

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California Department of Education -- California Department of Ed Board of Education (S371C110037)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	21
Sub Total	37	21
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	23.5
Sub Total	28	23.5
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	10
Sub Total	15	10
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	12.5
Sub Total	20	12.5
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	69.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - SRCL - 4: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: California Department of Education -- California Department of Ed Board of Education (S371C110037)

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

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:

(ia) The State's Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) team developed a plan in conjunction with the California Department of Education (CDE) and State Board of Education (SBE), and clearly states that it will implement the comprehensive literacy plan as part of the grant activities (e5). The plan incorporates the Early Learning Foundations, California Common Core Standards (CCCS), and the English Language Development (ELD) standards to create a seamless educational system. The applicant carefully aligns the proposed SRLC program activities with its comprehensive literacy plan (e6-e7) and intends to expand the implementation of its already developed Response to Intervention (RtI2) process to the proposed SRLC program (e7). The applicant includes in its management plan the intension for the state leadership team and SRCL team to meet and update the state literacy plan as needed (e38).

(ib) Migrant Education, Title I, Title II, Title III, and Career and Technical Education leadership offices will provide statewide technical support for the subgrantees, which demonstrates that there will be alignment between these offices and the SRLC project. Subgrantee applicants are required to describe past and future collaborations and articulations with other federal programs, and a strategy for continuing and sustaining these collaborations during the grant period (e37).

(ic) The CDE will make public the subgrant application, procedures, and criteria used to the evaluate the grant (e9) and will make the subgrant application public via a webinar, and by preparing a RFA for subgrants (e39). The RFA and Frequently Asked Questions will be posted to the Internet (e39).

The applicant clearly states required elements to be included in the subgrant applications, emphasizing the importance of discussing the evidence base and alignment with State standards (e18-e21), and requires subgrantee applicants to submit a list of instructional materials and supplementary materials to be used in their projects (e37). The CDE has developed a process for conducting rigorous competitions for subgrants to LEAs, and intends to conduct a fair and equitable request for applications (RFA) competition (e29).

(id) The applicant will ensure that subgrant funds are used to implement a comprehensive and coherent literacy program by monitoring the implementation via external evaluators, site visits, conference calls, and data analysis (e11). The applicant will monitor subgrantee budgets and expenditures to ensure that funds are supporting students from birth through grade 12, and that the areas of instruction are focused on areas determined by subgrantee's needs assessments (e11). The applicant requires subgrantees to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment as part of the application process (e17).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

(ib) The applicant does not specifically state that it intends to align the use of Federal and State funds and programs to support a coherent approach to funding (e11), nor does it specifically state that subgrantees must align the funding streams (e37).

(ic) No mention is made of where the RFA will be posted on the Internet, and how the public will be made aware of its availability. No mention is made regarding whether the results of the applicant's review of subgrant applications will be publicly available (e40).

(id2) The applicant does not explicitly state how it will determine if curriculum and instructional materials aligned with State standards, incorporate the components of effective literacy instruction, and incorporate technology and principles of UDL (e30-e32).

(id3i-ii) There is no specific discussion of screening measures or strategies, or diagnostic and progress-monitoring measures, nor their validity or reliability other than a vague reference to assessments as part of RtI2 planning (e7).

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:

(ii) The SEA has carefully conducted a needs assessment to identify the types of disadvantaged students throughout the state (e13-16), and identified specific areas for the applicants to address the SRCL plan's goals (e17). The areas are clearly written (e18-e21), and have the potential to result in the SEA's taking a clear and credible path to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.

Weaknesses:

There are no clearly written state goals; rather, there is a long list of possible topics that subgrantees can address (e18-e20). It is unclear what the role of the SEA will be to support the subgrantees' projects.

Reader's Score: 4

- 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:

(iii) The SEA will provide many avenues of technical assistance and support to SRCL grantees via state meetings, webinars, and phone conferences (e22). The State Literacy Team has developed a draft comprehensive plan and will guide the California Department of Education (CDE) in reviewing student data and subgrantee documentation of program implementation (e22). The CDE will conduct site visits as necessary, meet with subgrantees on a semi-annual basis to provide guidance and technical assistance, and provide input workshops as needed (e22).

Weaknesses:

(iii) The applicant does not list specific members of the State Literacy Team, nor does it list the credentials of technical assistance providers (e22). Additional details on the content and timeline for technical assistance would have strengthened the technical assistance plan.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 3.5

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:

(iv) The SEA will subcontract with an external evaluator to examine the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12 (e24). The Year 1 evaluation questions are clearly stated and are likely to provide evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities (e25). The planned conceptual framework, including key variables, timelines, methods, and justification for methods is thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project (e26). All subgrantees are required to have a local evaluator who will provide subgrantee-specific data, and who will assist in the collection and delivery of data to the SEA external evaluator (e28, e23-e24).

