the standards based measure used for secondary students is needed (p. 3, 12).

Reader's Score: 5.5

2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.

Strengths:

The applicant convincingly demonstrates needs of student population in state. The application clearly outlines the proposed activities at each level of involvement (p. 10).

Weaknesses:

There is limited description of activities that will specifically address needs of students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities (p. 15). It remains unclear how remote districts will receive more than what they are already receiving. (p.20). Discussion of the local need for professional development of the nature proposed in the application is inadequate.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 5

3. How the SEA will provide technical assistance and support to its SRCL subgrantees (and, at its discretion, to other LEAs or early childhood education providers) to enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.

Strengths:

The applicant specifies multiple means for the provision of technical assistance and support. The allocation of local literacy specialists who are highly trained to provide ongoing professional development, and support for practice implementation and monitoring of progress strongly enhances the likelihood of successful application of best-practice. Though additional detail on universal design could have been specified, this reviewer feels the proposed practices represent best practices for struggling readers and informing instructional practice (p. 19).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

4. How the SEA will evaluate the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12, including disadvantaged students, including: (1) whether the evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator (whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation); (2) whether the evaluation will use methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project; and (3) how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.

Strengths:

Independent evaluator will assess multiple aspects of project with the inclusion of measures of fidelity and social validity (p. 22-23).

Weaknesses:

A clear comparison of outcomes between subgrantee sites and those not receiving these supports would enhance the evaluation. The proposal did not clarify how comparable cohorts would be identified to conduct a valid comparison of student outcomes. (p. 26, 33)

Reader's Score: 5

5. How the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, and in formats that are easily understood by, and accessible to, the public, and how the SEA will make that information useful to varied groups (such as families, educators, researchers, other experts, early childhood education providers, and State leaders).

Strengths:

Proposal provides a clear plan for the dissemination of outcome data (p. 27-28).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear that data disseminated will be disaggregated by student subgroup. No discussion is provided on how the data will be presented in a consumer-friendly manner. Discussion of making the data useful to groups other than state leaders is lacking (p. 27-28).

Reader's Score: 1

Quality of the State subgrant competition - Quality of the State subgrant competition

1. In determining the quality of the applicant's proposed SRCL subgrant competition, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge:
 - a) The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

Strengths:

The applicant does a readiness assessment to judge potential buy-in for proposed activities (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

While buy-in is one component of capacity, the readiness survey does not appear to successfully delineate other factors that would indicate subgrantees' potential capacity to successfully implement points proposed, such as student need, evaluations of staff preparedness, strong leadership, etc.

The readiness survey, in its current format, appears to lend itself to the collection of socially desirable responses leaving this reviewer to question its validity (appendix).

Reader's Score: 1.5

2. (b) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:
 - (1) Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.
 - (2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.
 - (3) Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.

Strengths:

Applicant supports subapplicants' ability to propose a high quality literacy program by providing a curriculum alignment institute. The applicant has set competitive priorities to target subgrants to those most at risk (p. 33-34).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not address evaluation of how the subgrant applicants will address the involvement of "... other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students." (p. 34).

Reader's Score: 4.5

3. (c) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including with funds the entity

Sub Question

receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.

Strengths:

The proposal encourages budgeting the use of other funding sources by awarding additional points in the subgrant competition to LEAs who meet this goal (p. 33).

Weaknesses:

The applicant discusses preparing potential applicants to write the grant, but does not provide information on how the subgrant will be evaluated on strength of literacy programming (p. 32-33).

Reader's Score: 1

4. **The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that propose to serve high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population, based on a definition of poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.**

Strengths:

The proposals clearly specifies that 5 (competitive priority) points will be awarded to LEAs that present subgrant proposals targeting "current level 2 and above Title 1 districts" (p.33). Though additional detail on how SEAs will support high-poverty would strengthen the proposal, this reviewer finds sufficient evidence that priority will be given to high-poverty LEAs in the subgrant competition.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 6

5. **The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.**

Strengths:

Not addressed

Weaknesses:

Not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

6. **The extent to which the SEA will develop or update a process, or use an existing process, to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants, and how the SEA will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.**

Strengths:

Prior to subgrant submission, the applicant provides potential grantees with curriculum support through a previously established system for curriculum selection and alignment. This support works to ensure the use of research-based materials and instructional approaches (p. 33). The SEA's Curriculum Alignment Institute will provide LEAs with training for the alignment of materials with state standards and the identification of appropriate instructional practices. The materials generated by the Curriculum Alignment Institute and the result of potential subgrantees' reviews will be available to the public via the project website; allowing other districts access to the curriculum alignment processes (p. 34).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

Project management - Project management

- 1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management plan: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

Current management plan is based on the previous implementations of such plans, which provides evidence of knowledge and capability of planning. Applicant provides reasonable schedule of program activities by year and agency level (p. 10).

