

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Kentucky Department of Education -- Next Generation Learners (S371C110007)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	23
Sub Total	37	23
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	11
Sub Total	28	11
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	8
Sub Total	15	8
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	2
Sub Total	5	2
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	58

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - SRCL - 6: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Kentucky Department of Education -- Next Generation Learners (S371C110007)

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: 23

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 overall alignment of state-level activities with the state literacy plan demonstrates integration (p. e1-e4) and monitoring by the various committees in place (p. e7). The literacy plan developed by the state in 2010 addresses the coordination of the literacy instruction by aligning the Literacy Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools (PERKS) with the identified components of effective literacy instruction such as the state standards, assessments, and interventions. The components of effective literacy instruction and the state literacy PERKS are stated and supported with some research (p.e10-e18). The SCRL partnerships are connected to the existing DOE which includes state literacy coaches, the leadership team, and centers located within higher education, special education cooperatives, and early childhood centers, etc. and to the Promising Practices Sites for the subgrantees (p. e7). Promising Practice sites are set up as a part of the SRCL partnerships and are sites (approximately 8) that will be selected based on their ability to be models for the subgrantees capable of assisting with literacy instruction and assessment for disadvantaged children and youth. All three work together to share information and ideas related to literacy based on their focus.

Weaknesses:

There is no clear documentation explaining how the plans will be carried out. Providing clear timelines and benchmarks throughout the implementation process is key for monitoring the grants' progress at each stage.

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 application provides a very clear explanation of the alignment between the state (PERKS) and the "additional requirements" by building on the state's previous work related to high school goals (p. 20), preschool assessment (p. 27), and elementary, middle, and high school reading assessment (p. 28). The

Sub Question

state data analysis does report on the needs of students receiving free/reduced lunch and African-Americans (p. e19). High school dropout data is highlighted along with a pledge to prepare secondary students for college and careers. Interventions for students are mentioned on page e2.

Weaknesses:

The needs assessment does not address the early childhood (birth to preschool) aspects of literacy nor does it specify how students with special needs or limited-English-proficient students will be incorporated into the goals and data analysis. There are no specific goals or clear path to achieve those goals delineated. In order to clearly meet the literacy goals, there should be specific assessments. For example, p. e28 states that KDE will use state testing data in "reading and analyze measures of progress using common assessments and analysis of student work." There should be more description as to how the data will be analyzed, (i.e., analysis of limited-English-proficient students, etc.)

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:

Assistance is provided in the form of literacy leadership teams, instructional coaches, and through evaluation strategies (p. 23-25). The literacy leadership teams are required to "work with staffs to model learning" (p. e25).

Weaknesses:

The literacy teams are required to work with staff (p. e25) without any specific directives. The overall goals of improving literacy instruction through leaders' capacity and teachers' practices does not address specific literacy objectives. Literacy team members should have clear common goals and mechanisms to strive toward as they support the subgrantees' work.

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:

There is a position dedicated to data management and evaluation (Appendix F, p. e2, budget narrative, p. e1). The evaluator(s) will collect and analyze data throughout the grant in the form of formative, diagnostic and summative assessments. This data will be shared with the department of education staff in order to guide the development and implementation of professional development. This provides a clear support system for data from collection to application.

Weaknesses:

The application delineates specific areas and activities that support its SRCL grant but there is no clear explanation of who the evaluator is or how evidence will be used to improve the design beyond the application to "development and implementation of professional learning related to assessment and data" (Appendix F, p. e2). It appears that the evaluator is not specifically required to be outside of the organization, this could be a conflict of interest. There should be an outside evaluator in order to maintain objectivity throughout the process.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

- 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:

Dissemination to various stakeholders such as "families, educators, school boards, researchers, and state leaders" is built into the proposal (p. e28). The proposal states that these various audiences will receive reports and presentations. State boards of education and legislators are mentioned specifically as a target for the reports and presentations.

Weaknesses:

The dissemination of the projected outcomes to various stakeholders is vague and does not provide detail as to how the information will be distributed beyond assessment reports (p. 28). Citing "reports and presentations" (p. e28) does not take into account the need to translate the information from the grants into language and modes that are accessible to the various groups outside of the institutions of schools, legislators, and school boards such as families and educators who are not a part of the grants.

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: 11

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 LEAs/providers are asked to have a systemic plan for implementation, monitoring, and feedback (p. e29). The process of implementation is recognized as ongoing and requiring coordination with the state as a part of the capacity requirement in the subgrant applications which encourages state assistance during implementation.

Weaknesses:

The capacity to successfully implement the subgrantees' proposals does not provide enough detail to determine the specific criteria for a minimum level of subgrantees' ability to execute the ideas proposed. A plan is required without specifying what the plan should include in relation to capacity. The application also states that there will be external reviewers but there are no clear criteria for the reviewer's qualifications/position. The site visit criteria and procedures are not addressed in detail (Appendix C, p.6).

