

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Idaho State Board of Education -- State Department of Education (S371C110043)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	27.5
Sub Total	37	27.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	4.5
Sub Total	28	4.5
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	11.5
Sub Total	15	11.5
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	4
Sub Total	5	4
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 #9 - SRCL - 9: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Idaho State Board of Education -- State Department of Education (S371C110043)

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: 27.5

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 need for a revised literacy program is established based upon: a) a determined significant achievement gap (p. 1-2); b) the recent adoption of the Common Core Standards (p. 2).
2. The proposed new program will be based on principles of developmentally appropriate practice and transitions within developmental bands for improved authentic literacy acquisition to support the new core standards (p. 2). An overview of the common core standards and the state benchmarks is included (p. 3).
3. The SEA's primary goal is to create a seamless state literacy policy targeted at improving learning outcomes for disadvantaged students through the use of data-based decision making while utilizing technology (p. 3).
4. Through the receipt of a grant in 2010, the process of developing a state literacy plan is currently underway (p. 3-4). The ultimate purpose of the plan is that all students graduate from high school academically prepared for postsecondary education or the workforce (p. 4).
5. The SEA states that the SRCL grant will allow the state to build on the following initiatives: a) previous work completed by the Reading First program; b) further development of the RTI; c) implementation of the Common Core Standards; d) further development of the Health Education Assessment Project or HEAP) (p. 6-9)..
6. A discussion of how technology will be used and how technical assistance will be provided is included (p. 7-8). Training materials have already been developed for classroom teachers based on the described initiatives (p. 8).
7. A high level of collaboration among team members of the current initiatives is evident. This is demonstrated throughout the plan based on the variety of initiatives described, the support letters, and the inclusion of various groups in the management plan.

Weaknesses:

1. A discussion of numerous different current initiatives in the state is provided (p. 1-12). However, the connection between these separate initiatives to one another and to the SRCL grant is not always clear. How the SEA will use the SRCL grant funds to develop a cohesive project which includes all of these various initiatives is uncertain.
2. A clear path to meeting the priorities of the SRCL grant is not established as a coherency among the numerous different initiatives is not clear. Due to the lack of alignment and coherency among the numerous projects presented as they relate to the SRCL grant, it becomes unclear how the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State

Sub Question

literacy plan.

3. The SEA does not address how early childhood education will be included in the proposed plan. Many initiatives provided, such as RTI and Common Core, begin at the Kindergarten level. A discussion of how early literacy skills will be addressed and developed is needed.

Reader's Score: 6

- 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:

1. The SEA's primary goal is to create a seamless state literacy policy targeted at improving learning outcomes for disadvantaged students through the use of data-based decision making while utilizing technology (p. 3).
2. Through the receipt of a grant in 2010, the process of developing a state literacy plan is currently underway (p. 3-4). The ultimate purpose of the currently established plan is that all students graduate from high school academically prepared for postsecondary education or the workforce (p. 4).
3. An overview and goals of the various projects (Common Core, RTI, Reading First, and HEAP) are discussed.
4. The goals for SRCL are presented as follows: 1) collaboration among agencies; 2) continuous system of improved professional practice and community based programs; 3) Use of RTI; 4) Implement technology strategically (p. 12-13).

Weaknesses:

1. While numerous current initiatives are presented along with the SEA's goals, a path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals is not clear. Numerous initiatives and goals are presented. However, how these initiatives will align to achieve the SEA's goals for the SRCL grant is unclear.
2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students is not clear as numerous initiatives with various goals were presented. While a primary goal was presented, how all of these various initiatives will work together to meet the goals is not clear.
3. RTI is presented as a primary component of the plan (p. 5). However, an explanation for how literacy content will be addressed within the RTI process is absent.
4. While a discussion of a previous needs assessment which identified areas of need was included, a clear path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs is absent. The SEA fails to explain how all of the initiatives presented will merge to a clear and credible path toward reaching the SEA's goals.
5. The initiatives presented as part of the SEA's plan do not include early literacy skills. Therefore, it is unclear how birth to age 5 will be included in the SEA's goals.

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 SRCL grant will utilize the currently established, proven technical assistance structure (p. 13).
2. Infants and early childhood programs as well as families will receive assistance through the Learning Community program.
3. Recently retired, highly distinguished educators provide technical assistance to school and district leaders through the Idaho Building Capacity Project.
4. The Idaho Education Network, which is a statewide effort to establish high-speed internet throughout

Sub Question

the state, will be utilized for workshops and trainings for SRCL participants.

5. The Regional Support Network provides technical assistance through the use of literacy consultants located in three locations across the state. The literacy consultants provide an array of technical assistance to educators and stakeholders in their established region.

Weaknesses:

1. How all of the currently established and proven technical assistance entities will relate specifically to the SRCL grant is not always clear.

Reader's Score: 4.5

- 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. Education Northwest, an independent evaluator, will conduct the evaluations for the SRCL grant (p. 16).
2. A comprehensive mixed-methods design, to include both quantitative and qualitative measures, will be implemented (p. 17).
3. Evaluations will be analyzed to determine the degree to which the SEA, as well as the subgrantees, has implemented the SRCL Literacy Plan (p. 17). In addition, the extent to which literacy skills have increased among students will be analyzed (p. 17).
4. Outcome evaluation questions are also included (p. 18).
5. The evaluation team will begin by building a logic model along with Idaho SDE (p. 18). Ongoing communication between the evaluator and Idaho SDE will be implemented (p. 19).
6. Data will be collected via the following means: document reviews, surveys of school staff, Idaho RTI School Success Indicators Rubric, Interviews and Case Studies (p. 19-20). A timeline for data collection is also provided (p. 19). Outcome data will also be gathered based upon specified assessments at each age/grade level is provided (p. 21).
7. A discussion of how data will be analyzed, including specific statistical measures for analysis, is provided (p. 22-23). A copy of the results, along with a conference call for discussion, will be provided to the Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) and LEAs (p. 24).