Weaknesses:

An issue of possible concern is that the LEAs' personnel are only fully funded for first year of programming. If the grantee is unable to allocate other resources during the remainder of the program, fidelity may become an issue (p. 36).

Reader's Score: 4.5

- 2. (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.**

Strengths:

Personnel represent a body of experienced school leaders (p. 34-35).

Weaknesses:

The applicant reports that national experts will provide training, yet no letters of support or suggestions of quality and nature of support is provided. Key leadership in special education not apparent (p. 19 and appendix).

Reader's Score: 2.5

- 3. (iii) The extent to which the State will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project, including those of: families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

Numerous state and local organizations are represented by the state Literacy Advisory Board (p. 35-36). Teacher feedback is also collected during multiple stages of the program evaluation (p. 23).

Weaknesses:

It unclear that family perspectives are being assessed or influencing the design and implementation of project (p. 35).

Reader's Score: 2

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

- 1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The extent to which the costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project .**

Strengths:

Budget appears adequate to fund proposed project, though additional detail regarding funding of specific activities would strengthen the application. Funds are appropriately allocated by agency and education level based on SRCL requirements (Appendix).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

- 2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:**
- * At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.**
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.**
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.**

Strengths:

The applicant delineates where and how funds will be dispersed in support of proposed project. Allocation appears appropriate for proposed activities and adheres to the 15/40/40 allocation of funds to Birth-5/elementary/secondary agencies required by SRCL (appendix, p. 37-38).

Weaknesses:

None

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

3. (iii) **The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant and how it will support LEAs and early childhood education providers in integrating funds with other local, State, and Federal funds and in developing a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the subgrant.**

Strengths:

Applications are given priority for inclusion of a plan for allocating additional funds to the support of proposed project. Subgrantee's encouraged to leverage additional funds for personnel as grant award reduced annually (p. 33, 36).

Weaknesses:

The grant proposal does not adequately address what supports subgrantees will be provided in maintaining proposed activities or how it would address those subgrantees that have not been able to secure necessary funds (p. 36).

Reader's Score: 2

4. (iv) **The extent to which the SEA will award SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.**

Strengths:

The amount of proposed funding to subgrantees appears reasonable to implement proposed projects (appendix).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

1. **To meet this priority, an applicant must (1) propose to use technology--which may include technology to support principles of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA)--to address student learning challenges; and (2) provide, in its application, an evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.**

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

The application proposes use of various forms of technology in the various training/professional development activities. It use is specially emphasized in providing necessary support to more geographically isolated districts (p.20).

Weaknesses:

Requirements for use of technology with students not adequately addressed.

Reader's Score: 2.5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

1. **To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students.**

Background: Improving the language and literacy development of disadvantaged students is essential to improving academic achievement for these students in all content areas. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show disproportionately large numbers of disadvantaged students struggle with developing the necessary pre-literacy and literacy skills needed to read, comprehend, and use language effectively. This results in persistent gaps in academic achievement through the elementary and secondary school years and in high school graduation rates, and presents civic and economic difficulties for these students later in life. Meeting the language and literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

Priority MET. Proposed activities support the preparation of a highly skilled education workforce and implementation of evidence based practices designed to improve literacy outcomes for students.

Weaknesses:

More detail regarding supports of students with disability, universal design and use of technology on student learning needed.

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. **To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to collect, analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in the NIA), to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early learning settings and in elementary and secondary schools.**

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

Priority met. The applicant clearly addresses the use of progress monitoring systems, as well as other forms of evaluation of student outcomes and program effectiveness, to inform practice.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 0

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Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development -- Education & Early Development Teaching and Learning Support (S371C110014)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	13
Sub Total	37	13
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	7
Sub Total	28	7
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	9
Sub Total	15	9
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	13
Sub Total	20	13
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	2
Sub Total	5	2
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	44

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SRCL - 7: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development -- Education & Early Development Teaching and Learning Support (S371C110014)

Questions

Quality of State-level activities - Quality of State-level activities

1. In determining the quality of State-level activities, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 13

Sub Question

1. How the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities (described in the Additional Requirements section of the NIA) and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State literacy plan.

