

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Kansas State Department of Education -- Career,Standards & Assessments Learning Services Division
(S371C110038)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	30
Sub Total	37	30
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	17
Sub Total	28	17
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
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	5
Sub Total	5	5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - SRCL - 6: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Kansas State Department of Education -- Career, Standards & Assessments Learning Services Division (S371C110038)

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: 30

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 literacy plan focuses on effective literacy instruction, high quality professional development, targeted interventions, data-based decision making and the use of technology (p. e2). There are clear activities that support the plan implementation at the state level. There is a clear logic model that details the state leadership activities such as the organization of subgrants, technical assistance, data collection, and reporting (p. e2). District administration is involved in both professional learning activities and evaluation which allows for the grant to be maintained. Resources such as coaches, higher education partnerships and literacy leaders are in place and prepared to facilitate the state level activities.

Weaknesses:

There is does not have a clear early childhood focus at this point in time (p. e23). The SCRL grant emphasizes a strong focus on early childhood based on evidence and clearly defined literacy skills. Not having specific and clear early childhood criteria and assessment data in hand does not allow for data based decision making in grant planning or implementation.

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:

(ii) The literacy goals are stated (p. e25) and the data is based on a needs assessment at the state level (p. e20-e25). The state assessments identify student reading and writing outcomes from 2008-2009 with a focus on students from the following groups: free/reduced lunch, special education, English Language Learners, African-American, and Hispanic.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

(ii) Due to the grant's focus on early childhood there should be more information on birth-5 included in the assessments. There is no clear breakdown of the subgroups below the elementary level (p. e18) A lack of data demonstrating the needs of subgroups in early childhood birth -5 leaves the grant with no means of evidence-based planning for instructional resources, training, and funding .

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

(iii) Technical assistance relies on the organizational structure of the project director, the literacy coordinator and the state leadership team both online and face-to-face (p. e26). The State-Level Leadership team supports the subgrantees through all-inclusive and coordinated staff development. There is a Literacy Learning Coordinator provided to work with the state and subgrantees to align resources for the Collaborative Workspace and Unified Standards Management and Reporting System (p. e26). This provides for a clear and consistent line of communication at the administrative level.

Weaknesses:

(iii) The modes of communication are not specified beyond face-to-face vista and top-down team and director coordination (p. e26).). There are no provisions for agencies, campuses, or educators to participate in the communication or access information. This lack of communication with educators does not provide assistance to all members of the instructional and assessment teams associated with the grants. Maintaining a high quality program focused on improving student achievement requires support and communication at all levels of implementation.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

(iv) The monitoring process is specific and outlines sub level responsibilities and timelines (p. e19). There is an independent evaluator of the grant listed to ensure objectivity and avoid any type of conflicting interests that might compromise the process or analysis (p. e27). The Enterprise Data System provides a platform for data input and analysis across programs (p. e20). Formative and summative data will be collected and used to review and refine goals (p. e27-e29).

Weaknesses:

(iv) There are no weaknesses in this area.

Reader's Score: 10

- 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:

The proposal states that the grant process and outcomes will be made public via their state website and various list serves (p. e18). The state websites and list serves are provided for superintendents, curriculum leaders, principals, technology coordinators, etc. (p. e18). This allows for quick dissemination of the information to key educational personnel.

Weaknesses:

(v) There are no detailed plans for dissemination of grant information and outcomes to various audiences (p. e18). Families and educators are not provided with any type of informant beyond seeking out the website. In order to increase accessibility there should be more proactive means of communicating the information to these groups.

Reader's Score: 2

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: 17

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

(i)(a) The subgrant process does require a competitive criterion based process (p. e1). This process includes a timeline (p. e34), a listing of priority points (p. e33) and a description of how the subgrants will be reviewed, scored, and ranked by a group of literacy, early childhood and technology leaders with expertise in literacy, Kansas Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS), 21st Century skills, higher order thinking, integration of technology in the classroom and effective professional learning practices (p. e33). Reviewers will include in and out of state experts outside of the application pool. This range of expertise is aligned with the state focus areas of the grant.

Weaknesses:

(i)(a) There is no information provided on the evaluation tool reviewers will use to review the subgrants' capacity. Therefore, the priority and significance assigned to the role of the subgrantees' ability to successfully implement its proposed program is not known. For example, "integrates other state and local initiatives" and funding for "all cohort teacher classrooms" are not clearly connected to implementation ability or capacity (p e31-32).

Reader's Score: 2

- 2. (b) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:**
(1) Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.
(2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support

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:

(b)(1)The subgrantees are required to address the needs of disadvantaged students (p. e32, e33) through the assignment of additional priority points designated for specific populations in districts with attention to poverty, language, graduation rates, homelessness, migrants, free/reduced lunch, and academic improvement needs (p. e33). This certifies that schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement will be highlighted during the subgrant review process.

(2) Data at the state level is described and the reading assessments demonstrate a need for subgroups such as ELLs, African-Americans, and Hispanics to receive assistance (p. e21).