Weaknesses:

1. Measurements of early childhood are limited. RTI is relevant only to grades K-12 (p. 19-21). Only one outcome data source is presented for preschool which only measures receptive vocabulary. No indication of measuring any of the other early literacy skills (such as concept of print, phonological awareness, and so on) is provided.
2. The plan for data collection and analysis fails to include how the SEA will use the evidence collected and analyzed to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities. Due to this, how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities is not evident.

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).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

1.The independent evaluator will provide data, disaggregated by student subgroup, to the SEA and LEAs (p. 24). Phone conferences will be held between the evaluators and project staff members to discuss the evaluation and data collection progress (p. 25). Annual reports will be presented each year to LEAs by a member of the evaluation team (p. 24).

Weaknesses:

1.No plan is provided indicating how the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, to various other groups to include families, educators, researchers, and other experts.

Reader's Score: 3

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: 4.5

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:

- 1.Criteria are presented by the SEA for the subgrant applications to include how the LEA or provider of early childhood will provide district wide implementation (p. 26).
- 2. Selection criteria to determine greatest need and ability to benefit from funds and a ranking system and School Needs Matrix will be developed (p. 27).
- 3. Three types of subawards will be granted: 1) early childhood programs, 2) LEA planning grants, and 3) LEA implementation grants (p. 27). A description of each type of subaward is included (p. 27-28).
- 4. A Subaward Competition Activity Timeline is provided (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

1.All 141 LEAs will be eligible to apply for a subgrant. The SRCL subgrant competition will be based upon previous competitions used by the state: Idaho's 21st Century Community Learning Center and Charter School Planning and Implementation awards (p. 26). How the previous criteria and process will relate to the specifics of the SRCL grant is unclear. In addition, how this relates to the LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal is unclear.

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

Sub Question

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 state needs assessments will be used in subgrant awarding (p. 29). Core requirements are provided which include: 1) leadership team development and planning, 2) Universal Design for Learning, 3) professional development, 4) family and community engagement, 5) interagency literacy collaboration, 6) students with special needs, 7) RTI, and 8) alignment of practice across literacy bands (p. 30). An LEA Implementation 3 Year Grant Activity and Budget is included (p. 31).

Weaknesses:

1. The inclusion of how the subgrant 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 is vague.
2. While the state's needs assessment has been described, how the subgrant applicant is informed by a needs assessment as described in the subgrant application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers is unclear.
3. While family and community engagement is included in the criteria, the specifics for review criteria based on involvement of other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and so on is not included.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

No strengths found.

Weaknesses:

1. No discussion of how the review criteria will address the extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant will demonstrate that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction is provided.
2. No discussion of how SRCL subgrant activities will align to activities supported with other Federal, State, and local funds is included.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

1. Subgrants will be ranked based on multiple data sources, which includes a factor of need based on the School Needs Matrix. The ranking system was previously developed for use with existing Idaho grant funds.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear if the criteria for ranking the subgrant applicants will include the extent to which the subgrantee is a high-poverty school or serves a high-poverty population.

Reader's Score: 0.5

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:

No strengths found.

Weaknesses:

The use of review rubrics and review process currently used under other programs will be implemented for the SRCL grant (p. 28). Specifics of discussed review rubrics are not included. It is unclear if the criteria of including evidence as support of subgrant activities is included or will be included as review criteria.

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. The use of review rubrics and review process currently used under other programs will be implemented for the SRCL grant (p. 28).

Weaknesses:

1. The SEA plans to use an already established review process along with review rubrics. However, the extent to which this review criterion aligns with State standards for the curricula and materials used by the LEA as part of the grant activities is unclear.
2. Reviewers backgrounds do not indicate expertise in working with disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, or struggling readers. A description of the review panel simply states that it will consist of colleagues with a background in implementing comprehensive literacy in schools and the community (p. 28).

Reader's Score: 0.5

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: 11.5

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

Sub Question

accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

1. A management plan is provided which includes an overview of responsibilities, timelines, milestones for accomplishment tasks, as well as the funding source (p. 33-39).
2. Collaboration between various groups involved in the SRCL grant is evident from the responsibilities listed in the management plan (p. 33-39).

Weaknesses:

1. The management plan is general, lacking any specifics regarding tasks or dates.
2. Years of task completion do not seem appropriate for the scope and sequence of the SRCL grant. For example, the development of interagency agreements is indicated for year 2013 when this is a key step to initial implementation of the grant (p. 33).
3. The table is cumbersome as organization is not based on date of completion, but on objectives. A detailed table based on the timeline of completion would be helpful in determining the established plan by the SEA.
4. The LEA Implementation Plan (Table E5, p. 31) is only for 3 years. This is confusing as the SRCL grant period is 5 years in length.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

1. The curriculum vita for key personnel is provided (Attachments: p. e0-e13). Many key personnel are in areas related to the proposal, such as language and literacy, school improvement, RTI, and so on.

Weaknesses:

1. Not all roles named in the budget seem to be linked to specific individuals as determined by a review of each individual curriculum vita.
2. It is unclear which individual, based on the curriculum vita, is responsible for what SRCL tasks, based on the narrative. For example, it is not clear which individual will be the grant Project Director.