Strengths:

Strengths

A(i)

1. Creating the Alaska State Literacy Blueprint: Birth to Graduation provides school districts and early childhood development centers with a comprehensive literacy plan for all learners, regardless of ability, throughout the state. (p. e2)
2. The Annual Literacy Institute is designed to be inclusive of all stakeholders. (p. e3)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(i)

1. Placing tables before narrative portions of the document made reading and understanding the content challenging. (pp. e9-e11, e20-e21)
2. The applicant did not explain how the coordination of resources from Title I, Title II-A, Title III, and special education would be aligned to the state's Blueprint in areas other than professional learning. (pp. e3, e20)
3. It is unclear whether or not schools/centers in Cohort 1 will receive funding after Year 3 of the award. (pp. e9-e10)
4. The applicant did not include a method of evaluating activities (including professional learning) after the first year of funding. (p. e9-e10)
5. The leaders who will participate in the Leadership Academies are not clearly defined as administrators, teacher-leaders, and/or others. (p. e9-e10)
6. Identical project activities occur each year of funding for cohorts. Activities should reflect an increase in rigor based on the expanded knowledge of the educators. (pp. e9-e10)
7. The number of formative literacy assessments that will be used are limited for students enrolled in grades K-12 and an assessment for writing was not present. (p. e11) DIBELS was an assessment included in the Evaluation Outcome Measures section on p. e25; however, this tool was not listed on p. e11 with other assessments that would be implemented.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.

Strengths:

Strengths

A(ii)

1. NAEP and state testing performance data is disaggregated to show the low levels of reading and writing proficiency among students with disabilities (SWDs) and ethnic minorities. (pp. e5-e7)
2. Five state goals created to improve literacy achievement are inclusive of families, the community, and colleges of education. (pp. e12-13)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(ii)

1. A detailed description (including data) of how the five goals established for improving student literacy achievement for diverse students (e.g., SWDs, English language learners (ELLs), socioeconomically-disadvantaged students, ethnic minorities) was not present. (pp e12-e13)
2. The organization of the chart (specifically the arrows) did not demonstrate a clear path of how Goals 1-4 worked in concert to meet goal 5. (pp. e12-e13)

Reader's Score: 2.5

3. How the SEA will provide technical assistance and support to its SRCL subgrantees (and, at its discretion, to other LEAs or early childhood education providers) to enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.

Strengths:

Strengths

A(iii)

1. On-line professional learning modules will be available for educators in order for everyone to have equal access to the materials. (p. e13)
2. Strong emphasis has been placed on professional learning activities with the implementation of Leadership Academies, literacy specialists, coordination of funding sources, etc. (pp. e13-e20)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iii)

1. The plan does not indicate that professional learning is ongoing for all sites for each year of the grant. (p. e13)
2. A definition of "cross-system" collaboration (p. e13) is needed for clarity of the term.
3. Table 5 (p. e14) shows that Leadership Academies will have grade spans of birth to school entry, K-5, and 6-12; however Table 4 (Assessment p. e10) shows grade spans of birth to school entry, K-6, and 7-12. Keeping the grade spans consistent may eliminate confusion when student performance is discussed.
4. Teachers of students in grades K-12 will have "some coverage" (p. e14) of foundations of reading when many struggling readers are enrolled in those grade levels. Older (grades 6-12) ELLs and students

Sub Question

who have a home language that does not follow the patterns of Standard English may benefit from 6-12 teachers who understand oral language development and phonemic awareness. Also, since writing is a recursive process, more attention to this area may improve the pedagogy of K-5 teachers who will only have "some coverage" of this area in the Leadership Academies. (p. e14)

5. The first line of the narrative underneath Figure 4 (p. e16) is covered by the figure.

6. Methods that the SEA will use to provide assistance to the subgrantees were not clearly explained. A description of how literacy activities would be integrated into core subjects was absent.