(3)There is a call to involve other organizations (p. e31). The subgrantee requirements include involvement with community partners (early childhood programs/providers, nonprofits, community-based organizations, families and other civic partners). This diversity of perspectives will allow for more innovative integration of ideas and resources during the subgrants' plans and implementation rather than relying solely on education providers.

Weaknesses:

(b)(1)No weaknesses noted

(2) There is no needs assessment requirement at the subgrantee level. The information regarding district needs is provided by the state. Requiring subgrantees to complete their own needs assessment could provide more specific information and data-based decisions for the design and focus of the subgrants.

(3) The involvement of other organizations is not specified or emphasized (p. e31). There are no requirements for the subgrantees to clearly indicate how the organizations will be a part of the subgrantee work. This could leave the partnerships relegated to existing in name only without specific partnership information required at the subgrant level.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

(c) The newly created Kansas Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS) system the state has implemented is designed to remedy the current disjointed organization of the state and federal programs and integrate the programs with a clear focus on student success (p. e6-7). This will assist the state with focusing the subgrantees' attention to implementing coherent and aligned proposals.

Weaknesses:

(c)No apparent weaknesses

Reader's Score: 2

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

(ii) The subgrant applications add points for disadvantaged students (p. e33) and clearly define sub-areas such as poverty, language, graduation rates, homelessness, migrants, free/reduced lunch, and academic improvement needs (p. e33).

Weaknesses:

(ii) Attention to disadvantaged students is listed only as one priority point (p. e33). Prioritizing this population is a primary component of the grant and should be clearly emphasized in the subgrant competition.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

(iii) The subgrant requires the applicants to name specific needs for their own communities (p. e31). There is a requirement to examine "academic achievement related to school readiness, graduation, disadvantaged students, limited English proficient students, and students with disabilities" (p. e31).

Weaknesses:

(iii) The requirement for prioritizing subgrantees whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence of data that exhibits a need for resources is not clear and specific (p. e31). There are no requirements/suggestions for the types of data necessary for providing evidence related to the subgrantees' need for grant funding leaving the assessment criteria open could result in the subgrantees recycling the state provided data and not taking their own analysis into consideration.

Reader's Score: 2

- 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:

Requirements for all subgrantees include alignment with the Kansas Literacy Plan and the Essential Elements p. e31). This ensures that each subgrantee is using curricula and materials linked to the literacy standards as their foundation for literacy instruction. The evaluation of the subgrants is conducted by a group with expertise in literacy, MTSS, 21st Century Skills, etc. (p. e33). There is a timeline and a note that there will be Subgrant RFA developed (p. e31). The review process will be made public via the state website, TAKE, and state list serves (p. e18).

Weaknesses:

(iv) The review process is not clearly outlined beyond describing the criteria in general (p. e34). The application states that once applications are received there will be interviews with finalists followed by a final recommendation to the board of education without providing questions or criteria for the interview evaluation. To ensure that each level of the competition is based on the grant criteria, questions and processes should be detailed and prepared for this current review.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

Project management - Project management

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

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

(i)The management plan is comprehensive and covers the grant implementation by utilizing an advisory group to monitor alignment of programs (p. e35), grantee support teams (p. e36) and leadership and district personnel to evaluate progress (p. e36, e37) Clear timelines and responsibilities are provided (p. e38).

Weaknesses:

(i)No weaknesses in this area.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

(ii) The subgrant process will be monitored by experienced personnel (e.g. KSDE's Fiscal Services Team, Technology Assistance for Kansas Educators team, etc.) (p. e1). All personnel listed have previous experience with grant implementation and/or specialization in the area of literacy (p. e35).

Weaknesses:

(ii) No weaknesses in this area.

Reader's Score: 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:

(iii) There is a description of the diverse perspectives that will be included on the state advisory group (p. e43). The application states that families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, higher education and community-based organizations and libraries will be represented.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

(iii) The personnel who will share in the design and implementation of the project are not specifically named (p. e43). For example, families and teachers are mentioned on page e43 with no clear delineation of who will be representing families and teachers or how they will be selected. In order to ensure multiple views are a part of the design and implementation there should be more specific information in place as far as who the representatives are and what roles they play in the community and agencies they represent.

Reader's Score: 3

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

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

Reader's Score: 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:

(i)The budget is aligned with the goals of the proposal (p. e43, Part 5 p.e0-e10). There are significant amounts of funding dedicated to technology with a focus at the classroom level. This builds in support for the grant's focus areas related to support personnel and all of the technology use and materials required of the proposal.

Weaknesses:

(i)The needs assessment at the state level indicates a need for subgroups such as ELLs, African-Americans, and Hispanics to improve their reading scores across the state. The funding structure does not focus on reaching a large number of students but is centered on a few focus districts. This limits the overall scope of the grant impact to fewer numbers of students. Distributing the grant resources over a larger population of student would reach more students in the sub groups across the state.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

(ii)The subgrant requires all applicants to adhere to the percentages at each level (p. e43). A statement of assurances will be required from subgrantees with commitments to the funding distribution. This requirement guarantees that subgrantees will adhere to the funding percentages of 15% for children 0-5, 40% for grades K-5 and 40% for grades 6-12.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

(ii)No weaknesses in this area.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

(iii)Each application is required to specify how their existing funds (such as Title I, Title II-A, Head Start, IDEA, and the Perkins Act) will support the SRCL requested funding (p. e44). This criterion will be measured within the evaluation rubric.