Reader's Score: 1

Sub Question

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 application relies on the SRCL definitions of high-quality literacy programs (p. e30) and provides a strong research rationale for the literacy areas such as oral language skills (listening and speaking), phonological awareness, vocabulary, grammar, academic language, decoding, fluency, comprehension, motivations, and writing (Appendix B, p. e2) .

(1) Disadvantaged students and the highest levels of need are focused on as mirrored in the SRCL RFP. The subgrantees are required to provide a preference to "districts that demonstrate that they serve high poverty and high-risk populations" (p. e34).

(2) Funded districts are required to use an evidenced-based plan (Appendix, E).

(3) Additional organizations/committee members are listed as partners in the application (Appendix E, p. 6).

Weaknesses:

(b) (1) The criteria for the subgrantees' proposal evaluations are listed but are only prioritized in the application by 5 points(p. e34; Appendix E, p. 6). There are no directives as to how applicants should identify their areas of need or how those areas will be evaluated by the state. This is key to confirming that the subgrantees who receive the funding are clearly going to serve the high needs populations.

(2) There is no needs assessment listed.

(3) Partners are mentioned only in the proposal evaluation criteria (Appendix E, p.6). There are no details outlining how the partnerships should be constructed.

Reader's Score: 4

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) Activity alignment is described (p. 29-30) and sub grantees are required to describe and align their additional funding with their current request. This focus provides a way for agency teams to align time, resources, and information.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

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

Sub Question

poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.

Strengths:

A stated preference for districts that serve high poverty and high risk populations is mentioned on page e34.

Weaknesses:

The LEA and early providers are named in the subgrant but there is no procedure or criteria listed that specifies how they are prioritized during the process (p. 34). It is important to clarify the prioritization during the process in order to ensure the criteria are met.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

Currently the proposal states, that subgrantees should "base their applications on literacy data and assessments, including services to disadvantaged students" (p. e34).

Weaknesses:

The prioritization of LEAs or early childhood education providers' applications with evidence is not specific(p.e34). There should be more information detailing the ways in which the subgrants will be evaluated according to the prioritization of LEAs and early childhood education providers' use of evidence in order to highlight their needs. Creating a system for embedding prioritization into the subgrant process by assigning points or other evaluation methods into the evaluation tool on pages e6-e8 would ensure that those providers able to provide evidence would receive credit during the selection process.

Reader's Score: 1

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 reviewing process is mentioned on page 6 of Appendix E. There is an evaluation document that provides a rubric for reviewers to use on page e6. Reviewers then make recommendations to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff and on to (KDE)Leadership.

Weaknesses:

The process to review and judge the evidence base and alignment is detailed on page 36 but not specific as to how information will be made public and in what format. . In order to reach a wider audience the subgrants should be specific as to how they will communicate with a broad range of stakeholders ensuring that the information is understandable to a variety of community groups as well as educators and administrators.

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:

The objectives and timeline are mentioned on page 39. Each year from 1-5 has a stated general focus, for example, years 1-2 are the implementation years, and years 3-4 add in monitoring and revisions to provide an overall plan. KDE actions are listed on pages e40-e42.

Weaknesses:

The management plan is vague and limited to a year to year timeline. The plan indicates that year one is reserved for planning for implementation, year two for planning and implementation, etc. There are no more discrete goals set up with deadlines than the yearly overall goals. An entire year is listed for planning for implementation with no specific milestones or reporting and accountability timelines or benchmarks for the state (p. 39). The yearly plan should be specific and integrate all areas of monitoring for the grant by providing detailed dates smaller than one year increments this would provide the state more frequent data and assessment information throughout the life of the grant. Providing clearly defined roles and responsibilities would also assist the implementation process by allowing personnel to establish short and long term goals for implementation while maintaining the focus and integrity of the ongoing work.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Personnel qualifications and training are provided for the grant coordinator, the state literacy coach/professional learning coordinator, and the data manager (p. 42, Appendix F). Each of the members has listed duties that are directly correlated to the focus areas of the grant. The duties describe the roles and the reporting relationships between the personnel and the DOE.

Weaknesses:

There should be some criteria for the key personnel (e.g. the state literacy coach/professional learning coordinators) to be knowledgeable about special populations (limited-English-proficient students, special needs students). For example, in Appendix F there is a designation that Literacy Coaches should have 5 years of experience teaching, a Master's degree and be knowledgeable about literacy instruction and assessment. If coaches only have knowledge of literacy, other focus areas such as English Language Learners and special education may not be addressed as the coaches work with educators. The instruction of special education and limited-English-proficient students is not exclusive to literacy instruction and requires additional specialized knowledge that should be a part of the coaches' repertoire.

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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

(iii) Ensuring a diversity of perspectives throughout the process is detailed in the listing of specific participants from varied backgrounds (p. 43). There are representatives from the DOE, higher education, and educational administration who represent literacy, special education, and ESL. (p. e43). There is one parent representative.