Reader's Score: 1.5

- 4. How the SEA will evaluate the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12, including disadvantaged students, including: (1) whether the evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator (whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation); (2) whether the evaluation will use methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project; and (3) how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.**

Strengths:

Strengths

A(iv)

1. The Department of Education and Early Development is contracting with Education Northwest, a company that is familiar with the educational needs of the state. (p. e20)

2. Qualitative measures (surveys, interviews, etc.) will be employed to determine the impact of the grant on student performance. (e21-e25)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iv)

1. According to Table 6, the SEA's evaluation focus will be examining the evidence of the impact of the grant on schools and struggling readers after Year 3 only. (p. e21) the impact of the grant should be measured after years 1 and 2 to measure effectiveness and revise/improve activities.

2. SEA's evaluation of children's (birth to school age) literacy attainment is only completed with 4-yr-olds who are administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and Expressive Vocabulary Test. Assessments for students under the age of three is absent. (p. e25)

3. The application does not describe SEA's analysis of student scores as a measure of monitoring progress. (p. e25)

4. The application does not contain a plan to evaluate the progress of disadvantaged students.

5. The application does not contain a plan to use the evidence gleaned from data on program effectiveness to make revisions to improve the design of activities.

Reader's Score: 3.5

- 5. How the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, and in formats that are easily understood by, and accessible to, the public, and how the SEA will make that information useful to varied groups (such as families, educators, researchers, other experts, early childhood education providers, and State leaders).**

Strengths:

Strengths

A(v)

1. The formation of a State Literacy Advisory Council comprised of members from various educational and political organizations who will distribute information available to members of their respective groups. (pp. e26-e27)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(v)

1. The application does not detail how information on the project outcomes will be distributed to parents, early childhood centers, and public school communities without internet access.

Reader's Score: 1.5

Quality of the State subgrant competition - Quality of the State subgrant competition

1. In determining the quality of the applicant's proposed SRCL subgrant competition, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge:**
- a) The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)

1. The SEA is offering technical support to districts and early childhood centers desiring to apply for the grant.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(a)

- 1. The applicant failed to address how they will review and judge applications other than giving priority to "level 2 and above Title I" districts. (p. e32)
- 2. Teams that will participate in the grant writing audio conference have the following grade bands: K-2, 4-7, 9-12. Third grade was omitted from the grade bands. (p. e31)
- 3. The School Readiness Tool (Attachment 7) is a perception scale that asks participants to rate their beliefs about literacy. Questions neither address a school's willingness to participate in a literacy initiative nor does it inform the SEA of the literacy needs of the school.

Reader's Score: 1

- 2. (b) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:**

Sub Question

- (1) Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.**
- (2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.**
- (3) Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(b)

- 1. Data was presented that demonstrates a need for interventions in the area of literacy for disadvantaged students. (pp. e5-e8)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(b)

- 1. The applicant does not specifically address how they will ensure proposed programs will: meet the literacy needs of disadvantaged students; conduct needs assessments; and involve other agencies, families, and the community in improving literacy attainment of students.

Reader's Score: 2.5

- 3. (c) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including with funds the entity receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(c)

- 1. LEAs and early childhood providers who clearly identify the use of other funding sources will receive additional priority points. (p. e32)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(c)

- 1. The applicant does not address the extent that the SEA will ensure that subgrants are aligned to other local, state, and federal funding sources to address the needs of young and disadvantaged students. When the funding sources were listed, Title I was omitted. (p. e31)

Reader's Score: 0.5

- 4. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that propose to serve high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population, based on a definition of poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths

B(ii)

1. Five additional priority points will be given to LEAs that serve high-poverty populations. (p. e32)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(ii)

1. An explanation of the extent to which priority will be given to schools and early childhood centers serving students with high poverty populations is very limited. (p. e32)

Reader's Score: 1

- 5. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.**

Strengths:

Strengths

No strengths were noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iii)

1. The applicant did not address how priorities will be given to applications that are supported by the strongest available evidence. (p. e32)

Reader's Score: 0

- 6. The extent to which the SEA will develop or update a process, or use an existing process, to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants, and how the SEA will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(iv)

1. The SEA has an existing process for providing guidance to low-performing districts in selecting reading curricula and materials. (p. e32)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iv)

1. The SEA's existing process for providing guidance to low-performing districts in selecting reading curricula and materials was not explained. (p. e32)

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

Project management - Project management

1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management plan: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

1. (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

Strengths

C(i)

1. The applicant has identified several positions at the local and state level to ensure that project milestones were met. (pp.e34-e35)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(i)

1. A timeline outlining projected budget expenses for each year of the grant was not included.

Reader's Score: 3

2. (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.