Weaknesses:

(iii)The requirement for subgrantees to specify the relationship between funding is required but not detailed and there are no requirements for planning or evaluating the sustainability of the funding beyond the subgrant. Integrating the funds across the various funding sources strengthens the sustainability of the SCRL grant beyond the scope of the funding period.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

(iv)The subgrantee guidelines outline the funding at the district and the classroom level and require early childhood provider partnerships (p. e43).

Weaknesses:

(iv) There is no indication that the subgrantees are required to serve students in high need schools. The SCRL grant emphasizes the needs of at risk students therefore there should be specific attention and guidelines for certifying that funds are focused on those high needs students.

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 logic model of the state goals lists the use of technology to support UDL as well as to assist students and teachers (p. e2). 21st Century notions of learning are supported by the Technology Rich Classroom Program (p. e0). Technology will be used to facilitate communications at the state level with the various districts (p. e18), within the professional development program (p. e26), and with the students in classrooms (p. e 32, e45).

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses in the area of technology.

Reader's Score: 5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

The application DOES MEET the criteria.

The state goals of using benchmark assessments at each level are listed on page (e2). The literacy goals are based on research and clear "Essential Elements" for each level (birth-5 and K-5 and 6-12) are denoted in detail on pages e12-e17. There is an emerging focus on early childhood at this point in time (p. e23). Providing clear learning outcomes through the use of specific research based literacy elements is key to guiding instruction for student achievement. The additional benchmark assessments provide goals for educators to target and evaluate.

Weaknesses:

The state does not have a developed early childhood literacy plan.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and

language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

The proposal DOES MEET the criteria.

The proposal outlines the state MTSS literacy framework for providing literacy instruction for all students. This framework is supported by the Essential Elements checklists for each level as well as a detailed monitoring process (p. e19). The Enterprise Data System will be used to manage the data and provide reports (p. e20). The state is working on collecting early childhood data and will be set to begin in 2011 (p. e23).

Weaknesses:

The state does not currently have data at the birth-5 level (p. e23).

Reader's Score: **0**

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Kansas State Department of Education -- Career,Standards & Assessments Learning Services Division
(S371C110038)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	28.5
Sub Total	37	28.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	21
Sub Total	28	21
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	13.5
Sub Total	15	13.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	13.5
Sub Total	20	13.5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	81.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - SRCL - 6: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Kansas State Department of Education -- Career, Standards & Assessments Learning Services Division (S371C110038)

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: 28.5

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:

Strengths

A(i): Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has an innovative strategy to align state activities with its comprehensive state literacy plan (Kansas Literacy Plan; KLP) through the Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS) (p. 6-9).

This unified system provides a roadmap for delivering a cohesive, evidence-based, data-driven, tiered instructional approach at all levels from birth to grade 12.

The MTSS framework will effectively integrate two key models in delivering current, evidence-based curriculum: The Kansas Reading Academy and the Kansas Technology Rich Classroom.

Unique features of the KLP include: (1) paradigm shift in the context of literacy instruction from a dichotomous approach (Learning to Read vs Reading to Learn) to a simultaneous approach that encompasses multiple areas beyond reading (writing, speaking, listening, and language) and acknowledges that literacy is relevant across multiple contexts in a child's life (home, school, community); (2) inclusive framework that acknowledges the importance of early learning facilities, families, and schools in addressing students' literacy learning needs; (3) frequent data-based monitoring that supports a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs; (4) a tiered approach to tailor instruction to the identification of student needs; (5) leadership involvement to support change in school culture; (6) professional development to support individual and collective responsibility to improve academic achievement; (7) shift in curriculum from a reading focus to a lifetime literacy focus in which literacy involves a socially and culturally constructed continuum; and (8) acknowledgement of importance of multiliteracies in incorporating technology into the curriculum.

The KLP clearly delineated the essential elements for each targeted age level (0-5; K-5; and 6-12). Importantly, the plan emphasized the critical role of comprehension through all age levels (p. 11-18).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(i): It was not clear how the foundational skills of early literacy would be facilitated in the birth to 5 age group. Further the plan did not specify instruction that would be meaningful and contextualized (p. 11-

Sub Question

12).

It was unclear if the technology would be incorporated within the KLP's instructional strategies for children across age/grade levels or only with children in grades 3-8, as described for the Technology Rich Classroom (TRC) Program, which was implemented in grade 3-8 math, science, and reading classes in student-centered, project-based instruction that addressed higher order critical thinking skills (p. 9).

Reader's Score: 8.5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

A(ii): A statewide data management system, Enterprise Data System (EDS), will provide important longitudinal data across time and programs (new and existing data systems) (p. 20).

Reading achievement data was clearly provided by subgroups, which present a gap between the total average achievement of students and students who are ELL, African-American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, or enrolled in special education services. Specifically, the overall percentage of student achievement in 2010 was 85% reading proficient compared to 64% to 75% for students within the subgroups (p. 20-21). These data are the basis for the goals to improve student literacy outcomes.

Inclusion of sub-goals to address sustainability, incorporation of technology, teacher literacy instruction to foster higher order thinking skills, and student literacy in the content areas reflects a commitment to build on the primary goals of this project (p. 26).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(ii): Goals for improving the literacy outcomes for children in the lower achieving subgroups were not specifically addressed. As noted in their data, 85% of students were proficient so it is important that the needs of children in the subgroups be specifically addressed to close the achievement gap (p. 25-26).

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:

Strengths

A(iii): A variety of technical assistance will be available, including face-to-face and online support workshops (p. 26-27). A Literacy Resource Coordinator will provide an effective mechanism for identifying and coordinating literacy resources for the project subgrantees. A multi-tiered approach to professional development was proposed that includes state and local professional learning as well as onsite coach/facilitator/literacy leaders (p. 0).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iii): The technical assistance (TA) plan was not clearly described or extensive. It was unclear how TA would be coordinated by the State Leadership Team and Literacy Learning Resource Coordinator. Limited information was provided on how the project would provide support and training (p. 3-4). Finally, it was

Sub Question

not clear who would be included and how TA support would be effectively coordinated and organized throughout the state and within the subgrant projects (p. 26-27).

Reader's Score: 2.5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

A(iv): A comprehensive and multi-layered approach to evaluation was described using an independent external evaluator (SRI International) that will incorporate a goal attainment evaluation model. An important and highly effective component of the evaluation plan is the evaluator working directly with each subgroup to develop a goal attainment plan that will include the activities to achieve each goal, benchmarks for each milestone, and type of evidence to be collected. This will standardize the evaluation plan across subgrantees to ensure reliable, valid, and feasible benchmarks are established (p. 27-28).

Another important component of the evaluation plan is the inclusion of web-based survey data from all individuals involved in project implementation within each subgrant to provide information regarding levels of involvement and support, perceptions of implementation quality, and satisfaction with project activities and support with grant-related activities (p. 28). Project staff perceptions and satisfaction are an important component of a project's effectiveness, which is often overlooked.

The use of a scaling method to differentially weigh goals based on importance provides an effective and focused approach to evaluating grant activities (p. 28-29).

Outcome data will be examined for students overall and for disadvantaged students which will be used to identify areas of need. The calculation of the mean of all scores for students each year will provide important data to allow responsive action (p. 29).

Finally, the evaluation plan includes an iterative process in which SRI will work with each subgrantee to update its goal attainment plan based on data obtained each year (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iv): It was not specified how the survey data from project staff's perceptions and satisfaction will be used to improve grant activities (p. 28).

Reader's Score: 9.5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

A(v): A comprehensive and integrated system of dissemination was described that provides unification of standards and linking of standards to instructional resources through a web-based Unified Standards Management and Reporting System (p. 29-30). This system will be linked to a Collaborative Workspace that will provide important resources to teachers, including extensive student data (demographic, assessment [state, formative assessments, and ACT], course completion, and student behavior data) and cross-referenced information.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(v): No plan was included for disseminating project outcome information to the public and making it accessible to families, especially those who do not have computer access (p. 28-30).

There is a concern about confidentiality and protection of student privacy in the data that will be stored and accessed by all teachers. Certain data, such as student behavior data and historical assessment data, should be accessible only to specific staff (p. 30-31).

Reader's Score: 2

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: 21

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(a): Detailed requirements for subgrant proposals were specified (Table 6), which will permit the state to review and judge each applicant's capacity to successfully implement a subgrant project.

A rigorous review of the proposals will be completed by a panel of experts from within and outside of the state (p. 33-34). Final selection will be based on interviews by the Interview Team with the 20 final contenders (p. 34). The use of external peer reviewers who will be trained on the review process has the potential to identify applicants who will have capacity to successfully implement their proposal.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(b): The state will ensure subgrant applicants include a comprehensive high-quality literacy program, as listed in the RFA requirements (Table 6). These requirements are extensive, as well as inclusive in addressing the needs of disadvantaged children; inclusion of a community partner approach; integration of state and local initiatives; and access to technology. The requirements also specify the number of days for professional development for teacher cohorts and Instructional Coach/Literacy Leaders. Priority points will be assigned based on need within each district, as provided by the KSDE Research and Evaluation Team (p. 33). The combination of a panel of expert reviewers and the RFA Requirements (listed in Table 6) will ensure that subgrantees propose a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that addresses the needs of disadvantaged students (bullet 2 in Table 6), is informed by a needs assessment (Table 7) that is designed to support effective teaching and improve student achievement of struggling readers (bullet 2, 8 in Table 6). A clear timeline for the grant competition was specified (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(b): The review panel does not include experts in the area of adolescent literacy, which potentially weakens the review of the proposals' instructional strategies and resources to effectively address literacy for this age group (p. 33-34).