Reader's Score: 3.5

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. Letters of support are included for: State Department of Education, Boise State University, Head Start Collaboration Council, University of Idaho, National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials, Computers for Kids, Inc., Early Childhood Coordinating Council, Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, Family Advocates, Idaho Commission for Libraries, and Idaho Coordinated School Health Program (Attachment: p. e0-e12).
2. The SEA has clearly demonstrates the intention to include a diversity of perspectives through the inclusion of an array of individuals and agencies in the design and implementation of the proposed project.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

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: 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:

- 1.A detailed budget narrative is provided describing the costs related to personnel, fringe, travel, supplies, subgrants, other costs, and indirect costs (Budget Narrative).
2. The vast majority of funds will be allocated to the subgrantees and are proposed to have a significant impact across the state.

Weaknesses:

1. The personnel section of the Budget Narrative is confusing (p. 0). Many of the personnel listed in the Budget Narrative are listed as .5 FTE with one individual listed as .33 FTE. According to the budget narrative, only one individual will be full-time at 1 FTE. Due to this, it is unclear who will be completing the tasks as described in the proposed plan. In addition, it is unclear where the additional individuals who provided a curriculum vita will be included in the budget. Clarity needs to be provided as to specific roles for personnel, to include all personnel funded by the budget.

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:

- 1.The subgrant award amount totals indicate the 15/40/40 requirement (Budget Narrative).

Weaknesses:

1. While the Budget Narrative indicates a 15/40/40 split in funding, the SEA plans to use \$5,000 from the 15% allocated for early childhood to align pre-literacy, early childhood literacy, and adolescent literacy (p. 28). The direct use of a portion of the 15/40/40 requirement for another purpose is contrary to the 15/40/40 budget mandate.
2. The SEA does not include a discussion of the logistics of how the 15/40/40 will be ensured and managed.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 1.5

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 SEA clearly demonstrates a plan to leverage and integrate other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant. This is evident in the inclusion of other funding sources for completion of indicators and objectives on the management plan (p. 33-39).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

1.Subgrant award amounts will total \$170,000 as indicated in the LEA Implementation 3 Year Grant Activity and Budget Table (p. 31).

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear if the indicated amount will be of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-needs schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five. More detail regarding the subgrant awards is needed to make this determination.

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:

- 1.The plan includes the use of assistive and instructional technology (Abstract: p. e0).
- 2.Technology will be implemented strategically to support the primary priority of improving learning outcomes (Abstract: p. e1).
3. An overview of the Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) is provided (p. 7). The IATP provides an array of services from AT equipment exchange to technical assistance for educators (p. 7).
4. The SEA is working with Computers for Kids (p. 8) to provide computers and software to students (p. 8).

5. Training materials have been developed for the inclusion of technology into the classroom, particularly through the use of Universal Design for Learning(p. 8).
6. The AIMSweb data system will be implemented to house IRI scores for students K-3 (p. 5).

Weaknesses:

1. The proposed plan lacks a specific discussion regarding how the described technology systems will be utilized to increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

This priority is met. The focus is to improve school readiness and success for all children, including those who are disadvantaged, birth through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development (Abstract: p. e0). The plan is an integrated approach on pre-literacy, early literacy, and adolescent literacy development (Abstract: p. e0). Universal Design for Learning will be used as the basis for improving student outcomes (Abstract: p. e0).

Weaknesses:

Detail regarding the proposed plan is lacking. More detail is needed regarding the specifics of the proposed plan. It is also unclear if funds will be targeted specifically to locations of higher need as all LEA's in the state will be eligible to apply for a subgrant (p. 27). However, this priority is met.

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 plan involves the use of data to guide the project for the purpose of improving learning outcomes (Abstract: p. e0). A clear plan for collecting and analyzing data is presented to include the evaluator, the data collection points, assessments used for evaluation, and means of analyzing the data.

Weaknesses:

While data collection and analysis is clearly provided, a discussion for how the data will be used to inform instruction for the purpose of improving literacy skills is not clearly defined. In addition, outcome data for early childhood education is insufficient as it measures only one component of early literacy, receptive vocabulary. Multiple sources of data collection need to be included to ensure the measurement of all aspects of early literacy development. However, this priority is met.

Reader's Score: 0

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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	61.5

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Panel #9 - SRCL - 9: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Idaho State Board of Education -- State Department of Education (S371C110043)

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: 31

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 proposal directly addresses portions of the State Literacy Plan and utilizes the same structure envisioned in the plan, which is based on the state's experience with Reading First. The State Literacy Team will remain the same, with the addition of expertise in early literacy. A variety of examples of braiding of funds is provided to illustrate ways in which a focus on literacy is already supported across different populations (e.g., special education students). Data are provided on annual measures of proficiency to demonstrate need; these are shown separately for all students and for students with disabilities and English language learners. Demographic shifts are also cited to demonstrate the growing need to include young children in the literacy plan. The structures for professional development, assessment, curriculum, and instruction are also based on Reading First, which focuses on implementing RTI throughout all schools and across all ages. An assessment system is described that standardizes data across districts and schools. The State Team has already begun working on a seamless state literacy policy that crosses ages. A timeline for managing the sub-grant process is provided (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

Since RTI is the primary framework for change in literacy instruction, strategies for applying SEA structures that will support RTI should be described (e.g., assessment and ongoing monitoring, professional development). While there apparently is a linkage with early childhood services through the agency administering Part C, and Head Start is mentioned as a partner, no description is provided of the overall state structure for early childhood services and how it will be incorporated into this project. For example, this could include discussion of Part B early childhood services as well as any LEA preschool services for children identified as being at risk. It is important to describe how the continuum from birth-school age will acknowledge and involve all of these entities, and to state which will be eligible to apply for the early childhood portions of the grant. A discussion is needed of how the components of the Reading First model (particularly RTI and ongoing assessment) will be modified to address content and to use teaching processes appropriate across the range of birth-grade 12.

Reader's Score: 7.5

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

Sub Question

support of its LEAs.

Strengths:

Goals for the project include inter- and intra-agency collaboration to support literacy learning across environments (early childhood programs, school, home), as well as a continuum of literacy learning across ages. Learning standards in language and literacy are being aligned with the national Common Core Standards, which are used K-12. Through the RTI system, data will be collected 3 times a year to guide evaluation of progress (p. 11). Technology will be built into the project at many levels, including adaptive technology as well as computers for classroom learning and distance modes of collaboration and teacher education. The overall approach is the use of RTI supported by technology based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to meet the needs of students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency. Together, RTI and UDL provide a credible pathway toward achieving the goal of closing gaps in achievement. Much of this will be accomplished through existing collaborative projects and networks.

Weaknesses:

With the exception of adding an early childhood component and focusing more specifically on students with disabilities and with limited English, it is difficult to tell how this project will go beyond what is already in place through Reading First and other state initiatives. While building on these components is a strength, the unique contributions of this particular funding should be addressed more explicitly. The Common Core Standards are minimal at the kindergarten level and do not extend below kindergarten. Other, state standards in language and literacy are not described, so that it is not known whether any state early childhood standards are specific enough to guide intentional instruction in emergent and early language and literacy. Appropriate benchmarks will be needed for literacy development in younger children in order to show that they are entering Kindergarten with the skills that they need to learn to read. Additional discussion is also needed of specific UDL strategies that will be used to address the needs of students with disabilities and with limited English proficiency.

Reader's Score: 6.5

- 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:

Technical assistance will be provided through a substantial, existing structure that includes a 3-region network that provides technical assistance to LEAs, support for special education and school improvement, and work with institutions of higher education (in which they are based). Literacy consultants will be added to each region. The SEA also supports virtual learning communities for a variety of audiences including LEAs, infant and early childhood providers, and families; a community on literacy will be added. The SEA provides training to LEA leadership (specifically implementation of the components of RTI). Retired educators, trained by the SEA, provide mentoring to specific schools, and will be prepared to incorporate mentoring on literacy. An educational television network will be used to broadcast workshops that stem from this project. Training materials on Universal Design for Learning are available through a partnership with a center on accessible materials for students with disabilities.

Weaknesses:

Strategies for making this support available to early childhood settings that are outside of the school system structure should be described. The relationship between technical assistance to be provided through the state structure and technical assistance, training, and coaching provided through the sub-grants needs to be clarified.

Reader's Score: 4.5

- 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**

Sub Question

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:

An external evaluator with extensive experience in state-level educational evaluations will be used. Evaluation questions are stated for both implementation and outcomes. The model used in evaluating the Reading First project will be used. Methods are appropriate to the objectives. Feedback to the SEA and the project will be both formal and informal, and will provide information that is accessible to a variety of audiences. The evaluator will meet directly with different stakeholders (e.g., State Team, LEA administrators) to share and discuss results. Reports will be available on a variety of web-sites. Feedback on student outcomes will be disaggregated for sub-groups of traditionally under-performing students. Achievement of project students will be compared to that of non-participants, controlling for background factors. Evaluation will include analysis of RTI implementation using a standard rubric. Case studies of successful implementation will be developed. Valid measures are listed for each grade level strand.

Weaknesses:

Additional measures are needed at the preschool level to provide guidance to teachers on their instruction of emergent and early language and literacy skills (e.g., language/concepts; phonological awareness/alphabetic principle; print concepts). Measures for entry into Kindergarten should be viewed not only as baseline for Kindergarten, but also as formative data for improving the quality of instruction in preschool. Benchmarks will need to be identified for preschool entry and exit.

Reader's Score: 9

- 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:

As described above, the external evaluator will assist the SEA in disseminating information to a variety of stakeholders, both in person and via reports available on several web-sites. The evaluator also will assist stakeholders, including LEAs, in making sense of the data and using it for planning.

Weaknesses:

A plan is needed for disseminating information to families, particularly for families of disadvantaged students and those who are learning English as a second language.

Reader's Score: 3.5

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: 6.5

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:**

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Subgrants are focused on building capacity through district level teams and leadership development. LEAs will be required to implement practices that are community-wide as well as to link with community providers. The RFP will be modeled on applications for other, previous available grant funds. A ranking system will be used to design criteria for determining schools with highest need.

Weaknesses:

No information is provided of process or criteria used in previous grant competitions so that their appropriateness for the SRCL competition can be evaluated. Examples of criteria that will be used to evaluate capacity should be stated (e.g., experience in certain areas, outcomes of previous grants, knowledge of research). Examples are also needed of the types of criteria to be used to identify schools with the highest need. Sub-grantees also should demonstrate that they understand components of effective literacy teaching. Early childhood applicants should demonstrate understanding of appropriate content and teaching processes for birth-5 year olds.

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:

Sub-grant applicants will conduct a community needs assessment, and applicants will be ranked using a 3-tier ranking system based on multiple data sources (p. 27). Applicants also will develop community collaborations that include LEAs and early childhood providers, as well as community agencies serving birth-3 year olds and their families.

Weaknesses:

Information is needed on how the previous grant process and criteria will be adapted for the current grant, i.e., what criteria will be included that address the requirements of this federal RFP, including how sub-grantees will address the learning of students with the highest level of need and capacity for improvement. The 3-tier ranking system should be described with respect to how it helps to identify schools with the largest number of struggling readers.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

This was not included in the proposal narrative and so could not be scored.

Weaknesses:

Presumably these will be built into the RFP process since they are described very well at the state level and are based on previous sub-grant competitions that flowed from federal dollars. However, criteria for ensuring that sub-grants meet these qualifications are not described.

Reader's Score: 0

- 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:

A three tier ranking system will be developed for ranking schools according to need.

Weaknesses:

Details on the ranking system are not provided and it is not clear how this will be used to guide funding. From the funding table (p. 31), it appears that all projects will receive the same basic funding. It also appears that a large number of districts (60) will receive funding; how these relate to those most in need is not clear. Poverty should clearly be one of the criteria for determining need.

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:

This is not addressed in the proposal.

Weaknesses:

This is not addressed in the proposal.

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:

The SEA will follow a previously established review process that was successful in previous projects. Criteria will be based on those used in these previous grant projects (school improvement grants, p. e26; 21st Century Community Learning Center competition, p. 26). Availability of grant funding will be announced through information published on web-based media, in newsletters, and at meetings (as listed in Table E4, p. 29).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No information is given on the criteria to be used or on how these will be aligned with SRCL criteria related to state standards for curricula and materials, making it difficult to judge the quality of the review process. The SEA should also demonstrate that reviewers will have appropriate backgrounds in early childhood and in work with struggling readers as well as in literacy. No information is included on how the process used and the results of the review will be made publicly available.

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: 8

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:

A management table is provided showing objectives, times for accomplishment, and entities responsible. Funding sources are also shown for each objective, demonstrating a nice integration of funding streams and collaborative relationships within the grant leadership and resources. The management plan is integrated with the evaluation plan, with the latter providing information to modify the former. A sub-award competition activity table (p. 29) shows how competitions will be managed across the years. A separate table describing budgets for sub-grants (p.31) indicates specific components to be included in sub-grants, while retaining a portion that will vary based on need.

Weaknesses:

Activities for achieving the objectives are not listed or described in the narrative. Timelines are stated in terms of year of the grant, which will not provide guidance within years for accomplishment of different objectives. Some objectives don't appear to be placed in the right year to support the grant (e.g., 1.1 on interagency agreements) or to include all of the appropriate players (e.g., Head Start as part of the interagency agreement partners). Some success indicators (e.g., 1.2, invite stakeholders) appear to be responsibilities of the LEAs rather than the management team. The column of responsible parties shows many changes across the different objectives; it is not clear that there is a core team of consistent people to assist the coordinator in managing all of these. The funding formula presented on p. 31 should be adjusted to account for varying levels of need with respect to serving students who are the focus of this grant (i.e., more funding to programs with a larger number of students who demonstrate need). The implementation table on p. 31 indicates similar levels of funding for projects across 3 years, but does not account for all years of grant funding. It also is not clear how sub-grants could require the same amount across years when the number of sub-grants of different types could vary by year.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

A number of different resumes are provided in the proposal. Together, the resumes indicate that an appropriate range of expertise will be available to the project, including literacy, special education, early childhood, bilingual education, and technology.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Vitas included are not specifically linked to key roles on the project. Not all roles named in the budget (e.g., specialist) are described in the narrative or linked to specific individuals. Qualifications for individuals to be hired are not described; these should reflect what the individuals will be expected to do with LEAs and early childhood programs (e.g., training, mentoring).

Reader's Score: 2

- 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:

Collaboration is palpable in this proposal. It is evident from the lists of individuals and entities that will be responsible for different objectives listed in the management table that a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, will be represented. Diversity of perspectives also is built into the process that will be followed by sub-grantees in establishing local planning teams. Institutions of higher education are included within the technical assistance system. The letters in the appendix also indicate support from a wide variety of entities (e.g., libraries, technology experts, Head Start, professional organization in early childhood).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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

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:

Most SEA expenditures are related directly to activities that support the design proposed for this project. The majority of the budget goes to support the sub-grants, and will have a significant impact across the state.

Weaknesses:

Some portions of the budget need further description and rationale. The personnel section in particular lacks clarity. It appears that current staff will be reassigned to this grant (total of .83 FTE for professional staff, plus a .50 assistant). A full-time coordinator of professional development will also be hired. A salary is requested for an additional .50 FTE program specialist, but this role is not described in the budget or in the narrative. Three specialists are described in the narrative, one for each technical assistance region, but these do not appear to be included in the budget (although one of these may be the .50 FTE indicated above). Overall, the personnel section of the budget is not clear.

Sub Question

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:

Sub-grant applications will be accepted from any district or early childhood provider, and then awarded to achieve the appropriate allocation. The budget indicates that the appropriate amounts will be allocated across the levels.

Weaknesses:

A description is needed of how the required allocations will be achieved. Funds will be taken out of the total of 15% for early childhood to put toward alignment between early childhood and K-12 (p. 28). No rationale is provided, nor is this process explained; this should come out of the 5% state funds.

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:

Collaborative relationships are already evident (management table lists various sources of funds for different objectives), and sub-grantees will be required to establish collaborative teams within their communities. Activities of this grant continue to build on other statewide quality improvement efforts and will impact a significant number of schools and teachers. Knowledge and skills gained by current technical assistance entities will last beyond the scope of this grant. A portion of sub-grant funding will go toward supporting community collaboration.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

Two kinds of grants will be used, planning grants (1 year) and full grants (2 years). Three rounds of sub-grants are planned, each funded in April for the two following school years. Twenty full grants will be funded each of 3 years, for a total of 60 full sub-grants.

Weaknesses:

The budget lacks clarity in how funds will be distributed within each of the years, as well as in how funds will be targeted primarily toward high-need schools and early learning programs or how they will accommodate differing numbers of high needs students in different communities. Although the size of the grants appears adequate to support activities that relate directly to implementation of RTI, they may not be large enough to encompass larger efforts at quality building, including purchase of literacy teaching materials and mentoring that is intensive enough to bring about change in instruction.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

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:

Several technology-supported initiatives are described with respect to both support for children's learning and with respect to teacher improvement. Support for children's learning includes assistive technology and accessible materials for students with disabilities (through partnership with the Idaho Assistive Technology Project), teacher education materials and training to support use of assistive technology with struggling learners, use of AIMSweb for tracking data as part of the RTI system, as well as providing used computers to students with disabilities and in rural regions. Use of technology for teacher improvement includes on-line communities of practice and broadcasts of training.

Weaknesses:

All of the above uses of technology will need to be extended to preschool classroom settings and teachers in ways that make sense for children's learning. A process for accomplishing this should be described.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

This priority is MET. The project demonstrates considerable strength in collaboration among and within agencies and entities responsible for or providing educational and other services related to the education of children birth-grade 12 and their families. Evidence of goal-directed collaboration in previous projects is substantial. This project will build on and continue the work of these previous projects, working toward specific state goals to put specific practices in place to support the learning of all children.

Weaknesses:

What is less clear is how the project will specifically address the needs of students who have most need; rather, this is assumed from the RTI approach, which is the primary focus of the project. Use of this approach to address different student needs should be described. Funds also should be targeted toward districts and early childhood programs with a higher number of students who might require higher tiers of instruction. Since the RTI framework is the unifier that guides the project, some discussion is needed of how the different components of RTI will be applied to early childhood settings.

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. Data-based decision-making is built into an RTI structure, and evidence is provided that teachers will use regular monitoring of student progress (e.g., use of AIMSweb). Coaches and technical assistance providers will work with teachers and districts to implement data collection and use of data within the context of expanding use of RTI. The external evaluator will provide regular and ongoing data as well as assistance in interpreting data, working with a wide variety of local and state-level stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted for this section except that the proposal lacks a description of collection and application of early childhood assessments. A description is also needed of the process by which ongoing monitoring will be used to improve instruction or to make administrative decisions in response to evidence of children's learning.

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: Idaho State Board of Education -- State Department of Education (S371C110043)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	29
Sub Total	37	29
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	11
Sub Total	15	11
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	14
Sub Total	20	14
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	64

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - SRCL - 9: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Idaho State Board of Education -- State Department of Education (S371C110043)

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: 29

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 state's Comprehensive State Literacy Team with literacy experts ranging from infancy through high school that included experts in limited-English and students with disabilities coordinated the compilation of the existing pre-literacy plan with the former K-3 literacy plan and a new adolescent literacy plan to create a new comprehensive framework for the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Including experts from all levels in the creation of the literacy plan ensures that all areas birth-12 are represented.

The state's SRCL project has five goals (e12) that include leadership, professional development, a tiered system of instruction and intervention, use of technology and effective grant administration that align with the comprehensive literacy plan.

The state has a record of coordinating approaches to literacy with partners such as the Health Education Assessment Project (e3 and e6) and the Idaho Assistive Technology Project (e7).

The state's SRCL project will align with and build on its successful implementation of other federally funded projects such as the Office of Special Education Programs which created an Accessible Instructional Materials Center for IDEA and Reading First (e5) which used the RTI process for intervention for disadvantaged students in grades K-3. This is an effective use of and alignment with other federally funded projects with the SRCL project.

Weaknesses:

The connections between the many federal and state initiatives already in place and the proposed SRCL grant are not clear, and a coherent approach to how the grant will be implemented is not presented.

Though the success of RTI at the K-3 level is cited as the impetus for ramping up this intervention approach to pre-literacy and adolescence, the content of the instruction is not presented. A clearly defined instructional base for each of the three tiers at the pre-literacy and adolescent stages is needed to support the effectiveness of the SRCL proposal.

The state has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and has acknowledged a need to reorganize its frameworks of language arts delivery models (e2) and has developed a five year plan for implementation (e6), but there is no indication of how these standards align with the SRCL project or the

Sub Question

state's comprehensive literacy plan.

Reader's Score: 8

- 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 state's SRCL project has five goals (e12) that include leadership, professional development, a tiered system of instruction and intervention, use of technology and effective grant administration that align with the comprehensive literacy plan.

The state conducted a needs assessment to identify areas of improvement in pre-literacy, early literacy and adolescent literacy that have been incorporated in to its comprehensive literacy plan (e3).

The state cites data from appropriate measurements that indicate gaps in students' literacy performance for disadvantages populations (e1)

The use of a universal screener, the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), and AIMSweb data system which houses all of the IRI data is currently used for all K-3 assessment. This will be expanded in the SRCL project for use with adolescent students identified as at risk (e5). This is an effective use of and alignment with other federally funded projects with the SRCL project.

The SRCL project proposes to 'scale up' (e8) the use of Assistive Technology and Universal Design for Learning to support SRCL project initiatives including Response to Intervention pre K-12 framework (e9). This builds on an effective practice currently being used with students with disabilities to meet more students' needs (e8). The importance of teacher training is acknowledged and addressed (e9) which is critical to wide scale implementation.

The use of assistive technology and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will be expanded to early literacy providers and pre-service teachers (e9).

Multiple summative and formative assessment measures will be employed to assess students' literacy performance, which provides a broader view of students' literacy abilities (e10-e11).

RTI has been used successfully in K-3 schools with disadvantaged students (e4) and has been included in the SRCL project with five identified components for successful implementation (e11). The state indicates that RTI will become woven with the school improvement plan as the vehicle to monitor the attainment of achievement goals and modify instruction to meet students' needs (e11). The program will be monitored by school administrators and ongoing professional development will be incorporated into the school day. This overall approach to meeting students' needs builds on previous success and uses some existing resources.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how pre-literacy (early childhood providers) will be included in students' data collection.

It is unclear what curriculum and instructional materials will be used or how they will be aligned with the CCSS (e6).

Though formative and summative assessments are discussed as being critical components of RTI and the SRCL project, these assessments were not identified in the narrative and assessments included in the data sources table on page e21 for early childhood providers or students in grades 9-12 were not

Sub Question

included.

The state indicates that a district team will establish academic targets for the district as a whole, schools, and specific sub-groups of students. It is important at this point to have a plan specifically for how disadvantaged students will be targeted and for how assessments will be used to identify students who need additional instruction.

Though the state indicates that multiple summative and formative assessment measures will be employed to assess students' literacy performance, formative measures are not used as data sources for project evaluation (e21).

It is not clear how the use of UDL will address student learning challenges or increase student engagement or achievement or teacher effectiveness.

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:

The state will utilize and build upon technical assistance that is currently in place from other federally funded projects. (e13)

The SRCL grant staff will coordinate the professional development activities provided for subgrantees and utilize existing networks of support such as the Regional Support Network, and the Learning Communities to deliver professional development onsite, at conferences and through long distance technology. (e14-16)

Weaknesses:

How the state will provide professional development for early childhood care providers should be described.

It is unclear how much training and support for the use of UDL will be provided from the state as currently structured and through the SRCL subgrant. A coherent alignment of support is important to ensure consistent implementation and adequate training across birth-12.

Reader's Score: 4

- 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:

Education Northwest, a nonprofit educational research organization will serve as the outside independent evaluator for the state. (e16)

Education Northwest proposes a comprehensive mixed-method design implemented over the five years of the SRCL project using quantitative and qualitative data that seems thorough, feasible and appropriate to assess whether the SRCL project meets its implementation and evaluation objectives (e17 and e18).

Evaluation reports will be disaggregated by students with disabilities, LEP and at risk (e24) so the state

Sub Question

and LEAs will have easy access to information that will help them determine if the SRCL project is meeting the needs of disadvantaged students.

Project staff members will dedicate professional development time to discussing the results of the evaluation and their implications with LEAs.

Weaknesses:

Outcome data sources for early literacy providers are not indicated (e21).

Informal assessments are not used in the data collection and would be critical to inform that LEAs, the state and teachers of student progress.

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:

Annual reports will be provided by the evaluator and published on the state and LEAs websites.

Professional development time will be dedicated to discussing the results of the evaluation and their implications with LEAs.

Weaknesses:

There is no indication of how information from the report will be made available and understandable to parents and families who do not have access to the Internet or do not speak English.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

The SEA will review and judge the capacity of subgrantees to successfully implement by modeling the process after other successful competitions and federally funded grants that were targeted at schools with highest need, have the capacity to implement, and serve disadvantaged students (e26), thus the state is building on a proven process.

Sub Question

LEA subgrantees must have a strong leadership team and will be required to provide district wide implementation and include early childhood providers which ensures that SRCL project initiatives are implemented to meet the most disadvantaged students birth-12. (e26)

A timeline of sub-award activity is provided and appears feasible according to the time allocations indicated.

Weaknesses:

The state indicates that subgrants will be awarded in three areas: 1) early childhood programs, 2) LEA planning, and 3) LEA implementation. There is no indication of how many within the first two areas will be awarded.

The state indicates that LEA implementation applicants will be funded via a cohort system. There is no description of how LEAs will be chosen for the first, second or third cohort or how the third cohort will have the opportunity to fully implement the SRCL initiatives with one less year of funding than the other two cohorts.

Subawards for planning grants will only be funded for one year (e27). The purpose of these grants is for LEAs to conduct a needs assessment to inform and develop a district literacy plan. There is no indication of how LEAs who use funds for this purpose will then receive additional funds to be able to implement the plan.

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:

(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:

All 141 LEAs in the state are eligible for subgrants (e27) providing opportunity to participate.

LEA applicants for the planning and implementation sub-awards must conduct a needs assessment.

Weaknesses:

1) The state indicates that to ensure LEAs with the most disadvantaged students are given priority, factors indicating greatest need and ability to benefit from the SRCL funding will be developed and used in the selection process that includes multiple data sources and a School Needs Matrix (e27). No indication of what these multiple data sources will be or what the School Needs Matrix is or how it will be used is included.

There is no indication of how the percentage of disadvantaged students in early childhood care programs will be reported or will be funded.

2) There is no indication that applicants for the early childhood program will have to conduct a needs assessment.

Sub Question

3) Applicants for the early childhood program and planning sub-awards must participate in inter agency collaboration and development but there is no indication that LEA implementation applicants will have to involve other agencies.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

None

Weaknesses:

There is no indication that applicants to any of the sub-awards have to align activities to other federal funds.

Reader's Score: 0

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 state indicates that it will use selection criteria that rank applicants using factors indicating greatest need, including multiple data sources that may include high poverty. (e27)

Weaknesses:

High poverty schools or populations may be one of these factors or data sources, but it was not identified.