Weaknesses:

The literacy team should include a Head Start representative and the Transforming Education in Kentucky Task Force members' perspectives should be specified. The focus on early childhood (birth-5) is a major component of the SCRL grant along with a focus on leveraging existing funds and sustainability. Head Start is a preexisting funded program and is listed as an agency in the proposal application integrating a Head Start representative will assist in the integration of Head Start into the management process during the life of the grant. The Transforming Education in Kentucky Governor's task force (p. e44) members were "handpicked" from various groups such as education advocates, parents, teacher, superintendents, law makers, business and community leaders but with no names or positions listed.

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:

The budget is reasonable and aligned with the existing systems already in place (p. 30, p. 38 & 48). Yearly allocations are delineated and activities proposed are funded (p. e3). The indirect costs are set at 5% rather than the KDE 15.2%. Setting the costs at 5% increases the amount of funding directly available to the state and subgrantees and subsequently to the students.

Weaknesses:

The budget allocates a large amount of the funding to KDE staff salaries (budget narrative pages e4-e6) without a clear professional development plan to reflect the weight of the role staff plays in the grant's implementation.

Reader's Score: 8

- 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:

The allocation by level is stated as a criterion in the subgrant application description and evaluation tool (Appendix E, p. 0, 7).

Weaknesses:

The allocation by level is stated but does not specify in detail how this will be achieved beyond being required in the subgrant application (Appendix E, p. e7) .The maximum points are set at 5 which in relation to the other listed criteria on the "Evaluation of Proposal" document (Appendix E, p. e7) does not indicate that the percentages are mandatory.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The organization and goals of the grant clearly delineates the integration of SRCL with state's committees and cooperatives (p. 48). The sustainability measures are also detailed with evaluations in place (p. 49).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

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 subgrants' budget is detailed according to district size and proposed funding is allocated clearly. (Budget Narrative, p. e6; Appendix E, p.3).

Weaknesses:

While the subgrants are allocated by district size, they do not prioritize students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children. Due to the nature of the focus of the grant, the budget allocations should specifically dedicate funds to the districts with high-need populations.

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

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

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot

access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

The grant does utilize eLearning Kentucky and ELL Academics for teacher professional development (p. 40). This use of technology will be helpful to the educators and administrators as they share information via the Elementary English Learner Academy and the Secondary English Learner Academy. Using technology to share information with teachers provides timely information regarding data and instruction to the teachers. Teachers can interact and communicate their immediate needs and receive feedback and suggestions. The units are clearly developed and facilitated (p. e31). The data sharing system and self-evaluation components are outlined well.

Weaknesses:

Technology is not integrated throughout into the grant or subgrant application at the classroom level. It is not clear how students would benefit or have access to technology to support limited-English-proficient students or to support UDL. Prioritizing student use and access to technology is a component of the SCRL grant. Teacher education related to the use of technology is also not proposed. In order to reach all students in the targeted populations (limited-English-proficient and students with disabilities) technology should be explicitly integrated into the teacher professional development plans and tied directly to student instruction.

Reader's Score: 2

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

The grant does meet the improving learning outcomes criteria with a focus on birth through grade 12 literacy via the subgrant design and coordination of the partnerships with existing state assessments and committees. The grant highlights integrating existing initiatives into the SARCL program at the local and state level. There is a clear focus on both teacher and student growth measureable through reading assessments at all levels and professional development evaluations and goals for teachers.

Weaknesses:

The definitions and assessments of literacy are set at the minimum criteria and leave innovations and use of more current research and technology use up to the subgrants (pp. 13-18).

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 application does meet the criteria. The data collection mechanisms are already in place at the state level in the form of state reading assessments for data-based decision-making. There are goals and measures for student data collection and for teacher professional development progress with special attention to sustainability.

Weaknesses:

The reading assessments listed are not accompanied by information about their quality in relation to validity and reliability. The type and formatting of how information will be relayed to stakeholders is not detailed beyond the traditional reporting format.

Reader's Score: **0**

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Applicant: Kentucky Department of Education -- Next Generation Learners (S371C110007)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	19
Sub Total	37	19
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	14
Sub Total	28	14
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	6.5
Sub Total	15	6.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	12
Sub Total	20	12
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	1
Sub Total	5	1
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	52.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - SRCL - 6: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Kentucky Department of Education -- Next Generation Learners (S371C110007)

Questions

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

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

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Strengths

A(i): The applicant provided a clear alignment of the components of effective literacy instruction with the state's literacy plan (Literacy Program Effectiveness Review for KY Schools: PERKS). Within the elements of PERKS, the following areas were specifically addressed (p. 1-4):

- * The use of supportive technologies (under Aligned Curriculum)
- * The use of assessment strategies to identify children at-risk
- * The importance of motivation/engagement in learning
- * The creation of language and text-rich learning environments
- * The inclusion of parents as learning partners and universities as collaborative partners to support training in best practices

In addition, the applicant presented a plan to carry out the state-level activities through a KY Literacy Team, a Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) cross-functional team, and Promising Practice Sites (p.4-7)

A comprehensive tiered approach to professional development is planned (p.9)

A strong partnership and collaboration between the state and schools/providers based on establishing communities of practice was described (p. 11-13).