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(c): The review panel will evaluate applicants' integration of state, local, and federal initiatives, as specified in the RFA requirements (Table 6).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B(ii): Additional Priority Points will be assigned to LEA/providers that serve high-poverty schools. A clear definition of poverty was specified for poverty, homeless students, and students who qualify for free/reduced lunch, with priority points given for each need priority listed in Table 7.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
None noted.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B(iii): A list of districts will be provided by the KSDE Research and Evaluation Team regarding the stated specific need priorities (Table 7). This will ensure that the districts have the most currently available data.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iii): The strongest available evidence was limited to the district list provided by the KSDE Research and Evaluation Team for priority funding. No additional information from the districts was specified for evaluation of strongest available evidence (p. 33).

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B(iv): A continual review process will be implemented through the requirement of continuation grants for subsequent funding years (p. 35).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iv): Specific information was not provided regarding how the state will review each subgrant regarding the evidence base and alignment of curricula and materials with State standards. Further, no information was provided for making the process and results of reviews publically available (p. 35).

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: 13.5

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:

Strengths

C(i): A detailed and clear management plan was presented that included an organizational chart that reflected a relationship among KSDE leadership at the state level with instructional support, advisory group, and subgrantees (p. 35-37; Figure 7). The proposed timeline was explicit and reasonable with delineation of project activities, assigned staff, and timeline that was specified by quarters (p. 38; Figure 8). Responsibilities of the key personnel were appropriate within the specified organizational structure.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(i): Within the hierarchical management structure, several of the same people served on multiple levels. For example, Key Services Coordinators (tier 2) also served in the Advisory Group (tier 4) and on the Leadership Team (tier 5) (p. 35-37). This could reduce the diversity of perspectives within the project as well as affect the check and balance of review and evaluation of the project design and activities.

Reader's Score: 4.5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

C(ii): Key project staff is highly qualified with relevant training and extensive experience within their areas of expertise (p. 39-42; Resumes). With the exception of two staff, all have master's degrees or higher.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

Reader's Score: 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:

Strengths

C(iii): A reasonable plan to include diverse perspectives in the design and implementation of the project was described (p. 43), which will have the potential to inform the design and implementation of the project.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

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: 13.5

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Strengths

D(i): Expenses for staff salary, travel, and consulting services were appropriate relative to the five project objectives and the project design (Budget Narrative).

The use of technology as one of the project objectives will be a high budget cost, but has significant potential in developing instructional pedagogy that could serve as a model for other states.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(i): The budget did not include percent effort to the project for the Executive Director and the Key Services Coordinators (Budget Narrative). It is therefore impossible to evaluate the adequacy of their time devoted to the project.

The percent effort (0.25 FTE) dedicated to the project for the State Literacy, Language Arts, and Writing Expert and the State Early Childhood Coordinator does not seem sufficient to effectively implement the project objectives (Budget Narrative).

The budget did not include costs for Kansas University Center for Research on Learning (KU-CRL) (unless specified as Contract for Services for Literacy Expertise, Training Academies; Budget Narrative, p. 8). The external evaluator, SRI International, was not included in the budget or listed as a Contractual Service (Budget Narrative).

The costs for technology were not clear, although it seems this will comprise a large portion of the budget. A technology list for all cohort teacher classrooms was provided (p. 32), but it is unclear how the specific technologies for students with disabilities align with the proportion of students who will require these tools. For example what is the percentage of the student population within eligible LEAs with blindness and low vision for whom technology such as Bookshare, InfiText and Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic will be required?

The estimated average costs per class (K-5 = \$50,000) and instructional period (6-12 = \$750/student) is quite high. This will limit the number of schools, classes /instructional periods within schools that can be included in the project (p. 45).

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths

D(ii): An effective plan to ensure appropriate allocation of funds by subgrantees was described, which includes oversight of monthly fund requests by both the Director of Fiscal Operations and Services and the Project Director (p. 44). In addition, a statement of assurances from each subgrantee will be required and include commitment to the required funding distribution (p. 44).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

Strengths

D(iii): Applicants will be required to specify in their proposals how they will leverage existing federal and state initiatives to maximize the grant impact. A rubric will be developed for scoring applications' compliance with this requirement. Finally, commitment to this leverage will be required in a statement of assurances by all subgrantees (p. 44).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(iii): A plan for sustaining funding after the project ends was not adequately addressed as part of the leveraging of state and federal funds (p. 44).

Reader's Score: 2.5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

D(iv): The funding support will be sufficient for the proposed number of classes/instructional periods that will be included in the subgrant projects (p. 45). Adequate funding will include teacher and coach release time for professional development, travel costs, materials, and the technology costs to provide a minimum 1:2 web-enabled device with security and theft control for both teachers and students. The applicant clearly delineated the total cost broken down by class (K-5) and by student (6-12).

Funding will incorporate community libraries within smaller districts to incorporate as many children within the 0-5 age group, whereas larger districts may include feeder agencies and schools, such as community centers and multiple daycare and preschool centers. This provides a unique plan to increase access to the wider and more diverse population of children birth to grade 12 (p. 45-46).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(iv): Due to the average estimated costs per class/instructional period, the grant will not serve a significant number of students in any one school within a given district (p. 45-46). It was not clear if a staged implementation of the technology enhanced classrooms would be utilized, which could expand the number of classrooms included, as well as provides a comparison of technology-enhanced instructional classrooms to classrooms without technology.

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:

Strengths

A compelling rationale was provided for the inclusion and importance of technology in instructional strategies (p. 4-6). The project includes a detailed plan and appropriate support for teachers to engage students through innovative and instruction technology and resources. Technology for students with disabilities was appropriately included (p. 32). The effective use of technology for delivering professional development was also provided.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

MET

Strengths

An appropriate plan was included to address the special and differentiated learning needs of disadvantaged students within the groups of ELL students, minority students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with special needs. The differentiated instructional strategies and use of technology will address the gap that exists between average and lower achieving students. The proposed project design has the potential to serve as a model for other states to implement technology to support instructional pedagogy and motivate students. It importantly addresses the multiliteracies required for today's students.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

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:

MET

Strengths

A comprehensive data collection and analysis plan was described as a core component of the project, which will allow the state to effectively use data for decision-making and continuous improvement in the project design and activities. An independent external evaluator will collect, analyze, and use multiple data sources in a timely manner. An iterative process using formative and summative analyses will be implemented to make corrective adjustments in a time responsive manner.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None noted.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Kansas State Department of Education -- Career,Standards & Assessments Learning Services Division
(S371C110038)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	33
Sub Total	37	33
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	20
Sub Total	28	20
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	17
Sub Total	20	17
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - SRCL - 6: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Kansas State Department of Education -- Career, Standards & Assessments Learning Services Division (S371C110038)

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: 33

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Strengths

i) The applicant presents information on a recently developed Kansas Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS) decision-making process utilized in the state. The graphic representation of the MTSS (pg. e7) exhibits the tiered approach to meeting the needs of all students. In addition, the state has developed a professional development plan (Kansas Reading Academy) and a Technology Rich Classroom (TRC) program. These three plans, along with the Kansas Literacy Plan (pg e9), provide the framework for the alignment of the state literacy plan. The applicant indicates that multiple resources will be in place to support the literacy plan. The existing technology aligns with the activities and priorities of the proposed grant (pg. e3). The applicant clarifies the new paradigm which will be the driving force behind the literacy focus of the Kansas Literacy Plan (pg e10). The visual on page e10 aligns past and present focuses and indicates a research based modification of past literacy activities. There is clear evidence of the alignment of activities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

ii) The applicant presents details explaining the Enterprise Data System (EDS), a data storage process developed by the SEA which currently exists. This system provides information regarding the need for improving student literacy outcomes. The applicant presents clear information regarding recent improvement in literacy scores for many students but also indicates the lack of growth for at-risk student populations (pg e22). The applicant also provides data relating to kindergarten children who benefited from teacher best practices. The data presented by the applicant indicates a clear path the SEA

Sub Question

will take to achieve its goals.

Weaknesses:

ii) The applicant does not present specific information about the rationale for collecting data on a subset of early education children. It is unclear if the subset would include a sample of the same populations as the disaggregated data from state assessment tests (pg. e23).

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

iii) The applicant documents that technical assistance will be provided to subgrantees by the State-Level Leadership Team through professional development and ongoing support. Teachers will be trained in the use of technology. This indicates the high value the applicant places on technology and its effective use. The applicant explains that technical assistance will be provided face to face and online by a variety of individuals, including experts in the field. Both technical assistance and training will be provided. This variety is strength.

Weaknesses:

iii) No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

iv) The applicant provides information that subgrantee implementation and performance will be evaluated using a goals attainment model evaluation. The model addressed how each subgrantee met its own independent goals determined before the project.

1. The applicant provides adequate information about the external evaluator (e27). The applicant also provided a letter from the external evaluator detailing the services they will be providing (pg e0). The evaluation provided will be both formative and summative which indicates recognition of the growth model (pg. e36). The University of Kansas Center for Research will play a key role in the evaluation.

2. The applicant described ways the evaluation used methods that are appropriate to the objective of the proposed project because the evaluation examines the growth of each individual district toward goals that had been established. The statistic that will be used is appropriate as it relays change in the improvement of students. This is a strength as it indicates that the measure relates to the intent of the subgrant proposal (pg e29).

3. The applicant describes a reporting system that is used to assist educators in effective teaching, and they also explain a student operational data store (ODS) that holds detailed information about individual students. The planned workspace for teachers is another strategy for data to be used effectively. Planned expansion of the system exemplifies a proactive approach to using data to inform and improve the design and increase student learning (pg. e31).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

iv) 2. The applicant did not provide enough information regarding how the goals chosen by administrators to mark the success of their program will meet the overall state goals. The applicant does not provide detailed information about the way the measures will identify which groups of students, and/or disadvantaged students are not improving (pg. e27), and the level of growth the individual district is expected to attain to meet state goals.

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:

v. The goal of useful data is clearly stated on pg. e29. This statement is validated by the description of a flexible reporting system which allows individuals to search by standard and generate progress reports (pg. e30). The applicant explains the USMRS system which will be used to provide data to the local district. KSDE will ensure that the grant process and outcomes will be publically available via their website.

Weaknesses:

v) The applicant provides minimal information explaining the way the SEA will inform stakeholders who are not a part of the subgrant process and who do not have access to the USMRS (pg. e30). Stakeholders unable to access the USMRS may not be able to search specific standards and generate the available reports. It is not clear how early childhood providers state leaders, researchers, and other stakeholders will receive information regarding project outcomes.

Reader's Score: 2

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: 20

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

i The applicant presents evidence that there are a number of different criteria that must be met in order for subgrants to be awarded. These are documented in Table 6. The criterion addresses all the components of the SRCLG requirements. (pg. e31). A strength of the RFA is that it will be managed by a team working with the project director and there is a time frame for applications-8 weeks. Evidence is presented that the SEA desires well written subgrants and there is provision for webinars and frequently asked questions. There are several levels of the competition, adding to its merit. Readers are diverse-and are in and out of state. A unique aspect of this competition is that there will be face to face meetings to

Sub Question

further review the applications (pg. e34).

a) The SEA will determine the capacity of each LEA to successfully implement its proposal by implementing the steps above (pg. e34). Various opportunities are provided by the SEA for subgrantees to become familiar with the process and requirements. This identifies strength in the applicant information and indicates the SEA desires high quality subgrants.

Weaknesses:

i) No weaknesses were noted in this area.

Reader's Score: 3

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

(1) Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.

(2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.

(3) Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.

Strengths:

b) The applicant has proposed a high quality literacy program and has included the required information in the RFA.

1) A requirement for the RFA is that it involves a community partner approach and involves early childhood programs. This exhibits the commitment to early literacy programs couples with community contributions and involvement (pg e31). A strong focus of the Kansas Literacy Plan is the developmental growth of the reader. There is adequate information that the applicant recognizes the unique learning needs of early readers as well as the skill focuses for this age group. The applicant also recognizes the current lack of preschool data and has detailed the current plans to remedy this lack of data (e23).

2) The applicant presents an analysis of progress that shows the need for improved student achievement, particularly for subgroups (e21). The Kansas School Readiness Project has collected data on 5,000 kindergarten children and this data is related to teacher practices (pe25).

3) The applicant references a parents as teacher program as a positive strategy to improve literacy. The RFA also requires a liaison be aligned with each community partner. This evidences the applicants recognition of the need for parent and community engagement (pg. e23)

Weaknesses:

b) The applicant does not provide adequate information about the way the subgrant is required to specifically address the needs of disadvantaged students. There is no information about the way the highest need and capacity is determined as a significant part of the total RFA.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

c) The applicant demonstrates by the information in Table 6 a requirement for subgrantees to implement a coherent strategy for integrating other state and local initiatives. The requirements indicate that use of other funding is critical for coherent literacy instruction (pg. e31). The advisory group has responsibility for aligning state and local funding initiatives (pg. 35). Page 44 presents additional evidence that the grant requires districts to address funding initiatives (pg. e44). These three mentions of funding indicate this is a strength.

iv) The SEA has initiated a decision-making process (MTSS) which is used to provide support for all students. The applicant indicates that the data drives the problem solving process to meet the need of all students and that the student assessments address the Kansas standards (pg. e7-10).

Weaknesses:

c). No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

ii) The applicant presents information that it will give additional priority points to districts that are in the top quartile for poverty in the state (pg. e33). This criteria is a critical part of the application which evidences that grantees must also see this as a priority. The applicant clearly explains the definition of poverty.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

iii) There are no identified strengths.

Weaknesses:

iii) Table 7 (pg.e33) presents information about the way the applicant will determine priority points. Information relating to early childhood educators whose applications are supported by evidence is missing. The applicant has not explained how the early childhood education providers will be determined in the subgrant award process.

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:

v. The applicant explains the USMRS system which will be used to provide data to the local district. KSDE will ensure that the grant process and outcomes will be publically available via their website. The criterion for subgrant applications requires subgrantees to address the way the proposed project aligns with common core standards (pg. e18). A strength of the public availability plan is that KSDE will use a number of different channels to support communication (pg. e18).

Weaknesses:

iv) The applicant provided no information about the process which will review and judge the materials each LEA proposes to use. Table 4 in the grant monitoring process (pg. e19) does not define the specific outcomes participants must meet and if standard alignment is included as a part of the outcomes.

Reader's Score: 3

Project management - Project management

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

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

i) The organizational management chart (figure7) presents clearly defined responsibilities of the project leadership. The applicant has described the roles of each group, and the main objectives they are to accomplish. A unique aspect is the focus on local level implementation and building level control. Further details of the subgrant requirements are presented on pg.e31-e32. It appears that the applicant has taken care to determine broad project requirements, and management responsibilities. A timeline for grant competition is presented (pg. e38) and project activities for each quarter, across five years evidence understanding of the scope of the project.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

ii) The applicant presents detailed documentation of the qualifications of the key personnel. The personnel have ample experience related to the project parameters and represent PK-16 experts. The key personnel evidence experience with technology focused learning platforms and this add to their qualifications for this project.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 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:

iii) A diversity of perspectives is represented in the design and implementation of the project (e43). Individuals representing diverse groups will be part of the advisory group. Representation of students from disadvantaged groups is clear. The applicant has evidenced that there are representatives from birth to higher education and multiple perspectives and expertise are valued.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

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: 17

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

i) The applicant intends to award 10-12 subgrants. The cost presented appears reasonable and indicates each subgrantee would receive significant funds. There are multiple project objectives indicating a need for significant funding. The technology proposed on page e32 would require extensive funds. The applicant has also listed unique technology tools to use with students with disabilities. The proposed project and its focus on 21st century classrooms precipitate an extensive budget. One of the five broad goals of the project (graphic organizer, e2) is use of technology and the proposed budget appears reasonable to accomplish this objective. The technology based data driven decision making process, using a growth model, is unique and aligns with objectives. Given the extensive proposed use of technology to create 21st century classrooms, the project has potential significance.