Strengths:

Strengths

C(ii)

1. The leaders of teaching and learning in the school district will be involved in the project management and their resumes have been included with the application. (pp e33-e34)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(ii)

1. The state superintendent was not included as one of the key persons involved in the project.

Reader's Score: 4

3. (iii) The extent to which the State will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project, including those of: families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils,

Sub Question

professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.

Strengths:

Strengths

C(iii)

1. The organizations that will be included to provide a variety of perspectives were listed. (pp. e34-e35)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(iii)

1. The extent to which the SEA will ensure that organizations will be involved to provide a variety of perspectives for project management were not included (pp. e34-e35)
2. Teacher and parent groups were not included as participants on the State Literacy Advisory Council to provide a variety of perspectives for project management. (pp. e34-e35)

Reader's Score: 2

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

1. **The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 13

Sub Question

1. **(i) The extent to which the costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project .**

Strengths:

Strengths

D(i)

1. The costs associated with the activities planned were listed, reasonable to meet the objectives of the proposed plan, and were within the \$8M that could possibly be awarded to the state.
2. The costs associated with personnel, fringe benefits, equipment, supplies, and professional development were outlined and reasonable to meet the objectives of the proposed plan. (pp. e36-e37)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(i)

1. The costs associated with the specific activities to improve literacy attainment and achievement for disadvantaged and students from birth to age 5 were not listed in the budget.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 7.5

2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:
- * At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.

Strengths:

Strengths

D(ii)

1. The expenditures for students from birth to five were clearly delineated to determine that 15% of the subgrant funds were earmarked for this group of students, 40% of the subgrant funds for K-5 students, and 40% for middle and high school students. (p. e3)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 4

3. (iii) The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant and how it will support LEAs and early childhood education providers in integrating funds with other local, State, and Federal funds and in developing a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the subgrant.

Strengths:

Strengths

D(iii)

1. The applicant mentioned that federal and state funds would be reallocated during the life of the grant. Reallocating funds will ensure that other funding sources will be used to improve teaching and learning in another capacity.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(iii)

1. The applicant did not specifically explain how other local, state, and federal funds would be allocated in order to maximize the grant during the five years of the award or how literacy activities will be maintained after the subgrant funds are depleted. (p. e35)

Reader's Score: 1

4. (iv) The extent to which the SEA will award SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.

Strengths:

Strengths

D(iv)

Sub Question

1. The proposed budget ensures that enough money is allocated to improve instruction for children birth to age five. (p. e3)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(iv)

1. The applicant did not address the extent to which the SEA will award subgrants to support instruction for specific populations in high-needs schools and early learning centers.

Reader's Score: 0.5

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must (1) propose to use technology--which may include technology to support principles of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA)--to address student learning challenges; and (2) provide, in its application, an evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant ensured that the integration of technology was used extensively as on-line modules for professional learning activities as well as ensuring that teachers had access to on-line resources that would improve literacy instruction. (p. e19)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

There was no evidence in the grant that supported students' use of technology or assistive technology to support literacy development and assess their knowledge.

Reader's Score: 2

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students.

Background: Improving the language and literacy development of disadvantaged students is essential

to improving academic achievement for these students in all content areas. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show disproportionately large numbers of disadvantaged students struggle with developing the necessary pre-literacy and literacy skills needed to read, comprehend, and use language effectively. This results in persistent gaps in academic achievement through the elementary and secondary school years and in high school graduation rates, and presents civic and economic difficulties for these students later in life. Meeting the language and literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

Strengths

Professional learning topics as presented in the Leadership Academies addressed different topics for teachers to discuss to improve learning outcomes.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Priority NOT MET

The SEA did not meet the minimal requirements for this priority based on the following:

The applicant did not address the importance of family literacy in the early childhood programs and disseminating information to parents of young children in order to improve pre-literacy skills prior to their enrollment in public school systems.

Strategies to improve the use of language and oral language skills of disadvantaged students were not presented.

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

- 1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to collect, analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in the NIA), to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early learning settings and in elementary and secondary schools.**

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant included data that indicated that the state could benefit from additional funding to improve the low literacy rates of students as indicated by NAEP and state-wide assessments.

Professional learning activities were detailed and relevant for improving pedagogy for public school students.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Priority NOT MET

The SEA did not meet the minimal requirements for this priority based on the following:

The applicant did not specifically address how formative and summative assessments would be used to inform future plans for implementation for students in early childhood programs and students who attend public schools.