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:

None

Weaknesses:

The state did not indicate that evidence would be a requirement for applicants to any of the three sub-award programs.

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The LEA application and process will be modeled after the successful 21st Century Learning Community grants awards (e28), thus the state is building on a proven process. Review panels will be made up of field colleagues with strong backgrounds implementing comprehensive literacy in schools and community environments.

Weaknesses:

The extent to which the review process aligns with the SRCL project initiatives is unclear since the process used by the 21st Century Learning Community grants awards is not described. The extent to which the process will address alignment with the state's standards or evidence based of curriculum and material is not described.

The state does not indicate that the reviewers will have appropriate backgrounds in ELL, early childhood education, or with struggling readers.

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: 11

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:

An extensive management plan is provided that integrates the objectives of the SRCL project with the responsible staff and funding agency indicating how goals, personnel and resources align in order to implement the project. (e33-39)

Weaknesses:

Activities for achieving the objectives are not included or defined in the narrative to ensure that the timeline will provide sufficient time to complete the activities of the project.

The management table beginning on page 33 is confusing for several reasons. First, it is organized by goal rather than year which make it difficult to evaluate the timeline of SRCL success indicators. Additionally, the projected years do not align with subgrant requirements. For example, it is a requirement for early childhood providers to participate in a local inter agency literacy council (e27) yet the timeline for establishing the inter agency agreements states they will be established in 2013.

The staff involved across the years of the grant on the management plan has no core team consistency. There is no indication of how the staff in different areas will work together to achieve the goals of the SRCL project.

Reader's Score: 4

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The resumes of key personnel that will be involved in implementing the project indicate qualified representation from a diverse range of expertise (i.e, special education, literacy, ELL). (e1-13)

Weaknesses:

Not all roles in the budget are described in the narrative (i.e. the three new specialists to be hired). The vita provided are not described in the narrative, thus creating a disconnect between the two.

Qualifications of the new specialists to be hired are not defined.

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 state indicates that collaboration among various divisions within the state department will be provided and a variety of staff members with expertise in diverse areas are represented including special education, parent engagement, ELL and early childhood programs.(e41)

Letters of support from family advocates and libraries are strong and provide a diverse base of support for the SRCL project.

Weaknesses:

None

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: 14

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:

A majority of the budget will go to sub-awardees.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The personnel section of the budget lacks clarity. For example, it is unclear how the percentages of FTE of staff for specific duties described in the narrative are related to their responsibilities in implementing the SRCL project.

Three specialists to be hired are described in the narrative but not shown in budget.

Reader's Score: 7

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 budget narrative indicates that sub-award allotments will be divided among areas 15/40/40.

Weaknesses:

The state indicates that \$5,000 of funding for early childhood care providers will be taken out to ensure alignment for pre-literacy, early childhood literacy and adolescent literacy (e28). This means that the required 15% of funding for early childhood care providers will not be met. Further, there is no indication as to how these funds will be used to create alignment.

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:

There is extensive documentation that the state will leverage other state and federal funds to maximize the impact of the grant. For example, other federal funding will be used to provide training, artifacts virtually on the Idaho Training Clearinghouse (see the management plan on pages e33-39).

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 3

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 budget is appropriate to ramping up the of RTI and UDL for LEA implementation in pre-literacy, and 4-12 grade levels.

Weaknesses:

The state doesn't indicate how many subawards will be given to early child care providers, so there is no way to determine if grants are of sufficient size.

Though the budget appears to be adequate for ramping up of RTI and UDL, if consideration is given to

Sub Question

the quality of RTI and UDL, then building teaching materials and mentoring/coaching must be included in which case, funding is inadequate.

Reader's Score: 2

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 proposes the scaling up of the use of UDL for all teachers and early childhood care providers as part of the SRCL project initiative and teacher training will be provided. (e9)

Use of the Aimsweb for special education will be ramped up for use with birth-12, building on the current successful use of the program. (e5)

Refurbished laptops are provided to individual students with disabilities and rural local education agencies (e8). Online professional development is provided to be sure staff in distant locations have access.

Weaknesses:

The state only indicates that the UDL lesson plan design will be used at all level to meet student needs including disadvantaged students. It is not clear how the use of UDL will address student learning challenges or increase student engagement or achievement or teacher effectiveness.

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:

THIS PRIORITY IS MET.

The state's SRCL project has five goals (e12) that include leadership, professional development, a tiered system of instruction and intervention, use of technology and effective grant administration that align with the comprehensive literacy plan. The state's SRCL project will align with and build on its successful implementation of other federally funded projects and focus on scaling up RTI and UDL to early literacy providers and adolescents. Assessment information will be collected and used to make curricular and instructional decisions for meeting students' needs.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the state plans to allocate SRCL funding to address the most disadvantaged students.

RTI is assumed to meet the disadvantaged students' needs since it has been successfully used at the K-3 level, however, there is no plan for how RTI will be implemented at the pre-literacy and 4-12 level, what the content will consist of and how it will meet the needs of disadvantaged students.

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.

An independent evaluator will collect and analyze performance data over the five year period of the SRCL grant and give annual feedback and reports that will be shared with LEAs, early childhood care providers and with teachers through professional development.

Weaknesses:

Formative data from LEAs and data from early childhood providers and adolescents are not included in the data collection and analysis.

Consideration should be given to how data will be disseminated to families and community members.

The proposal doesn't describe how the ongoing data collection will be used to inform instruction or make administrative decisions.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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