Weaknesses:

(iv) No student achievement data for birth to grade 1 are identified. No specific assessments or instruments are described, other than those that are part of the STAR system.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

(v) There are some plans for dissemination. The applicant intends to disseminate project outcome information and updates on a systematic basis to subgrantees. Reports will be available online and in hard copy at least once per year. Additional information will be made available to other local stakeholders as it becomes available. After the first year, preliminary information will be disseminated to inform state leaders (e29).

Weaknesses:

(v) The dissemination plan is limited. While there is a reference to posting yearly reports online, it is not clear whether this is intended for subgrantees only or for a wider audience. There is no mention of disaggregating data by subgroup, or of dissemination formats that would be useful to varied groups (e29).

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: 23.5

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:

(i) The SEA describes a rigorous subgrant competition process, utilizing a previously successful process (e30). An independent panel of experts will review applications, and objective guiding questions will be used to score the quality of each application (e30). Specific criteria for ensuring applicants have the capacity to implement the project are set (e32).

Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

(b.d) Subgrantees are likely to propose high-quality literacy programs because they are given specific criteria regarding what constitutes such literacy programs (e32-e33).

(bd1) The statewide evaluation will examine the effectiveness of professional development, increasing the likelihood that subgrantees will deliver helpful professional development to their teachers (e25).

(bd2) Subgrantees are likely to use curriculum and instructional materials that are aligned with State standards because they are required to submit a list of materials (e37) they will use and a scope and sequence of the birth to preschool curriculum as part of their application process (e31). Subgrantee grant reviewers will determine if proposed instructional materials align with state standards (e37-38).

(bd3iii) Subgrantees are likely to systematically use assessment data to inform instruction, interventions, professional develop, and continuous improvement because local evaluators or subgrantees are required to collect and analyze student outcome data, as defined by key GPRA indicators (e12, e23). Subgrantees are required to describe how the local evaluation plan will be utilized for continuous program improvement (e31). Local evaluators are expected to work with subgrantees to outline additional data to be collected and analyzed (e23).

(bd3iv) The STAR includes assessments that provide accommodations to ensure that all children are reliably and accurately assessed (e27).

(bd4) Subgrantees are likely to implement interventions that help both struggling youth and those who have mastered the material ahead of their peers because--as part of the application process--they are required to identify specific areas that will have the greatest impact on student learning outcomes for their identified group of disadvantaged students (e17). Applicants are required to describe in detail the topics addressed within their local plan (e18) and the interventions they intend to implement (e18-e21). Applicants are required to explicitly describe how they will implement interventions for students who are

Sub Question

struggling readers as well as students who have mastered the material ahead of their peers (e33).

(bd5) Subgrantees are likely to address key SEA-defined areas relating to language- and text-rich learning environments that engage and motivate children because they are required to discuss this as part of the application process (e18-e21).

(bd6) Subgrantees are likely to establish targets, measure student progress, and report quarterly on program progress because the applicant requires them to engage in these activities with their local evaluators (e23-e24).

(b1) LEA partnerships are likely to serve a large number of disadvantaged students because they are required to have a large number of disadvantaged students in order to submit a subgrant application (e34).

(b2) Subgrantee applicants are likely to implement activities informed by a needs assessment of disadvantaged students because they are required to describe this as part of the subgrantee application process (e34). Subgrantees are likely to implement a program that focuses on areas with the greatest impact on student learning (e17), and their proposed focus areas are likely to be aligned with identified needs because they are required to describe this as part of their subgrantee application process (e34).

(b3) Subgrantees are likely to include other agencies as partners because they are encouraged to do this as part of the subgrantee application process (e35). Subgrantees are asked to provide in their applications a rationale for why they are including specified partners (e36).

Weaknesses:

(bd1) The requirements for professional development plans lack specificity; no criteria for effective professional development are discussed. Professional development is not specifically mentioned in the subgrantee application evaluation system (e30-e32).

(bd2) The applicant does not explicitly state how it will determine if curriculum and instructional materials align with State standards, incorporate the components of effective literacy instruction, and incorporate technology and principles of UDL (e30-e32).

(bd3i-ii) There is no specific discussion of screening measures or strategies, or diagnostic and progress-monitoring measures, nor their validity or reliability (e7).

(b3) Subgrantees are not required to involve other agencies in project activities (e35).

Reader's Score: 6

- 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:

(c) Subgrantees are required to have a partnership team serving children from birth through grade 12, which is likely to result in the implementation of a coherent strategy to improve instruction. Subgrantees are required to select areas of focus that are aligned with the state plan (e36). Subgrantees are required to have a strategy for collaboration and articulation with other federally funded programs (e36-e37).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

(c) No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

(ii) Only LEAs in which 55% or more students meet the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to apply for subgrants; the SEA has compiled an eligibility list (e33).