Instruction appropriately included a focus on reading comprehension (p. 13-16), as well as the importance of motivation for reading (p. 17-18).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(i): The state's literacy plan (PERKS) included limited information across a number of elements, as noted below (p 2-3):

- * Professional Development: did not address PD for students at risk, or for teachers in Reading or Language Arts
- * Aligned Curriculum: did not include principles of UDL, which would reduce barriers in instruction; thereby making instruction accessible to all students including students with disabilities and LEP

Sub Question

students

* Multiple Assessments: did not specify inclusion of valid and reliable measures; or data which will be used to inform instruction

* Instruction and Intervention: description of the "Core" was vague across all developmental levels

* Literacy Team and Plan: did not specify how effectiveness would be evaluated.

Reader's Score: 7

- 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:

Strength

A(ii): Applicant provided sufficient evidence based on 2010 State testing data of learning needs throughout the state for all students (p. 18-19; 21). Specifically, of the 53 SRCL eligible districts, 69.9% or fewer students scored in the proficient/distinguished range, with even poorer indicators for at-risk students (49% of students receiving free/reduced meals scored below reading proficiency level; 56% for African-American students; 72% for LEP students).

Weaknesses:

Weakness

A(ii): The application provided insufficient descriptions of goals or plans to improve literacy outcomes for at-risk students, including LEP and students with disabilities. Specifically, the workbook tool that will be given to school districts does not include information for students who are at risk or struggling (p.20)

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

A(iii): The state will provide technical assistance and support to their subgrantees through literacy leadership teams and literacy instructional coaches. Literacy plans as well as professional learning plans will be developed for each school (p. 24). This will enable the state to effectively implement their proposed comprehensive literacy plan.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iii): The description of the technical assistance and support to subgrantees was vague and provided insufficient information (p. 23-25). The statement that "each grantee will receive essential support to improve student achievement in all core academic subjects" (p. 23) does not specify how the "essential support" needed will be determined for individual teachers, the amount or intensity of professional development, frequency of coaching observations and meetings, etc. Each school/provider will develop a professional learning plan, but the identification of individual needs, content, and amount of technical assistance and professional development were not described.

Sub Question

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:

Strengths

A(iv): The applicant presented the evaluation strategies, perspectives, evaluation questions, and benchmarks that will be examined (p. 25-28).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iv): The application did not specify whether an independent evaluator would be used. The Budget Narrative (p. e1) included an "Evaluator(s)," as the KDE, which would not be independent. This represents a major concern for providing an objective evaluation of the project activities. Further, information was not presented with regard to the evaluation methods that will be used and how they are appropriate to the project objectives. Finally, information was not included on how the evaluation data will be used to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of the project activities (p. 25-28).

Reader's Score: 3

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): Dissemination to different stakeholder groups was noted as an important component in building understanding and support for the project (p. 28).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(v): Information on dissemination activities was both limited and vague. No plan was provided for disaggregating data by student subgroups; how the information would be made accessible to the public, or made useful to different groups, including families, educators, researchers, ECE providers, and state leaders (p. 28).

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Reader's Score: 14

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): LEAs/Providers will be required to follow a systematic plan in their application to demonstrate their capacity to successfully implement their KY SRCL plan (p. 29). Core implementation components, which will include a number of components ranging from staff selection to decision support data systems will facilitate fidelity of implementation (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(a): The stages and process of implementation were described, but no description was provided on how the SEA will review and judge LEA's or ECE provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal (p. 29-30). The focus was on implementation fidelity once a subgrant has been awarded with no information regarding how the state will review and judge the LEA/provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

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:

Strengths

B(i)(b): The PERKS elements that subgrantees will need to incorporate specify partnerships, which will include other agencies, such as institutions of higher education (IHE) within Promising Practices Sites, community, and families (p. 4).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(b): The comprehensive high-quality literacy program does not include a strong or specific emphasis on the needs of disadvantaged students. This limitation is apparent through several of the elements of PERKS, including professional development for students at risk; assessment; and instruction and intervention (p. 2-4).

A needs assessment to support effective teaching and improve student achievement of struggling readers was not clearly included as part of the subgrant RFP (p. Appendix E, p. 3)

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**

Sub Question

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 state has a strong existing structure for funding alignment through cross-functional teams that meet monthly to assure alignment of time, resources, and information across federal and state initiatives. Subgrant applicants will be required to demonstrate similar coordination and alignment of literacy programs to the SRCL program, as well as with other funding sources (p. 30-34).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None identified.

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): Competitive preference points (5) will be awarded to districts that serve high poverty and high-risk populations (p.34).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(ii): The applicant did not specify or define the criteria required for applicants to earn the 5 competitive preference points that demonstrate they serve high poverty and high-risk populations (p. e34 or Appendix E).