Weaknesses:

i) The applicant does not provide adequate information in the budget explaining the amount of technology from the extensive list on pg. 31 each subgrant will receive and the relative cost. Minimal information is provided about the "minor remodeling" noted on pg.32. It is unclear if this remodeling is necessary to enhance technology capacity.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

ii) The subgrantee has provided information regarding fund allocation. The budget is required to align with statutory requirements for fund distribution; equal distribution between middle and high school is documented. The lead LEA which receives subgrants will be required to provide a statement of assurances indicating the way they will meet the requirement for funding. The project director will monitor funding and monthly reports will be generated. There appears to be mechanism in place to ensure equitable fund distribution (pg. e 43,44) and the description of this process is complete.

Weaknesses:

ii) There are no identified weaknesses in this area.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

iii) The applicant presents information explaining its requirement or explanation of funding support as a part of the application process. A rubric will be used to score this during the review process (pg. e44).

Weaknesses:

iii) A detailed plan for sustaining funding at the end of the subgrant is not provided (pg. 44). A clear process for implementing "a commitment to provide leadership and support for sustaining and growing the project" is not provided.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

iv) The applicant has described a unique plan for funding which allows flexibility depending on size of district and number of intended classes served. The range of funding is wide and the average estimated cost has been presented. The grant funding is sufficient to accomplish the multiple proposed technology tools. The applicant provides a description of a potential proposal between grade levels, early childhood centers, and a library. It appears that the applicant is encouraging leveraging of funding and partnerships, within the requirements of the grants (pg. e45).

Weaknesses:

iv) The number of proposed projects does not serve a significant number of students. The assessment data presented on pg. e22/23 indicates an achievement gap for disadvantaged students. The number of proposed awards does not appear adequately to address the uneven achievement of a significant number of at-risk students. The high level of requested funding does not appear to be adequately dispersed.

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:

Strengths

The applicant presents information detailing how technology will be used to support administrators, coaches, and technology leaders, as well as to engage learners in age and skill-level appropriate activities (pg. e3). Additional detail is provided on page e4 and indicates that coaches and literacy leaders will have a web based social environment that will provide support. The applicant explains the rationale for technology with students and indicates that the motivational quality of the technology is a large reason for its use in this project (pg e4). Technology in the form of a professional development model (TRC) will be used to promote a student centered, problem solving approach to learning (pg e9). The applicant presents strong evidence that data will be utilized to increase student achievement by explanation of the Enterprise Data System, used to examine students achievement overall and also in subgroups. This data is used to guide instructional decisions. KDS is also used to guide instructional decisions (pg. e30). There is strong evidence indicating the applicant will utilize technology to address student learning challenges and provide evidence-based data to guide instructional decisions. The explanation of 21st century schools is supported by the wide variety of technology tools and resources that will be implemented in cohort teacher classrooms (pg. e32)

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant presents a strong case for the elements in the proposal and their ability to improve learning outcomes for disadvantaged students. Page e0 lists the specific goals of advancing literacy for children birth-grade 12 through a collaborative partnership and by using the existing state framework. Data is presented regarding persistent gaps for disadvantaged students and this proposal seeks to reduce the gap through professional development, effective strategies and by using data to measure improvement. The freedom given to individual districts to address areas of need in their own districts allows change to be specific and directed toward individual needs of at risk populations. Accountability at the state level is also directed at the local subgrant level, mandating local and specific changes for at-risk student populations. The applicant goals and capacity to improve student learning outcomes for disadvantaged students are evident in this proposal.

This priority has been met.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides information about the use of data to make decisions. The use of Enterprise Data Systems enables the state to collect and analyze data through time and to use the data to impact practice (pg. e200) and this mechanism will assist subgrantees in using data. The subgroup enables the SEA to examine data by subgroup and to make decisions for learning based on the data. The Kansas Readiness Project has collected data on kindergarten children and this data is used to increase best practices (pg. e24). The applicant requires that the subgrantee propose a project to direct instruction, track student progress, assess program outcomes, all with the goal of improving instruction. Subgrantees will propose a strategy to measure progress (e27). KSDE has developed a student operational data store that will use data to impact instruction and student learning (e30). It appears that the applicant has proposed a plan to use data to inform instruction and increase literacy.

This priority has been met.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides vague information about strategies that will be used to inform stakeholders and families of results indicated by data which can be used to inform and improve practices.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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