Weaknesses:

(ii) No weaknesses found.

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:

(iii) The SEA is likely to give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence because subgrantees are required to address this in their applications (e37).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

(iv) Subgrantee are likely to use materials that are aligned with state standards because the SEA requires subgrantees to submit a list of instructional materials and supplementary materials in their applications and the SEA will review and judge whether these are aligned with state standards (e37-e38).

Weaknesses:

(iv) No mention is made of how the SEA will make the process and results of the review of curricula and materials publicly available. No mention is made of how the SEA will review the evidence base for the curricula and materials (e37-e38).

Reader's Score: 2.5

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: 10

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:

(i) The management plan somewhat reflects the tasks needed to be accomplished to achieve the objectives of the proposed project, but only for Year 1. The timeline is reasonable and appropriate (e39-e41).

Weaknesses:

((i) The management plan does not specify clearly defined responsibilities of key personnel. The management plan does not include milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The management plan does not adequately specify the project objectives and how they will be addressed (e39-e41).

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

(ii) All key personnel listed are highly qualified to implement this project because they have both leadership and literacy experience (resumes, e71).

Weaknesses:

(ii) No evidence of any key personnel having expertise in special education was found (resumes).

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

Strengths:

(iii) The SRCL team members who participated in the design of this project is diverse, reflects the state's population, and includes individuals with varying areas of expertise (e43-e44). The applicant solicited public comment from a number of individuals and agencies (e45).

Weaknesses:

(iii) No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

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: 12.5

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:

(i) The costs described in the budget that are related exclusively to SEA activities are reasonable and adequate (budget: e0-e1).

Weaknesses:

(i) No itemized budget is given for subgrantee costs, making it difficult to determine if the subgrantee-related costs are reasonable and adequate (budget: e1).

Reader's Score: 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:

(ii) The SEA plan will allocate SRCL subgrant funds appropriately. Subgrantees are required to serve children birth through grade 12 via their feeder pattern model partnerships (e10), and are required in their applications to allocate funding according to the 15/40/40 model, with an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high school. The allocation of funds will be monitored by a leadership advisory group that will share responsibility for the expenditure of funds. The CDE staff has responsibility for reviewing budgets and expenditure reports to ensure that the funding proportions comply with the 15/40/40 model (e47).

Weaknesses:

(ii) No weaknesses found.

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:

(iii) The SEA is likely to use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds to maximize the impact of the grant. Several SEA leadership offices are currently working together to identify processes for collaboration and integration of funding at the state and local level. Subgrantees are required to demonstrate integration of funding as part of the application process. Subgrantees are required to submit a plan for continuing and sustaining the collaborations throughout the grant period and beyond (e48).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

(iii) The applicant does not address how the SEA will develop a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the grant (e48).

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:

(iv) The applicant will award funding to a limited number of subgrantees, up to \$2 million per subgrantee. This is likely to be of sufficient size to support projects for a significant number of children in the partnership (e48).

Weaknesses:

(iv) The maximum funding to subgrantees is \$2,000,000, but no minimum is given. It is unclear what the minimum grant would be, if the minimum would be sufficient, and how the allocation of funding will be determined (e48-e49).

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:

The applicant references the Partnership for 21st Century Skills as evidence that strong literacy skills are essential for student success, and concludes that use of technology will help students acquire these skills to prepare for the future (e4-e5). The applicant intends to include a technology component that brings 21st century learning tools into the classroom and addresses Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The applicant will use What Works Clearinghouse as a guide to ensure that the technology integration is evidence based. Subgrantees are required to include a strategic plan to integrate technology use in the classroom, which increases the likelihood that technology will be used effectively (e8). The applicant cites support for enabling UDL through technology, especially regarding flexible methods of presentation to give students various ways of acquiring information (e9). The applicant will gather data on the GPRA indicator, regarding percentage of students in classrooms using appropriate technology who are meeting proficiency levels (e12).

Weaknesses:

No specific technology tools are described, and other than for use in presentations, no specific uses of technology are described. No discussion of the state's role of technology usage is given.

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.