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B(iii): Applications supported by strongest available evidence will be ensured through alignment of their plans to PERKS (p. 34). Applicants will also be required to provide literacy data and assessments, including services to disadvantaged students (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iii): Priority for applications from districts/providers that are supported by the strongest available evidence was weak as it relied on the districts'/providers' alignment to PERKS, which does not encompass all the requirements of a comprehensive high-quality literacy program (p. 34; see also Comment under A(i) Weaknesses).

Reader's Score: 1.5

- 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**

Sub Question

and results of any such review publicly available.

Strengths:

Strengths

B(iv): KDE will utilize an existing process to review standards, as well as evaluate implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) through Leadership Networks that are comprised of three teachers from each district across the state that will meet monthly (p. 36).

An existing process includes Program Reviews that are required of all schools to evaluate evidence from teacher and student work, professional learning, assessment and leadership support, and monitoring activities (p. 37).

KDE has an existing strong alignment system for the CCSS (p. 36).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iv): It is not clear how the existing system for alignment will include a process to review and judge the evidence base, or evaluate the curricula and materials proposed by LEAs to be implemented in their subgrants (p. 34-38).

Further, the applicant did not include information on how the state will make the process and results of these reviews available to the public.

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: 6.5

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Strengths

C(i): A state plan (aligned to PERKS) and a monitoring plan will ensure that objectives are met (p. 39).

In addition, a monitoring planning template will be required to be used by districts/early childhood providers.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(i): The proposal did not specify objectives or milestones of the project; nor was a timeline, or clearly defined responsibilities presented related to the project objectives. Only the alignment of the state plan to PERKS was noted with the element of Professional Development provided as an example (p. 39-41). The additional components of PERKS were not addressed with regard to state actions, implementation indicators, and evidences, and include curriculum alignment, assessment, instruction and intervention,

Sub Question

language and print-rich environments, monitoring and continuous improvement, and partnerships. This information is important to determine the adequacy of the plan to achieve the objectives on time and within budget.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Strengths

C(ii): The Grant Coordinator has had 4 years experience as a literacy coordinator, as well as 1 year as a high school reading consultant. Of the vitae for three of the seven state literacy coaches that were included, each had a master's degree and teaching experience.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(ii): None of the project staff named in the application had degrees in early childhood education or in special education, which leaves the potential for gaps in expertise provided for the full range of students (birth to grade 12), as well as for students with disabilities.

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:

Strengths

C(iii): The state literacy team was well represented by school-based personnel at elementary, middle, and high schools; university faculty; individuals from the KDE; special education coordinators and consultants; program consultant for ELL and immigrant students; and literacy partners (p. 43-44).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(iii): The state literacy team did not include sufficient representation of members for early childhood education, families, community-based organizations; libraries; or Head Start, which would ensure a diversity of perspectives and represent the instructional needs of all students, particularly in the 0-5 age range (p. 43-44).

Reader's Score: 2.5

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

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): KDE will only claim indirect costs on the 5% set aside for state activities (Budget Narrative, e2). This is a cost-saving measure that reflects the state's commitment of funds to the project activities.

The tiered funding rate for schools was specified and was differentiated on the basis of student population within districts (Budget Narrative, e6).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(i): Insufficient information was provided with regard to the project objectives to evaluate its potential significance or the costs in relation to the objectives.

Insufficient information was provided for the number of literacy leads in each school/provider) to justify the estimate of \$400,000/year for salaries (e38).

No information was provided on the number of hours of professional development required for teachers and literacy leads, which makes it difficult to evaluate the adequacy of \$1,400,000 for statewide professional development each year.

Reader's Score: 3.5

- 2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:**

*** At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.**

*** At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.**

*** At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.**

Strengths:

Strengths

D(ii): A clear plan was described to ensure the appropriate 15/40/40 allocation of funds to subgrantees (Budget Narrative, e3).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None identified.

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): A detailed plan for sustainability was included through alignment with existing state and federal funds (p. 30; 48), and development of a Sustainability Tool (Appendix G). Literacy teams will evaluate the readiness of schools to sustain implementation of the SRCL plan using a Sustainability Tool (Appendix G) that links to PERKS (p. 49). This sustainability plan and tool will promote early planning and commitment at the district/school levels to provide continued support to LEAs/Providers after the funding period ends.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
None identified.

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:

Strengths
D(iv): A tiered approach for funding subgrants ensured that schools with larger student populations were eligible for higher awards than schools with smaller student populations (Budget Narrative, e6).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
D(iv): The funding formula for subgrants did not include a differential funding formula to provide additional funding support to districts that serve high-need schools; it was based solely on student population (Budget Narrative, e6).

Reader's Score: 1.5

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

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

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

Strengths:

Strengths
Technology will be incorporated through the inclusion of online literacy professional development courses and other teacher resources (virtual learning opportunities, discussion board options, PERKS online modules) (p. 40-41).

Weaknesses:

Weakness
It was unclear how technology would be incorporated to support principles of UDL, which would make instruction and resources accessible to all students (p. 5).

The proposed technology program was not described; therefore an evidence-based rationale was not provided, nor how it would be used to increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Reader's Score: 1

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

MET

Strengths

The proposal described the PERKS state literacy plan, which is aligned with components of effective literacy instruction. A strong focus on literacy instruction for middle and high school students was included, with appropriate instructional focus on students's comprehension and motivation to read.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The PERKS elements were not comprehensive to address learning needs of all students. It was weaker with regard to early literacy instruction and for students with special needs.

The project design did not address improvement of school readiness.

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

The proposal included collection and analysis of data to be used to improve instructional practices and student outcomes. Literacy teams will use a workbook tool to collect information in a variety of areas that can be used for team planning (p. 20).

Weaknesses:**Weaknesses**

An independent external evaluator will not be used, which brings into question the objectivity of the data collected. Insufficient information was provided regarding how data will be used to inform the project design and instructional effectiveness.

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: Kentucky Department of Education -- Next Generation Learners (S371C110007)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	26.5
Sub Total	37	26.5
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
Sub Total	15	13
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	2
Sub Total	5	2
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	81.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - SRCL - 6: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Kentucky Department of Education -- Next Generation Learners (S371C110007)

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: 26.5

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

i-The applicant provided a comprehensive explanation of the State Literacy Plan and its components of support and monitoring. The alignment of past, present, and future efforts indicates a desire for continuity and centralized organization. The alignment of state-level activities and the comprehensive state literacy plan is in place. The graphic chart of the elements of Literacy Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools (PERKS) presents the alignment and figure 2 (pg. e2) presented sound elements which were detailed later in the narrative. The SRCL plan or program will be aligned with an extensive list of current initiatives and funding sources (pg. 4).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

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 describes data from state assessments which indicate a need to improve literacy. The description documents the below proficiency level of at-risk students. The applicant provides information relating to tests scores (pg 19/20). Reading test data from at risk high school students exhibits below proficiency performance (pg. e19).

Weaknesses:

ii)The applicant is not clear regarding the way specific data will influence the path the SEA will take to achieve its goals There is not a clear connection between the data for disadvantaged students and the path the SEA will take to achieve the goals with the support of the LEA. The applicant does not present a description of the data for all students which it will consider to make decisions. It does not clearly

Sub Question

explain performance scores for disadvantaged students. General statements are made about "reflecting national trends" without specific state related data, beyond the discussion of high school students and the 53 districts eligible based on the percentage of proficient students. The applicant states Kentucky has shown steady growth in student achievement (pg.18)and significant growth on 4th and 8th grade scores on the National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP).The presentation of positive growth data and a lack of data relating to at-risk students presents an unclear path for improving student literacy outcomes for all students.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

iii- The applicant presents the details of the technical assistance plan with the goal of building capacity. The plan for support is documented (pg.e23) and sound strategies are presented such as literacy coaches, literacy plans, and Promising Practices Sites (pg. e42). The development of Promising Practices Sites is an innovative way to provide technical assistance (pg. e23).These sites will be exemplars or models of success and will provide videos, interviews, and other coaching tools to assist other sites. Professional learning plans for every school and the elements of Literacy PERKS indicate a strong commitment to technical assistance (pg. e23).

Weaknesses:

iii) The applicant presents vague information regarding the way it will provide technical assistance to early childhood providers and birth to school age children. It is unclear if early childhood centers will receive the same level of technical assistance as those in classroom settings (pg. e23).

Reader's Score: 3.5

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

Strengths:

iv) The applicant presents the objectives and perspectives for evaluating the State plan for evaluating progress. The three objectives indicate the intention of evaluating throughout the process. The applicant provides clear intention for the evaluation of the total experience, not only while students are in a traditional K-12 setting (pg. e25). The applicant indicates that they will monitor at critical learning points. This indicates frequent monitoring and interaction with stakeholders who will have input into literacy practices affecting change (pg. e27). The applicant provides information about several different data sources that will be used as a part of the evaluation process (pg. e27). The evaluation questions are comprehensive and focus on improving achievement (pg. e26).
iv2)The applicant lists as criteria for subgrant approval the use of data that is valid and reliable, indicating this is a key component of the application (pg.2/Appendix E, pg e2). Proposals unable to confirm the effective use of data will not be funded. The evaluation questions listed (pg 26) are comprehensive and focus on improving achievement.

Weaknesses:

iv1) The applicant does not indicate that the evaluation will be conducted by an outside evaluator. The budget narrative indicates that the KDE has budgeted for the payment of the individual (data grant manager) who will collaborate with KDE staff about selection of assessments and progress monitoring. The applicant also describes an evaluator who will oversee the administration of the evaluation project, oversee data entry, analysis, and interpretation, and present reports to stakeholder groups. The

Sub Question

evaluator tasks are identical to the ones noted as the responsibility of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) (budget narrative e1). From the information presented, it appears that the evaluator is a part of the KDE. Lack of an outside perspective is a weakness and could indicate a potential bias.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The individuals whose roles it is to disseminate information is determined. This evidences a commitment to the importance of this part of the project. A number of different stakeholders are listed. The applicant evidences understanding of the need to have different reports for different stakeholders. Internal and external partners are noted. This information indicates adequate understanding of the importance of disseminating information (pg. e28).