A blueprint for analyzing data of disadvantaged students to improve classroom instruction and family literacy (and thus achievement) was absent in this report.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 6/23/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/22/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development -- Education & Early Development Teaching and Learning Support (S371C110014)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	18.5
Sub Total	37	18.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	13
Sub Total	28	13
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	8.5
Sub Total	15	8.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	17.5
Sub Total	20	17.5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	3
Sub Total	5	3
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	60.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SRCL - 7: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development -- Education & Early Development Teaching and Learning Support (S371C110014)

Questions

Quality of State-level activities - Quality of State-level activities

1. In determining the quality of State-level activities, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 18.5

Sub Question

1. How the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities (described in the Additional Requirements section of the NIA) and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State literacy plan.

Strengths:

1.The applicant describes a detailed Alaska State Literacy Blueprint that covers objectives/goals from birth through graduation (Criterion #A, subcriterion i., p.10), and proposes goals and objectives that align with this Blueprint with state-level, LEA, and early childhood activities (p.10).

Weaknesses:

- 1.As the largest state in the U.S., this proposal aims to serve only 15 out of the 53 districts across ten sites (p.17-18). Minimal requirements are provided for professional development (PD) and the description of proposed content of PD is vague (Criterion #A, subcriterion i, p. 36).
2. Since ELL, low income, and disabled students are addressed, minimal information is provided on how UDL will be used to address the needs of these populations (Criterion #A, subcriterion iii., p.10-11) or how interventions and assessments will differ for various populations (p.22).
3. It is unclear how participants who will complete the surveys as a tool for informing practices will be chosen. If only top performers are chosen the data may not provide an adequate picture (criterion #A, subcriterion iii, p. 25).
4. Multiple measurement tools are not described thus it is unclear how SEA will evaluate the states progress. More detail would be helpful (Criterion# A, subcriterion iv, p. 24)
5. It was not clear how the applicants will identify cohorts to ensure equal pairing of groups for comparison of cohort outcomes (Criterion A, subcriterion iv, p. 26).

Reader's Score: 5.5

2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.

Sub Question

Strengths:

1. Goals 1-4 (Criterion #A, sub-criterion ii., p.13) target how to improve literacy outcomes and involved stakeholders from multiple areas. The most recent NAEP scores offer data on current literacy levels (p. 5) and graduation rates are provided (p. 9). These data confirm a significant need for ESL, low income, and disabled students. The Revised Developmental Risk Program (RAPD) offers reviewers data on current literacy levels during kindergarten entry.

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant does not effectively indicate who will provide professional development nor provide information on the focus of those sessions (p. 17-18).
2. Literacy specialists serve a key role but the staffing indicated in the application seems inadequate (p. 17-18).

Reader's Score: 6

- 3. How the SEA will provide technical assistance and support to its SRCL subgrantees (and, at its discretion, to other LEAs or early childhood education providers) to enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.**

Strengths:

1. The applicant provides descriptions of activities and methods that seem reasonable for achieving their literacy goals (Criterion #A, section iii, p. 10-13). In regards to technical assistance the applicant shares reasonable methods for supporting subgrantees such as leadership academies, professional development, online communication of practice, an annual literacy development institute, and online resources (p. 14-20).

Weaknesses:

1. Since ELL, low income, and disabled students are addressed, minimal information is provided on how UDL will be used to address the needs of these populations (Criterion #A, subcriterion iii., p.10-11) or how interventions and assessments will differ for various populations (p.22).
2. It is unclear how participants who will complete the surveys as a tool for informing practices will be chosen. If only top performers are chosen the data may not provide an adequate picture (criterion #A, subcriterion iii, p. 25).

Reader's Score: 2.5

- 4. How the SEA will evaluate the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12, including disadvantaged students, including: (1) whether the evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator (whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation); (2) whether the evaluation will use methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project; and (3) how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.**

Strengths:

1. The methods support educators at district, state, and school levels. The applicant offers methods of formative assessment (p.21-22), which include fidelity of intervention, impact of measures, and assessment of specialty groups (e.g., ELL, etc.) (Criterion #A, subcriterion iv, p.21-22). The reviewer offers opportunities to compare cohorts to determine the degree of impact, and the evaluation methods seem reasonable to accomplish (p. 24-27). Finally, the information about project dissemination provides focused and reasonable methods for sharing findings using collaborative methods (p. 27-28).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

1. Multiple measurement tools are not described thus it is unclear how SEA will evaluate the state's progress. More detail would be helpful when describing tools of measurement and how they will assist in improving literacy skills (Criterion# A, sub-criterion iv, p. 24).
2. The research base was inadequate. For example, on p. 29 application says, "Research says" but no citations are provided. Additionally, the outcomes did not reference research to support the document (Criterion# A, sub-criterion iv, p. 26).
3. It was not clear how the applicants will identify cohorts to ensure equal pairing of groups for comparison of cohort outcomes (Criterion A, sub-criterion iv, p. 26).