The applicant has explicitly proposed a project that provides for a smooth progression from birth to high school graduation (e4). The applicant proposes five (5) conditions and processes intended to improve academic outcomes for disadvantaged students (e6-e7), and the project is closely aligned around these five (5) conditions and processes. The feeder pattern model of subgrantee partnerships (e10) ensures that students from birth to grade 12 will be served. The applicant has clearly identified areas for subgrantees to address (e17), specifying appropriate and meaningful topics by age group (e18-e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 proposes to use RtI2 processes, which is a data-based, decision-making approach that centers on the analysis of student data and the alignment of targeted instruction based upon student needs and continual progress monitoring (e7). Subgrantees are required to identify in the RtI2 plan a section that specifically addresses the language and literacy needs of English language learners (e7). Use of the RtI2 approach is likely to result in subgrantees increasing the extent of their data-based decision-making.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California Department of Education -- California Department of Ed Board of Education (S371C110037)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	16
Sub Total	37	16
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	22
Sub Total	28	22
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	7
Sub Total	15	7
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	11
Sub Total	20	11
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	1
Sub Total	5	1
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	57

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - SRCL - 4: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: California Department of Education -- California Department of Ed Board of Education (S371C110037)

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: 16

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 presents some evidence as to their ability to carry out the state level activities. The applicant adequately details the need for a comprehensive literacy plan (e1). They note that they have never had a systematic B-12 articulated education system, and they appear to be in the process of creating one. They also focus on the fact that this grant opportunity will allow LEA partnerships to use appropriate technology. The applicant expects to pursue an aggressive, data and technology rich agenda to implement the SRC grant.(e5) California's current use of a RTI process is an adequate approach to instruction, especially its focus on ELL students.(e7) California also details a quality comprehensive subgrant process. (e10). The applicant notes several State level offices will provide technical assistance to subgrantees to facilitate successful implementation of the subgrants. The applicant also details their plans to appropriately and adequately monitor grant efficacy through the use of an outside evaluator (e11).

Weaknesses:

Most of the narrative related to this indicator was related to what the subgrantees would do. Evidence related to the state's ability to carry out the state level activity was limited at best. No specific details were given as to exactly the "who, what and when" of responsible parties and timelines. For example (e10), the state notes that "when establishing partnerships, it will be necessary to establish a few protocols to clarify responsibilities." However, it is not clear from the narrative "who"(state or grantee) is doing the protocol. The state talks about a monitoring process and technical assistance but details again are lacking as to the "who, what, where and when" of the process. Additionally, inadequate detail is given about previous successes. The sparseness of detail related to the state's role weakens the proposal significantly.

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant plans, appropriately, on having subgrantees use a needs assessment to detail specific areas that the subgrantees will focus. This needs assessment will drive the sub-grantees' plans. The state has organized the process on an adequate list of suggested topics (by age/grade level) and appropriately suggest that the subgrantee pick one or two topics to work on based on their needs assessment (e11).

Weaknesses:

The applicant gives inadequate detail as to the state's goals and strategies for carrying out their plan. The application never clearly details the states overarching goals (e12-e21). While various topics are suggested (e18-e22) for subgrantees, there is no clear path for how the state will see that any if all of these topics are implemented. While adequate information is given about what the subgrantee is obligated to do, inadequate information is provided related to the state's role and capacity to fulfill that role(e18-22). The lack of detail about the state's role weakens this section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 3

- 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 state provides a general statement that they will support their subgrantees through the process(e22).

Weaknesses:

The state's application provides inadequate detail as to how it will provide technical assistance to LEA's. The applicant notes that they will provide technical support through the entire process through various media including state meetings, webinars, etc. However, no specifics as to the process to be used by the state is detailed (e22). This combined with a "draft" comprehensive plan significantly weakens the plan.

Reader's Score: 2

- 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:

The applicant will use an external evaluator to analyze state data. It is noted that the evaluator will submit detailed descriptions of the evaluation process; in short, a detailed description of the evaluation plan. (e26). The Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR) assessment system will be used as part of the evaluation, as well as other instruments such as: surveys, intensive case studies, and focus groups(e26-27). This appears to be an adequate evaluation plan.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide information as to instruments that would be used to evaluate early childhood programs. More details as to the goals from the state point of view would have strengthened this section (e26-27).

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

- 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:

There is a general statement that the CDE will disseminate information via the internet and hard copy(p 29). They note that in the first year the information will be disseminated to the state leaders.

Weaknesses:

Inadequate information is presented as to how information will be disseminated. There is no detail as to how the state will make the information "user friendly" for different stakeholders(e29).

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: 22

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 details a complete process for the evaluation of sub-grant applicants. This process includes the convening of a review panel of literacy experts with adequate safeguards to avoid conflicts of interest. The thorough process includes: drafting documents to help the reviewers; guiding questions for reviewers; availability of CDE staff to provide guidance, and protocols that have been developed. The state has also clearly delineated the comprehensive components that must be included in the application which includes the following: needs assessment; action plan; evaluation plan, and leadership and management plan(e30-31). The leadership plan must include a narrative of the team's capacity to implement their proposed plan (e31). The state has presented a convincing picture of their ability to conduct a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge the LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 3

- 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

Sub Question

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:

The applicant presents an adequate plan to meet the requirement to present a comprehensive program that addresses the needs of students with disadvantages. The state specifies that only (1) schools that have over 55% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch(e32-33) are eligible. (2)The applicant includes an appropriate requirement for a needs assessment and rationale for their plan to be included in the subgrants application. This assessment includes context and demographic information and analysis of the subgrantees' areas of strengths and needs. The comprehensive action plan includes a section that asks for a plan to collaborate with other agencies and programs for additional resources and guidance (e36-37). The state provides a detailed comprehensive list of suggestions for partners (e35).