Weaknesses:

v-The applicant does not provide information about how project outcomes will be disseminated to all stakeholders, other than through reports and presentations. There is sparse breadth of dissemination strategies and the way differing formats will be used with different audiences.(pg.e28). There is minimal mention of the need to disaggregate data by subgroup and to share this information with relevant stakeholders. This is a weakness as it is not clear how the applicant will provide information to the multiple stakeholders in a useful format.

Reader's Score: 1

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

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

Reader's Score: 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:

i) The details of the competition for subgrant funds are detailed. The scoring for the Promising Practices Sites assists the competitiveness and rigor. The assurances required for application submission are comprehensive and align with SRCL requirements (Appendix B/C)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

a)-The applicant provides inadequate specific information about how it will judge the capacity of the early childhood education providers to successfully implement its proposal (pg. e29). Early childhood is not specifically addressed in the Promising Practices Site scoring rubric (Appendix B).

Reader's Score: 2

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

Strengths

b1. The applicant provides information regarding priorities for subgrants that address high-risk populations and requires demonstration of data to support their plans (pg.e34).

2) One element of the Literacy Program Effectiveness Review for Kentucky Schools (PERKS) is utilization of multiple assessments. The applicant advocates multiple assessments to monitor and modify student performance (pg.e2).

(3).The applicant presents information about other agencies and stakeholders (social workers, occupational therapists, university professors, business partners, the Governor's Task Force, Early Childhood Development Authority, pg.13,e45) that will be involved (pg.e49). Appendix C (pg 2) specifies which partnerships will be involved and this is a strength of the application. One recommendation from the Transforming Education in Kentucky (TEK) Task Force has been adopted. The adopted recommendation includes involving community partners and this indicates a desire to involve other stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

2)-The applicant provided vague details about the ways the literacy programs are informed by a needs assessment, and if the existing state assessment data (pg.19, 20) will be used to develop ways to improve student achievement. The best practices explained in the research review on pages e13,14 do not evidence a connection to supporting effective teaching.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

C) The applicant provides evidence that it will insure that subgrants utilize a variety of funding sources (pg e49) and this is also addressed as a component of the sustainability criteria (Appendix G).Page 30 provides additional information about the need for other funding. Leveraging funds from multiple

Sub Question

sources is clearly a priority for this applicant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

ii) The applicant provides competitive preference for subgrants that propose to serve high-poverty schools. This validates the priority for this subgrant competition (pg. e34). Granting additional points for these districts who can provide a plan to address the gap evidences this as a key priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The applicant presents statements indicating providers of early childhood will be a part of the subgrant. Language in the RFP (Appendix E), the description of the coaches job (pg. e42), and evaluation strategies note early childhood education (pg e25).

Weaknesses:

iii) The applicant provides no direct evidence that priority will be given to providers of early childhood education. The competitive preference on pg.e34 refers to high poverty and high risk populations and what data will be required to merit this priority. Early childhood evidence is discussed in the literature review (pg. e29) which details the importance of feedback and monitoring but no information is given regarding what type of evidence from early childhood education will be given priority by the SEA in the subgrant competition

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:

iv) The applicant presents a comprehensive and detailed explanation of the process for standard alignment. The information on past, present, and future processes are specific (pg. e36-38). The development of a leadership network to understand the impact and integration of state standards indicates a proactive approach to implement and align standards. There is strong evidence to indicate that a number of stakeholders will be part of this network to promote congruency. The role of this network to accomplish this process is thorough and futuristic. (e37).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

iv) The applicant has not documented how the SEA will make the process and results publicly available (pg. e36-e38). Following the site visit, documented on the application process, it is not clear how the public will be informed of award recipients.

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: 13

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 budget proposal is detailed and travel and supplies are noted. Yearly budget information is adequate and is presented in a number of formats, individual years and holistically (pg e5) which is a clear way to view the multiple budget items.

Weaknesses:

Weakness

i) The applicant does not provide adequate information regarding the actual milestones that need to be accomplished during each year of the program.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

ii) The key personnel involved in the project evidence strong and varied credentials, training, and experience (pg. 43.44). There is evidence that multiple agencies are included and the personnel have experience in both public and private sectors. A variety of educational backgrounds are represented and many participants have experience in grants such as this. It is a strength that the applicant has this variety of participants to implement this proposal.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

iii) The applicant provides a comprehensive list of diverse individuals who will participate in the project; the list of stakeholders is comprehensive (pg. 43, 44). Stakeholders who will be directly and indirectly affected are noted in the proposal. Multiple agencies are represented and individuals who are experienced in PK-16 education. The governors task force engages additional community members in the initiative and adds additional perspective and strength to this area. The applicant presents ongoing plans for development of this group. It is evident that careful planning has gone into this aspect of the proposal to insure a variety of expertise and perspectives.

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: 19

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

i) The applicant has described a reasonable budget and has shown the way the number and size of the district will impact funding eligibility. (pg. e38, Appendix E, e2).Information aligning the number of eligible districts with the eligibility totals is clear. The tiered approach to the budget (pg e6) aligns eligible districts, student populations and award amounts. The potential for funding 22 districts is noted in the application. The applicant justifies the funding by noting that it is contingent on the success of the grantees. Implementation costs are a part of the budget. The list of required assurances indicates careful attention to the alignment of requirements of this grant (pg. e3). The scoring sheet to assess the subgrant application contains 5 criteria for budget use (pg e8). The budget explanation is adequate and reasonable to accomplish the two major objectives of the project (implementing a Kentucky Literacy Team and building school capacity.) The rationale and plan for adequately funding up to 22 districts is well defined and strong.

Weaknesses:

i) No weaknesses identified

Reader's Score: 10

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

ii) The applicant documented the percentages allocated for each age group as part of the LEA assurances (Appendix C/E). This information is noted throughout the proposal and the various age groups are addressed individually in discussion of grant components. The plan exhibits the quality needed to meet the needs of the various student population.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

iii) The applicant presents information regarding the leverage of Title I and Title III funding. In appendix E it is noted that applicants must show through assurances and narrative how other funding sources align with their district plan. (e4). This is also noted in the rubric to assess applications. Reiteration of this element indicates its importance as a part of the subgrant application.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

iv) The applicant anticipates serving 22 school districts with grant funding (although 53 districts are eligible, pg. 18) and this is an adequate number because it provides funding for almost half of the eligible districts (Appendix E). This information, as well as the approximate numbers presented in the abstract are convincing. The sustainability tool documented on pg0 of Appendix G indicates that care has been taken to insure that applying districts are able to implement and support the grant requirements. The instruction and intervention section of the sustainability tool addresses the priority of this grant to close the gap and support struggling students and is a strength.

Weaknesses:

iv) It is not clear if schools that serve a higher percentage of disadvantaged students will be funded in a differentiated manner or if funding is based only on number of students in the district (budget narrative, e6, pg e2).

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 provides information in figure 10 (pg. 40) that evidences the plan for the use of technology to increase teacher effectiveness and to provide professional development. The elements of PERKS exhibit an already established commitment to using technology to improve teacher practice. The professional development availability description is detailed and includes multiple resources to which teachers will have access. The use of technology is an integrated component of the grant and ongoing throughout. A variety of tools for teachers are listed and there is evidence of interactive technology such as discussion boards that promote a collaborative interaction among professionals. The use of technology to increase teacher best practices is strong.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant provides insufficient information about the way the technology will support principles of universal design and meet the learning needs of diverse students. Recommendation 6E (pg. e47) from the TEK refers to the use of technology for students. There is no evidence of how technology will be operationalized to increase students learning.

Reader's Score: 2

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a strong project to improve school readiness and success through grade 12. The existing coordination of the State Literacy Team sets the stage for the proposal and gives credence to the capacity of the state to implement the grant. The elements of PERKS justify the framework for the project (pg. e1-e5).

The documented model of the secondary literacy intervention framework adds to the convincing nature of the proposal and the probability that it will improve literacy for adolescents (pg. e17, e24). The existing framework for College and Career Readiness demonstrates adequate alignment of plans for student future civic and economic contributions—a component of Absolute Priority 1 (pg. e20). The proposed virtual course provides a platform for teachers to examine English Language Learner (ELL) data (pg. 3) and provide adequate

instruction for this population.
This priority has been met.

Weaknesses:

The applicant presents vague information regarding the way the applicant will improve school readiness and early childhood education.

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 evidence of the multiple evaluation and assessment strategies that meet the priority of collection and analysis of data. The list on page e2 is convincing as it provides a description of valid and reliable measures which are used to identify students on both ends of the spectrum (pg e11). Additional documentation is given on pg.6 referencing the role of professional development in tracking implementation and outcomes. The narrative explaining best practices (pg e6) is comprehensive and demonstrates awareness of the need for ongoing monitoring and alternative methods of collecting data and to inform instruction. A tool for collection and use of data presents another example of using data to inform professional practices (pg. e20). The applicant presents evidence for responding to academic needs on pg. e25. Newly implemented data reports for early childhood completes the evidence of data being used to inform practices for young children (pg. e27). Program reviews (pg.e37) are another appropriate accountability tool.
This priority has been met.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides insufficient information about how it will inform families and other key stakeholders about the information that was gathered through data collection. A more detailed explanation is needed about this process and strategies the applicant will use to inform constituents, who are not directly involved in professional development, about what the data indicates. Additional information is needed to clarify how the applicant will inform key stakeholders.

Reader's Score: 0

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