Reader's Score: 2

- 5. How the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, and in formats that are easily understood by, and accessible to, the public, and how the SEA will make that information useful to varied groups (such as families, educators, researchers, other experts, early childhood education providers, and State leaders).**

Strengths:

1. The application describes a plan to disseminate information that includes technological approaches that would allow multiple means for accessing information, and a collaborative approach for sharing findings (Criterion A, sub-criterion v., p. 27-28).

Weaknesses:

1. There was not a plan for sharing findings at the family/home level (Criterion A, sub-criterion v., p. 27-28).

Reader's Score: 2.5

Quality of the State subgrant competition - Quality of the State subgrant competition

- 1. In determining the quality of the applicant's proposed SRCL subgrant competition, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 13

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge:**
- a) **The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.**

Strengths:

1. The applicant describes a step by step process for orienting, supporting, and selecting subgrants. Subgrantees will be required to have effective stakeholders involved in the process (e.g., principals, teachers, parents)(Criterion B, Sub-criterion ia, p. 30-34)

Weaknesses:

1. Greater specificity of plans for supporting subgrants after they are awarded would be useful. While basic procedures are noted, more depth would make the proposal more useful and understandable to reader (Criterion B, Sub-criterion 1a, p. 34-35).

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

2. (b) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:
- (1) Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.
 - (2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.
 - (3) Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.

Strengths:

1. The applicant explains the significant needs of Alaska which include high populations of diverse learners (e.g., ELL, disadvantaged learners, etc.) and effectively uses current collaborations to involve other agencies (Criterion B, subcriterion i(b), p. 5-7 and 34-37).

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant does not propose how they will meet the literacy needs of disadvantaged students, who are described as the target population (p. 5-7).

Reader's Score: 5.5

3. (c) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including with funds the entity receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.

Strengths:

Strengths
1. No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
1. While the applicant states it will be required to demonstrate it will implement effective literacy interventions, the discussion of mechanisms for assessing these factors is limited (Criterion B, subcriterion c, p.32).

Reader's Score: 1

4. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that propose to serve high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population, based on a definition of poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.

Strengths:

The applicant does provide some information about how SEAs and LEAs will serve high poverty schools and populations (Criterion B, subcriterion ic & iic, p. 34).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant does not provide depth in their description of how they will assist Title I and Title III other than stating supports for aligning materials and identifying research-based content. A description of how this alignment will specifically relate to the neediest populations is unclear (Criterion B, subcriterion ic & iic, p. 34).

Reader's Score: 1.5

5. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.

Strengths:

Strengths
No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
1.The applicant does not specifically address the extent to which the SEA will provide priority to disadvantaged and early childhood providers. Some information is provided to suggest these populations have a high need (p 5-7), however this is not further addressed outside of aligning it with curriculum and the Curriculum Institute (Criterion B, subcriterion ii & iii, p.34)

Reader's Score: 0

6. The extent to which the SEA will develop or update a process, or use an existing process, to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants, and how the SEA will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.

Strengths:

1. Alignment of curriculum and use of evidence-based practices are described with some detail to ensure the SEAs continue reviewing and updating processes (Criterion B, subcriterion iv, p. 34).

Weaknesses:

Additional examples of scoring systems for the sub-grant competition and how they align with the curriculum would be helpful (p. 34).

Reader's Score: 3

Project management - Project management

1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management plan: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 8.5

Sub Question

1. (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Sub Question

Strengths:

1. Some information is given in regards to timelines and steps towards achieving the outlined goals (p. 35).

Weaknesses:

1. There is limited information about how current personnel, programs, and plans can be built on. Specifically, milestones for accomplishing tasks are understated and lack reasonable explanation (p. 35).

Reader's Score: 3

2. (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.

Strengths:

1. Some personnel are provided with job descriptions and information about their roles is clear (e.g., project director) (Criterion C, subcriterion ii, p. 38).

Weaknesses:

1. The qualifications for relevant training and experience of personnel are minimal. Higher educational experts, researchers, and early childhood providers are not included in the personnel (Criterion C, subcriterion ii, p. 38).

Reader's Score: 2.5

3. (iii) The extent to which the State will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project, including those of: families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.

Strengths:

1. The applicant effectively describes how they will collaborate and require teams to involve families, teachers, early childhood professional, organizations, and also describe recruitment of large and small districts/organizations as well as shared professional development opportunities (Criterion C, subcriterion iii, p. 38).
2. Large and small school districts are included in the personnel section of the grant. Funds are allocated appropriately as student numbers increase (Criterion C, subcriterion iii, p. 38).

Weaknesses:

1. Libraries and community partnerships are minimally addressed in this plan, leaving gaps in the diversity plan (p. 38).

Reader's Score: 3

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

1. **The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 17.5

Sub Question

1. (i) The extent to which the costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project .

Strengths:

Strengths

1. The costs described in the budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (Criterion B subsection 1, p. 38-39). Though resources for birth through five were limited this reviewer finds the description to be sufficient.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:
- * At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.

Strengths:

Strengths

1. Funds are allocated as suggested, using a 15/40/40 split for students birth through grade 12 (see p. 36-38 and budget).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

1. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

3. (iii) The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant and how it will support LEAs and early childhood education providers in integrating funds with other local, State, and Federal funds and in developing a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the subgrant.

Strengths:

1. The proposal describes a plan for funding reduction over time in efforts to increase sustainability (p. 36). The subgrants planned are of sufficient size.

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant does not provide directions about how LEAs will obtain guidance for sustainability in the current plan (p. 38).

Reader's Score: 2

4. (iv) The extent to which the SEA will award SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.

Sub Question

Strengths:

1. The applicant demonstrates high needs in multiple sub categories (e.g., ELLs, poverty, disability). The proposed plan provides concrete goals to address the needs of the early childhood community and the budget would offer some opportunities for assistance (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant provides a minimal amount of information to describe the mechanisms for which the early childhood community will be served with the dollars allotted in the current plan (p. 34).

Reader's Score: 1.5

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must (1) propose to use technology--which may include technology to support principles of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA)--to address student learning challenges; and (2) provide, in its application, an evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

1. The applicant describes the current distance learning system in place. It addresses needs of the population. The applicant indicates that the state is confident in their ability to extend these tools to this body of work (Effective use of Technology, p. 14).

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant provides only one small mention of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), yet minimal information is provided about how universal design principles will be administered (Effective use of Technology, p. 31). The applicant would benefit from demonstrating how UDL can benefit their students with disabilities, from poverty, and ELLs.

Reader's Score: 3

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students.

Background: Improving the language and literacy development of disadvantaged students is essential to improving academic achievement for these students in all content areas. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show disproportionately large numbers of disadvantaged students struggle with developing the necessary pre-literacy and literacy skills needed to read, comprehend, and use language effectively. This results in persistent gaps in academic achievement through the elementary and secondary school years and in high school graduation rates, and presents civic and economic difficulties for these students later in life. Meeting the language and literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students

with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

Strengths

This priority is MET. The applicant describes collaborations with community agencies that allow them to develop an effective literacy plan. They used needs assessment findings and data on graduation rates and demographics to demonstrate a high level of need. The goals of the plan align early curriculum and school age curriculum goals in efforts to address school readiness success and improve graduation rates (p. 10-14).

Weaknesses:

Additional descriptions of programs and use of research would assist in clarifying how the goals can be reached based on a scientific educational approach would be helpful.

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. **To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to collect, analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in the NIA), to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early learning settings and in elementary and secondary schools.**

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

This priority is MET. The applicant gives a moderate description of the goals, programs, and forms of assessment they plan to require for subgrantees and their assessment procedures include fidelity of intervention, impact measures, and assessment of specialty groups (e.g., ELLs, etc.) (p. 21-22).

Weaknesses:

It seems unlikely that the proposed funding amount and current plan will produce a large effect on the current system due to factors such as percent effort (p. 35), geographical and state concerns (e.g., p. 5-6), and the amount of development left to get a subgrant competition going (e.g, limited resources provided in the appendix to support thought about the development of ideas.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 6/22/11 12:00 AM