Weaknesses:

While the state encourages partnerships with other agencies it is not a mandate(e35). Additionally, there was no clear plan for professional development (e 30-32). This lack of detail weakens this section of the grant.

Reader's Score: 6

- 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:

The applicant has documented several important avenues to insure a comprehensive literacy plan within the subgrants (e36). First, they have a state B-12 literacy plan. Secondly, they have instituted an innovative "feeder" pattern from preschool through 12th grade that will facilitate coherence for students who stay within the feeder LEA system(e36). Finally, as part of the granting process CA has asked its subgrant applicants to address the ways that they will leverage other federal and state programs to leverage the SRC funds(e 37). This combination provides ample evidence of appropriate activities by the subgrant applicants.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

- 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 specifies that only LEAs with high need demographic (more than 55%)(e33) will be allowed to apply for subgrants. (e37) This would seem to be an adequate process to ensure that only high need school districts will be served by subgrants.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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:

The state refers to its subgrant application process(e32, e39) as evidence that they will only give subgrants to applicants who provide a narrative that explicates which instructional strategies are being used, and the research base that supports the choice of these strategies. The application process appears to be complete enough that priority will be given to high quality programs (e30-35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

- 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:

Subgrantee applicant must submit instructional materials and supplemental materials. These materials will be judged by the reviewers whether they are aligned to the state standards(e37).

Weaknesses:

The applicant only states that as a part of the review process subgrant applicants will submit a list of materials and that the state will evaluate the materials and decide if they are adequate and align to state standards. The state does not give any information as to how these criteria will be reviewed or how they will make the process and results of any such review publicly available. The sparse evidence related to this area weakens the proposal.(e37)

Reader's Score: 1

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: 7

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:

The applicant presents an adequate list of tasks to be accomplished in the first year.(e39-40)

Weaknesses:

The applicant presents an inadequate plan that is lacking clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The applicant itself (e39-40) states there is really only a timeline for the first year. The applicant plans to more clearly define other years as federal timelines are established. However, even in that first year, the applicant only gives limited information which is comprised of a listing of tasks by month. The timeline lacks detail as to who has responsibility to accomplish any given task. There are no milestones to accompany the tasks(e39-40).

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The resumes presented for personnel on the grant (section six) appear to be adequate. One of the co-investigators appears to have had experience in literacy projects and a Masters in Literacy. The other resumes presented seem to have experience relevant to the job.

Weaknesses:

There is no evidence of personnel with experience with special needs children (section six). This is a particular concern in a grant aimed at struggling readers.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

The SRCL team appears to have adequate representation from various community stakeholders in the academic/educational arena. Representatives come from various arenas of education including teachers, administrators, parents, and university professors from such diverse areas as: elementary education, linguistics, special education, and early childhood education.(e43,44)

Weaknesses:

The team did not have community representation from members Hispanic organizations and other minority organizations. (e44-45) This lack of representation from key community stakeholders leaves out important pieces of the diversity picture.

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: 11

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:

The applicant presents a budget that appears to have adequate funds for the loosely described activities. (e 46 and budget narrative)

Weaknesses:

The ambiguously described project (see section c for more detail) makes it difficult to align appropriation of funds to project goals and objectives. While \$10,000,000.00 has been allocated for the state to carry out its functions, the sparseness of detail in the project plan as to exactly how funds will be distributed across the life of the grant weakens the budget narrative(e35).

Reader's Score: 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:

The applicant has built adequate safeguards to insure that subgrant monies are distributed in the 15/40/40 ratio. The subgrant application process includes the requirement that there be at least one organization from each age group in the partnership. The leadership group of each partnership shares the responsibility for the expenditure of funds. Finally, CDE will audit the funding expenditures. This process seems to be a sound method for insuring fiscal responsibility within the subgrant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

The applicant has made the integration of funds a requirement of the subgrant application. Additionally, the subgrant applicants are required to integrate funding among members of the subgrant partnership, and to submit a plan for continuing and sustaining collaboration throughout the grant period and beyond. This combination of approaches would seem to be adequate to insure that funds are appropriately leveraged at the subgrantee level. (e48)

Weaknesses:

The state is ambiguous as to how it will integrate and leverage funds across different entities at the state grant level. The applicant notes that various departments have met, and that discussion is underway, but there were sparse details related to this indicator(e48).

Sub Question

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 applicant plans on allocating up to \$2,000,000.00 for up to 30 subgrants. This would appear to be an adequate amount of money for projects to be completed.(e48)

Weaknesses:

While the maximum amount of money per grant is noted in the applicant's narrative, sparse detail is given related to how amounts of money would be allocated. Would some grantees get more than \$2,000,000? Would some get less? If so, how would this decision be made? It is not detailed in the narrative. There are no guidelines as to the scale of funding. More detail would have strengthened this section.

Reader's Score: 1

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 state appropriately mentioned that they would seek to use technology to enhance educational outcomes.

Weaknesses:

The applicant mentions in several places (e1, 2, 8, 11, 12, 17, etc.) in the application that technology is an important part of the plan. However, sparse information was provided as to how this would be implemented or the research that supports the types of technology to be used. Most of the responsibility for this has been assigned to the subgrantees (e 23, 30, 40, 47), but insufficient information was given as to the state's role in the process.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

The state has clearly articulated how they expect the subgrantees to put together a SR plan. The expectation is that each subgrant 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. The subgrant process requires the LEA partnerships to propose an extremely well articulated plan that specifically targets disadvantaged students. The state will only allow LEAs who have a rate of free and reduced lunch over 55%, which is an adequate strategy to ensure that the majority of the money will go to help disadvantaged students. As a part of this process the state clearly explicates a complete plan for the awarding of the subgrants and for evaluating the subgrants. This plan includes the evaluation of the subgrants by an outside evaluator. The applicant meets the first priority.

Weaknesses:

The state's plan is lacking details relevant to their ability to provide support to subgrantees in implementing their subgrants. For instance, the applicant presents a plan that is lacking clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The applicant itself (e39) states there is really only a timeline for the first year. The applicant plans to more clearly define other years as federal timelines are established. However, even in that first year, the applicant only gives limited information which is comprised of a listing of tasks by month. The timeline lacks detail as to who has responsibility to accomplish any given task. Similar ambiguities exist throughout the grant. For example, the state talks about a monitoring process and technical assistance (in section A) but details again are lacking as to the "who, what, where and when" of the process. Additionally, inadequate detail is given about previous successes. In response to the question as to how the state would ensure that only high quality materials and instruction is used by the subgrantees, the applicant only states that as a part of the review process subgrant applicants will submit a list of materials and that the state will evaluate the materials and decide if they are adequate and align to state standards. The state does not give any information as to how these criteria will be reviewed or how they will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.(e37). Generally this pattern held throughout the applications with only sparse details available annotating the state's role in the process.

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:

The applicant's use of external evaluators both for state activities and subgrant activities is convincing evidence that the applicant plans to use data to improve literacy instruction and outcomes. The state very explicitly details the types of data that they expect to receive in quarterly reports from subgrantees. They are also explicit in what they expect the external evaluator to investigate at the state level (e24-26). The state seems to have an ambitious plan to use the data appropriately. The state meets Priority 2.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California Department of Education -- California Department of Ed Board of Education (S371C110037)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	19
Sub Total	37	19
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	24
Sub Total	28	24
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	7.5
Sub Total	15	7.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	9
Sub Total	20	9
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	0
Sub Total	5	0
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	59.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - SRCL - 4: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: California Department of Education -- California Department of Ed Board of Education (S371C110037)

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: 19

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 will use local educational agencies (LEAs), kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), partnerships with early education centers, preschools, institutions of higher education, and other organizations within communities. This will enable the applicant to improve learning outcomes for children and carry out the State-level activities. (e0) By using the Partnership objectives to work in unison with families the applicant can align activities in the plan.

California will implement its Infant and Toddler Development and Learning Foundations and Preschool Learning Foundations (Early Learning Foundations), and the California Common Core Standards (CCCS) to better align systems.

Professional development opportunities for subgrantees address the needs of disadvantaged students. Other key state activities will provide assistance in aligning federal and state funds at the local level for project implementation. This will enable the applicant to support partnerships and work with schools and LEAs to successfully transition students.

The applicant plans to use the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI2) which has the research and evaluation that will be an effective tool. (e7)

Weaknesses:

Most of the information that was given in this section was about the LEAs but it is unclear as to how and what activities the state will use to broaden the outreach of its educational programs to help parents and staff support children in those early years. The applicant never details the state's overarching goals.

The final process for an innovative technology component with learning tools for use in the classroom is vague. A better description of the process is necessary to justify it. There are inadequate details about previous successes.

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

Sub Question

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 provides Table 2 (e13) as evidence of data regarding the racial and ethnic breakout of children who are younger than the age of five in 2008. Table 3 and 4 provides additional data for children Kindergarten-Grade 12. The state's plan to select partnership applications for funding, with these applicants conducting a comprehensive needs assessment will provide a path to achieve goals.

Weaknesses:

It is obscure as to who will determine which applications meet the requirements. It is unclear as to whether there will be assistance to applicants to help them complete an application. The applicant needs to have a better organized plan for a comprehensive and fair process. The lack of detail about the state's role is a weakness in this section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 4

- 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's plan to provide technical support throughout the entire grant process from the initial applications to data reporting is appropriate. By conducting state meetings, webinars, and phone conferences the applicant plans to provide continuity.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include a list of the California state literacy team members with their expertise, education or ability to provide high-quality support. Without a better description of the personnel, it is difficult to see how they can provide the necessary support.

The applicant did not provide evidence that the state comprehensive literacy plan included student data and other documentation to implement the goals and objectives and provide technical assistance.

A more detailed plan about technical assistance would have strengthened this section.

Reader's Score: 2

- 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:

The applicant has a strong plan to evaluate the progress of improvement in literacy development in two ways; through the local evaluation of the subgrantees, and through a contracted state evaluation of the implementation and impact of the SRCL state grant. Requiring participating subgrantees to submit GPRA data elements necessary for the external evaluator will ensure an unbiased statewide evaluation.

The applicant will require that the external local evaluator must be separate from the local entities involved in the pilot project implementation to ensure an unbiased and objective evaluation. The local evaluator or members of the local evaluation team are not be directly involved with the planning or delivery of the professional development content or pedagogy. This plan creates a seamless process to

Sub Question

evaluate the progress of improvement in literacy development consistently and comprehensively. Requiring the evaluator to collaborate with the CDE Assessment and Accountability Division, English Learner and Curriculum Support Division, Special Education Division, and Title I Division, as well as the SBE staff and SRCL Team to analyze pertinent data will enable the participants and the evaluator to improve the design. The evaluator provides findings in quarterly and annual reports including data collection and analysis methods. The applicant will involve subgrantees in the development of an evaluation plan. The evidence used to examine the impact of the statewide literacy program include academic student achievement, teacher qualifications, and characteristics obtained from the various statewide assessment tests that will allow for improvement in information and design.

Weaknesses:

There is no evidence of a Kindergarten Readiness assessment or if it is effective at assessing children appropriately to provide the most valuable data.
There is no evidence of a Preschool (Birth-4) data source and if it is effective at assessing children appropriately to provide the most valuable data.
A description of specific instruments would have improved the plan.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

The applicant states that they will provide the necessary technical support throughout the entire grant process from the initial applications to data reporting. By conducting state meetings, webinars, and phone conferences the applicant will be able to support a comprehensive implementation.

Weaknesses:

The applicant is vague on how often the project outcomes and data information will be disseminated. More information about disaggregating the data by student subgroup would make this section stronger. There needs to be information on what kind of formats the applicant will use to make it understandable by, and accessible to, the public and useful to various groups.

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: 24

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:

Sub Question

- a) **The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.**

Strengths:

The applicant details a complete process for the evaluation of subgrant applicants based on the ability to run a rigorous, high-quality competition. The CDE staff will select a review panel of experts in the area of literacy to review the applications.

a)

The subgrant applicant must include a Leadership and Management Plan to ensure that the applicant has the capacity to implement its proposed plan.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

The applicant will give priority to subgrantees that demonstrate how the funding will assist in implementing a comprehensive and coherent literacy program that serves students from birth through grade twelve and increases learning outcomes by focusing literacy skills. (e33)

Subgrantees will implement an innovative research-based project that assists educators in meeting the needs of disadvantaged students is a priority within this subgrant process.

Subgrantees will implement interventions for students who are struggling, by providing language and text-rich classrooms. Schools will use a coherent assessment system to monitor and track project implementation and outcomes at all levels to ensure continuous improvement. (e30-32)

1)

In the evaluation process, the state oversight ensures that the LEA partnerships, that receive funding not only have a large number (55% or more) of disadvantaged students, but they also have the capacity for improvement. (e34)

2)

By conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to determine the performance levels and needs of disadvantaged students, birth to grade twelve, the CDE shows strong commitment to a comprehensive literacy project. Subgrant applicants will identify current efforts to address student needs and evidence of successful outcomes. The needs assessment will also identify the level of understanding educators possess in relation to the key elements of the state literacy plan, including Early Learning Foundations, ELD Standards, and CCCS; RtI2 approach; research-based, data-decision making; instructional strategies for disadvantaged students; and technology.

3)

The local needs assessment will be completed by all local stakeholders to identify the strengths that the applicant will build upon. The applicant describes the context, rationale, and necessity for a successful project. CDE will encourage applicants to include other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities. (e35)

LEAs will be asked to describe the manner in which schools or other participating organizations were selected in the pilot project. (e36) This provides a strong consistent commitment for a comprehensive literacy project.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The professional development plan lacks specificity and there are no criteria for effective professional development cited. (e30-32)

Reader's Score: 7

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:

Subgrantees are required to have a partnership plan serving children birth-grade 12, which will likely result in the implementation of a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction. Subgrantees are required to select areas of focus that are aligned with the state plan. (e36)

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

There is an eligibility list in which only those serving 55% or more students meet the federal National School Lunch Program are eligible to apply for subgrants.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

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:

The CDE is requiring that all applicants must support their proposed projects with instructional strategies that are research-based and have been proven to increase achievement for birth to preschool age children and K-12 students. Evidence for strategies, programs, and practices must be cited within the application. This will give priority to those LEAs and providers that support their applications with the strongest available evidence.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

The applicant must submit instructional materials and supplementary materials to ensure that they are aligned. The applicant will review and judge whether the subgrantees submitted materials are aligned with state standards.

Weaknesses:

The process is unclear and the alignment is undocumented. The applicant needs to demonstrate how the process will be in alignment with state standards for curricula and materials and how it will be available for public view.

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: 7.5

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.

Strengths:

The applicant provides an appropriate timeline with project tasks to support the project appropriately. (e39-e41)

Weaknesses:

The applicant's management plan shows no evidence that the objectives of the project will be within budget. There are insufficient clearly defined responsibilities.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

The resumes of key personnel are adequate for the management of the program.

Weaknesses:

There is no evidence that there are key personnel with relevant training and experience in teaching children with special needs. There is no evidence of key personnel have strong backgrounds in literacy.

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:

It is documented that the applicant will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project. There is a list of individuals and community representatives including families, teachers, community organizations and specialists in Hispanic and Asian language learners. (e44)

Weaknesses:

The team lacks community representation from some minority organizations. (e44-45)

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: 9

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:

The applicant is conservative in the budget for the State in relation to most of the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The applicant is proposing a significant change in collaboration between infant/toddler and preschool programs, elementary schools, and high schools to identify successful projects that have closed the readiness gap as well as the achievement gap for all children from birth through grade 12. (e45)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that there will be 30 subgrants at \$2 million each but there is a discrepancy as to where those awards are generated from.

The design of the project is unclear with most of the decision left to the LEAs.

It is unclear as to the amount of funding that will be used for resources/tools to improve literacy for the neediest children.

It is unclear where the funding is to provide language and text-rich classrooms, schools, and other program environments that engage and motivate students in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Reader's Score: 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:

The state has a plan to ensure that the allocation process requires the subgrantees distribute the funding, as required by the federal guidelines.

A leadership advisory group, with members from each of the participating organizations, will share responsibility for the expenditure of funds.

The applicant's fiscal staff will carefully review the budgets, interim expenditure reports, and final expenditure reports to ensure that the funding proportions are correct.

The state has a plan to ensure that the allocation process requires the subgrantees to distribute the funding as required by the federal guidelines.

Weaknesses:

The leadership team has considerable oversight, but it is unclear how the leadership team members will be chosen and approved by the applicant. There is a lack of a chain of command or a check and balance procedure.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

The applicant requires that Subgrantees must address specific past and future collaborative efforts and articulations with other federal and state programs. (e48) (e38)

The subgrant application will also require a plan for continuing and sustaining the collaboration with the various programs throughout the grant period and beyond.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

There is no evidence or letters of support from any of the agencies mentioned. (e48)
There is no evidence that the discussion to collaborate and integrate funding at the state and local level will be approved and become a reality. The applicant does not explain how the SEA will collaborate and integrate funding.

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:

The applicant plans to allocate up to 2 million dollars to each subgrantee for their programs.

Weaknesses:

The applicant is unclear as to the extent of the award to subgrantees to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools that the subgrantee would serve. (e48) More detail needs to be available as to how the allocations will be made.
The applicant does not provide guidelines for subgrantee to establish an appropriately sized project to support and improve instruction for children birth through grade 12.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

No strength found.

Weaknesses:

The applicant is committed to guiding educators and students to use technology tools in innovative ways but fails to provide details on how this will be accomplished. (e3)
It is unclear as to how the applicant will implement a technology component that will bring 21st century learning tools into the classroom and address Universal Design for Learning (UDL). (e4-5)
The applicant is vague in the budget justification narrative under office technician; technology needs is stated but not defined. (e0)
There is no evidence of technology to improve and/or identify limited-English-proficient children, children with disabilities to help improve student's literacy and language development.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

THE APPLICANT MET ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1

The applicant focuses on a project to improve learning outcomes by the formation of a partnership model to promote student success with a smooth transition for children birth through grade twelve. The premise is that disadvantaged students and all other students will benefit from the partnerships coordination of effort.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

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:

THE APPLICANT MET ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2

The applicant bases that this priority has been met by enabling more data-based decision-making that works seamlessly with the ongoing implementation of California's guidelines. LEAs and schools will use a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI2) approach through collecting, analyzing, and using high quality data to improve learning outcomes.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM