

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Language Arts Acad. Standards, Curr. & Asses
(S371C110034)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	15.5
Sub Total	37	15.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	14.5
Sub Total	28	14.5
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	7
Sub Total	15	7
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	7
Sub Total	20	7
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	45.0

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SRCL - 1: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Language Arts Acad. Standards, Curr. & Asses (S371C110034)

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: 15.5

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

1. It was extremely helpful to read the Introduction and Capacity section of the document (p. 2-7). This helped in setting the context for the grant proposal and in explaining New Jersey's capacity and need for the grant.
2. Also, presenting the numbers of children in need (p. 3-5) adds strength to the grant proposal and demonstrates the need for support and assistance.
3. A strength of the proposal is to involve preservice teachers and teacher education institutions in the grant (p. 8).
4. The emphasis on students who are low-income and currently underserved (e.g. ELL, special education) (p. 3-5) is laudable and adds strength to the grant proposal.
5. A strength is the use of Response to Intervention (Rtl) for high school students (p. 17).
6. Many of the stated goals for the New Jersey Striving Readers grant proposal are excellent (p. 20). Particularly good are, 1) implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), 2) creating a framework for Response to Intervention (Rtl) implementation across the state, and 3) informing and improving programs of teacher education. These are praiseworthy goals as well as goals that are critical to systemic change.

Weaknesses:

1. One component of the State-level activities is the placing of preservice teachers in classrooms to conduct action research on improvements in reading and writing (p. 8). Most preservice teachers need a great deal of help and assistance themselves in learning how to teach explicitly, and it is doubtful that they and their cooperating teachers could improve on what already exists. In order to be successful, the studies themselves must be successful at implementing the comprehensive activities aligned with the comprehensive State literacy plan, but it is unclear how that would be done. It seems highly unlikely that preservice teachers and cooperating teachers have the capacity to accomplish this action research project that will align with the comprehensive State literacy plan. Further, there is no research or evidence base for the success of such a project. Also, there does not appear to be the professional development and coursework that would need to occur to make this endeavor successful.
2. The reliance on special education teachers to assist regular education teachers in designing lessons to individualize and differentiate instruction (p. 11) needs more discussion and explanation. Special educators would need professional development and assistance to conduct this work as it may differ substantially from the work to which they are accustomed.
3. It is unclear how Rtl will be implemented at the high school level (p. 17) to support the comprehensive

Sub Question

State literacy plan. What is particularly unclear is how one-on-one intervention will be provided for all students who need it at that level. There is research supporting the use of 2-3-on-one as equally effective. This would make the plan a bit more feasible.

4. On p. 18 the text says that middle school classrooms must devote 80 minutes per day on Language Arts. It is unclear that just increasing the time spent in English would affect reading and writing outcomes. This may be true at the elementary level where reading is taught, but it is unclear at the middle school level where English literature is taught. More time and instruction reading novels and short stories may not result in improved reading and writing, especially when attention is not paid to reading informational text since this is a critical piece of the State literacy plan and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to which the State plan will be tied.

5. A considerable weakness of the overall plan is the overly ambitious goals of the state Striving Readers. This is because so many of the goals require large, systemic changes in the whole system. For example, RtI requires systemic changes in itself (p. 20). The action research plan itself is a significant undertaking (p. 20). It would be better to select a few of these goals and work carefully and thoroughly to implement them successfully and then take them to scale.

Reader's Score: 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:

1. Data are presented at the beginning of the document (pp. 2-8) and demonstrate well the foundations on which the broad goals of the project are founded.
2. Details about ongoing projects and background to the existing state of the state are clear (p.2-8).

Weaknesses:

1. A weakness is that the SEA does not appear to have enough a clear and credible path to achieve its goals. For one thing, the infrastructural support for the project is lacking. For example, five literacy specialists (p. 21) does not sound adequate for the SEA to carry out the project, especially as their responsibilities are described. On p. 21, the text reads, "They will also provide on-going, job-embedded professional development through regular coaching." This does not seem feasible for the number of schools that will need coaching.
2. Further examples include numbers 3 and 4 on p. 22, where the SEA states that "regular training will be provided for subgrantees, and the DOE will make available staff with expertise in special education and bilingual/ESL education for workshops and job-embedded coaching." It is unclear how much of this training will be done, by whom, how often, to which districts and schools, at what levels, etc. Lack of specificity at this level is problematic in terms of evaluating the extent to which the SEA will have a clear path toward its goals.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The LEAs will receive support from the SEA Literacy Advisors (p. 21) who will provide technical assistance and professional development. These activities are important for the SEA to implement a high-quality literacy program to improve student achievement in the core academic subjects.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Lack of specificity at this level is problematic in terms of evaluating the extent to which the SEA will support the LEAs in enabling them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program to improve student achievement in core academic subjects. On p. 23, the SEA states that, "Wherever necessary, the department will provide guidance on the leadership needed to effectively structure the school environment necessary to help struggling readers." It should be assumed that this already exists at the DOE now anyway, so it is unclear how the Striving Readers project would change this. In other words, it is unclear exactly how the SEA will conduct activities to help the LEAs implement a high-quality literacy program and to improve student achievement in the core academic subjects. The level of support and assistance from the SEA is not demonstrated in the grant proposal. Specifics are needed as to the number of personnel who will be involved, their roles and responsibilities and how they will support the LEAs.

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:

The SEA has established goals for their progress evaluation, goals that are doable and should demonstrate whether the SEA has made progress toward improved literacy outcomes (p. 24-25), including disadvantaged groups. The SEA goals provide a sufficient outline for the evaluator to get started.

Weaknesses:

1. On pp. 24-25, very little is stated about how the SEA will evaluate the program (p. 24-25), and not enough information is presented to adequately evaluate the evaluation. It is stated that the "department will contract with an external evaluator to assist the Striving Readers staff with providing high-quality technical assistance, monitoring and oversight." No external evaluator is identified, so it is unclear whether or not the evaluator will have the technical expertise in reading as well as in research design and evaluation.
2. It is unclear whether the unidentified external evaluator would have the expertise to evaluate the quality of the action research conducted by the preservice university students and their mentors (p. 17), which would seem to take a great deal of knowledge about reading and writing curriculum, rather than research design and evaluation.
3. Methods of evaluation are not discussed or described at all, making it difficult to evaluate in terms of quality (pp. 24-25).
4. Finally, it is unclear how the SEA will work with the external evaluator to use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.

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:

The SEA will make available on its website project outcomes (p. 25) that will include disaggregated student subgroups, as well as have the LEAs disseminate findings to their various stakeholders. These activities will lead to many different stakeholders having access to the information. In addition, teachers and administrators should have access to the information based on the LEA dissemination. These are important stakeholders within the system and should help disseminate the findings.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the SEA will disseminate information in formats that are easily and usefully understood by different groups (p. 25) within the public sphere. Placing results only on a website is problematic since a certain group of people have access to the web. Families of high poverty, for example, may not have access to project outcomes as they may not have access to the web. Other avenues for outlets should be considered. Some of these other avenues include newspapers, policy briefs, reports for laypeople, business people and the general public.

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: 14.5

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

1. The particular targets for evaluation at the birth-12 levels on p. 27 are excellent and appear to focus on the most critical literacy skills, e. g. for early childhood, oral language development; K-5, phonics, comprehension, academic vocabulary; 6-12, writing argument, academic vocabulary, and reading increasingly complex text. These targets indicate that the SEA has sufficient content knowledge to run a rigorous, high quality competition for subgrants.

Weaknesses:

1. The subgrant specifications on pp. 25-30 provide a very general overview of the subgrant competition rather than a detailed description of the competition itself. Developing the actual competition proposal and including it in the narrative would have been more helpful in evaluating the SEA's ability to run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants.
2. The SEA does not specify with enough detail just how it will evaluate the LEAs' capacity to successfully implement its proposal. On p. 30, the text states that the scoring rubric will be developed by the SEA Office of Grants Management in collaboration with the SEA Office of Language Arts Literacy Education, and that a review team consisting of two external and two internal SEA readers will review the proposals. It would be most helpful to have the rubric developed and included in the narrative so that its usefulness in evaluating the LEAs' capacity could be determined.

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.**

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

1. The subgrant application supports a comprehensive literacy program in its identification of reading activities that are based on research-based instruction (p. 15).
2. The LEAs will be required to conduct a needs assessment and use it in their grant application (p. 17).
3. The SEAs require the LEAs to address the needs of disadvantaged students by proposing excellent programs that assist these students in learning outcomes (p. 15--home based activities, interactive activities; p. 16--90 minute block of time for reading instruction; p. 18--technology).
4. The proposal uses other agencies and institutions appropriately (p. 32) to promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students. Using these other agencies and institutions ensures that collaboration and coordination will take place.

Weaknesses:

1. A weakness is that much of the work of the grant appears to fall to the LEAs (p. 26+). For example, LEAs must determine schools with high levels of poverty to include. For example, they must develop and execute a successful program to address the needs of special education and ELLs, they must do the work with local universities, they must develop a series of protocols for classroom visits and monitor changes in instruction, and improvements to classrooms (p. 29). This appears to be a lot of responsibility placed on the LEAs, and it is unclear whether or not there will be sufficient support from the SEA to accomplish these tasks.
2. The SEA does not explain in sufficient detail (and does so only in very general terms) how it will work with the LEAs to accomplish many of the most difficult goals of the project (p. 21-24). For example, the SEA does not explain how it will work with schools to implement the Response to Intervention (RtI) model, how to screen, diagnose, monitor and provide summative assessments, how to conduct the action research, how to integrate technology in classrooms, and how to use Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These are all goals of the project, yet very little is explained for showing how the SEA will get LEAs to accomplish these specific tasks.
3. It is unclear what the SEA plans for ensuring that all recipients have high levels of poverty. The text says that "preference will go to programs serving high-poverty populations and significant numbers of ELLs and special education students" (p. 25), but it is unclear what will happen if those criteria compete with each other, e.g. significant numbers of special education students along with low or medium poverty levels. It is unclear whether priorities will go to high-poverty populations as stated in the Application Process.
4. On p. 25, the text says, "at a minimum, the school or district serves a sufficient number of English language learners and students with disabilities." They then mention high-poverty students as well, but high poverty is a priority in terms of this grant proposal.

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:

The SEA demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the subgrants with literacy instruction supported with other Federal, State and local funds (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

There is mention and attention, with corresponding data, on students of high poverty in the SEA's grant (p. 2-5). It is clear that the SEA understands and is using high poverty as an important factor in its award structure.

Weaknesses:

Because of the high focus on special education students and ELLs, it is unclear just how LEAs are going to determine which LEAs are funded based on high poverty (p.29). The text states that "priority will be given to LEAs and providers who propose to serve high poverty school populations..." but the text does not say how. Explicit attention needs to be paid to exactly how the SEA will give priority to high-poverty schools.

Reader's Score: 3

- 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 SEA will use a rubric (p. 27) to evaluate the quality of evidence-based practices. Using a rubric helps LEAs understand the level of quality that is expected of it and helps reviewers evaluate the extent to which the LEAs have met that level of quality.

Weaknesses:

It is not stated in the grant proposal whether the SEA will provide early childhood educators with priority based on the strongest available evidence.

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:

1. The review team will consist of experts in literacy education, ensuring that readers will have the necessary expertise to conduct the review and evaluate proposals (p. 30).
2. The results will be made public to the state (p. 30).

Weaknesses:

The grant proposal does not present a clear and identifiable method of evaluating the subgrants (p. 30). The review process is discussed in very broad terms, but specific methods of reviewing grants and selecting winning LEA proposals is missing. The process for awarding grants should be laid out in detail ahead of time and should be included in the narrative.

Reader's Score: 2

Project management - Project management

- 1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management**

plan: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

A chart lists the years of the project for the grant (p. 30) and responsibilities of the SEA. The chart lists the general activities for the grant proposal and will provide a broad outline of the project for the SEA and LEAs.

Weaknesses:

Responsibilities, timelines and milestones are largely missing from the narrative. The chart on p. 30 is inadequate to relay the quantity of information that is required for understanding the implementation of the project. A different chart outlining specific tasks to be done, responsibilities of personnel for these tasks, timelines as to when the tasks will be completed, and milestones or benchmarks to ensure that the tasks are completed would be most helpful.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The team leaders have extensive experience in the SEA conducting a variety of activities (p. 31, e0, vita). These different kinds of activities will ensure a broad background in state and school reform. It is likely that these personnel have broad experience in conducting grants of this sort.

Weaknesses:

The personnel do not have the required expertise in reading that is really necessary to provide the leadership and support for the project (pp. e0-e3). Further, the person who does have oversight does so for both reading and math, thus breaking up time and expertise that should be devoted to Striving Readers. It would be appropriate and wise to hire a reading expert with particular experience at all levels to become the Director of the project. This should be this person's only responsibility.

Reader's Score: 2.5

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

Strengths:

Many different agencies and institutions are mentioned throughout the document (pp. 13, 17, 23, 31). These can have a positive influence on the project in that a diversity of perspectives will be represented in the design and implementation of the proposed project.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

It is unclear the extent to which all these different stakeholders with various perspectives (pp. 13, 17, 23, 31) will be involved in the actual design and implementation of the project. It is unclear if they have been involved in the development of the grant proposal and whether they have influenced its design. It should be made clear the extent of their involvement and also the extent to which they will be involved in the implementation of the grant.

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: 7

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

1. This is a very ambitious proposal as evidenced by the many goals (pp. 20-21) that would require large amounts of money to accomplish well, and these large amounts have been proposed in the budget.
2. Most of the budget narrative adequately explains the budget (pp. e0+).

Weaknesses:

1. A weakness of the resource allocation is that the grant proposal needs a full-time administrator with expertise in reading (p. e0). Having the existing Director work 25% of the time plus a Program Administrator who may not know anything about reading is a serious problem. At the very least, the Program Administrator should be required to have expertise in reading; this would help the application considerably. Alternatively, a reading expert could be hired. An educator with expertise in reading and experience in school reform could add strength to the proposal and to the implementation of the grant itself.
2. The SEA has not budgeted sufficiently for the external evaluation at \$80,000 per year (budget narrative, p. e4). A solid evaluation of the project will cost considerably more, perhaps \$500,000 per year.
3. No funds are available for assessment tools (p. e0) or if they are included in the external evaluation budget, then that budget is exceedingly low.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The SEA has described and committed to this requirement, and it is described adequately on p. 33.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The LEAs are provided with a great deal of flexibility in how they want to design and implement the Striving Readers grant. It is unclear how the SEA will assure the appropriate distribution of funds. Without careful oversight, the LEAs could violate this mandate.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The SEA will require the LEAs to leverage other funds (p. 30-31), and it is apparent that there has been thought put into the kinds of agencies and institutions that it will use to do so. For example, on p. 32, the SEA identifies other State and Federal agencies that can be leveraged, e.g. Bilingual Education, Charter Schools, Special Education, Title I, and Human Services.

Weaknesses:

1. The SEA has not described how it will maximize the impact of the project through the leveraging of funds (p. 30-32). LEAs often need specific guidance and assistance in order to rethink the reallocation of funds.
2. Thought needs to be put into how other funds can be used in the future to sustain funding after the end of the subgrant. A chart listing the various agencies and how funding could be leveraged to sustain funding after the end of the subgrant would be helpful to LEAs and would improve this proposal.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The SEA awards for LEA subgrants in total are appropriate and should maximize the impact of the grant project on learning outcomes for the state's students (budget narrative p. e0).

Weaknesses:

A weakness of the budget is that each school will have available over \$1 million each year for school reform (p. 26). This is an unreasonable amount of money for each school for each of five years. The problem is that it is too difficult to develop the infrastructure at each school (e.g. especially the hiring of a sufficient number of people) to make the program work. Even half of that amount would be difficult to spend, although it may make sense if there were sufficient numbers of qualified people to be hired.

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:

Having experts in technology and reading can certainly assist the SEA plans in implementing the technology part of the grant (p. 17). Technology implementation is difficult in schools and much professional development is needed. The consultant the SEA expects to hire can add depth and strength to the technology professional development.

Weaknesses:

The specific plans for the use of technology are too vague to be of value to the grant proposal (p. 18-19). Most of the work is left to the LEAs to figure out. It is unclear how technology would be used differently than it already is now. What is needed are specific details about what the consultant will do, how he or others will orchestrate the technology professional development and devise a statewide plan. It is unclear how the LEAs would do anything different than they are already doing. A detailed timeline with goals, methods of achieving those goals and benchmarks would assist the grant proposal in making the use of technology clear.

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.

The project is designed to improve the academic literacy of children, birth through grade 12. As such, there is special interest in meeting the needs of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students, ELLs, and special education students.

Weaknesses:

It is exceedingly difficult to move reading scores 5-10% a year. Many of the activities that are suggested are likely to be going on now without additional support or monies. Much of the SEA work that is suggested seems to be part of what the SEA currently does anyway. It is unclear how the SEA would provide the leadership to move schools and districts beyond what they do now.

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

Data-based decision-making was used to inform this grant proposal (p. 1-5). In addition, the state will leverage the use of its Criterion Referenced Tests to further inform decision-making at the state level as a basis for considering the needs for students (p. 7). Data-based decision-making will also be facilitated through the use of technology whereby students will be screened and diagnosed for reading difficulties and monitored to ensure student progress. The RtI model will be used in the LEAs, thereby employing another data-based decision-making model.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **0**

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

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Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Language Arts Acad. Standards, Curr. & Asses
(S371C110034)

Reader #2: *****

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Questions		
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1. State subgrant comp	28	13
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1. Project management	15	3
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Adequacy of resources		
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1. Adequacy of resources	20	6.5
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Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	3
Sub Total	5	3
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	39.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SRCL - 1: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Language Arts Acad. Standards, Curr. & Asses (S371C110034)

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: 14

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 team already met December 2010 to discuss the state literacy initiative (p 8). One of the goals of the project is to fully implement the common core standards (p 20). The applicant builds upon the idea of literacy models that was used in previous meetings (p. 8-9). The proposed state level activities are tied to these literacy models.

Weaknesses:

There is a dearth of information to answer how the state will carry out their activities. More details about this or information tied to the Additional Requirements section would have been helpful. The applicant should consider either a table or a systematic list that aligns state activities to the comprehensive state literacy plan. Subgrantees are required to submit their own literacy plan rather than linking to the state plan directly (p. 18). This could potentially lead to many sub-plans by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that don't link to or align directly with the State literacy plan.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

Data were presented on passing rates of groups in a disaggregated fashion demonstrating a need, particularly among English Language learners (ELLs) and those from low-income families (p. 3-5). A specific goal of increasing student performance by 5-10% per year is provided (p. 20). Mention is made of collecting data through various outlets (p. 25) which should provide widespread and thorough information. Each year (p. 24-25) an external evaluator will measure student growth and evidence of change in instructional practices. These data will appropriately be made available on the website and program outcomes will be disseminated by the LEA for accountability purposes.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Specific data to be collected on subgroups is vague. On page 25, various outlets for data collection are listed but are not specific and not tied to project objectives. This makes it difficult to assess whether the SEA or LEA will be able to achieve their project goals. Data presented are not tied to the state plan or proposed activity. No needs assessment has been done to guide the implementation of a plan. The credibility of the path the SEA intends to take is weakened because the goals of the New Jersey (NJ) Striving Readers Program (p. 19-23) don't tie to data.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The SEA will provide literacy specialists (p. 10, 12, 21) to support subgrantees in the implementation of high quality literacy programs. There is a solid 7-part plan (p. 21-23) that lists supports to be made available from the SEA to the LEAs. Expertise will be made available to subgrantees in the form of staff development and summer academies followed by fall site visits (p. 23). Innovative summer programs will make training available and accessible to teachers.

Weaknesses:

Much of the focus of the application is on what subgrantees must provide to the SEA as documentation rather than on what SEA can do to support the LEA (p. 27). No mention is made of student achievement in core academic subjects. No information is provided about what the high quality literacy program may look like. This makes it difficult to determine whether or not this program is of high quality or will, in fact, lead to improved student achievement. Perhaps the SEA can use the rubric mentioned on p. 27 to guide LEAs in developing their literacy plans.

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:

The applicant describes utilizing an internal and external review (p. 24), looking at district and state data. An external evaluator will be hired to look at student growth, improvement in achievement, changes in instructional practice, and formative and summative data measures (p. 24-25). This ensures that a variety of measures will be addressed.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan is vague. It is unclear how the achievement will be measured. It is not thorough enough to determine whether it will be feasible and appropriate. There is no mention made of how the data will inform the project. Disadvantaged students are not given particular focus in the evaluation plan. Continuous improvement is not addressed. It would have been helpful to provide an evaluation plan beginning on page 33 where the overall state project goals could have been evaluated. Listing out how each of the goals listed on p 20-24 would be evaluated would have strengthened this proposal. This table then could have had a column where consideration was provided for how data collected could be used to inform the project.

Reader's Score: 3

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Project outcomes will be assessed and the results will be shared on the Department of Education website (p. 25). The LEAs will be required to disseminate their program outcomes.

Weaknesses:

No details of dissemination efforts are provided. This would have strengthened the application. Accessibility issues are not addressed. There is no indication as to whether data will be disaggregated by student subgroup.

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: 13

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The SEA will work with Title I to ensure that a good pool of applicants are encouraged to apply (p. 25). A variety of competitions will be held (p. 3) to target different age groups. This ensures that both LEAs and early childhood providers will be able to apply. The SEA developed a rubric to measure evidence-based practices for struggling readers (p 27) which will ensure that projects have incorporated evidence-based practices prior to receiving funding. The application states that subgrantees will be held to high standards and requirements to be considered; for example, they must develop a timeline and engage in collaboration (p. 26-28). A minimum of four expert judges will review each application (p. 30).

Weaknesses:

This rubric is not detailed so it is hard to judge the quality of its evaluative properties. This proposal would have been strengthened by providing either an example of the rubric (p. 27) or at least more detailed information about what would be evaluated. It is unclear if the rubric will tie back to the competitive process. Many comments are generically stated about what the LEAs will be required to do in the competition for grants (p. 26-29) but details about how these grants will be reviewed and judged to meet these criteria are not provided.

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:**

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The SEA encourages subgrantees to hire additional staff to work with ELLs and students with disabilities (p.27). Subgrantees are appropriately required to conduct a needs assessment (p. 27). On p 28 the applicant specifically requires subgrantees to develop a plan to engage in collaboration with various agencies, families, and organizations. This shows a solid commitment to involving these groups in the implementation of the literacy plan.

Weaknesses:

No specific activities are proposed for disadvantaged learners other than the hiring of additional staff. Evidence-based practices for working with these groups are not addressed. The applicant may wish to draw on the literature of culturally relevant pedagogy to incorporate this in any future proposals.

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:

The applicant specifically refers to a coherent strategy for the alignment of federal funds on page 29. They will require subgrantees to include specific plans to address implementation. This should lead to coordinated use of funds since this requirement is in place for LEAs.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

This is addressed with a statement that priority will be given (p 29).

Weaknesses:

No definition of poverty is provided. The process for applying the priority is not addressed. It would be helpful to specify exactly how this priority would figure into the decision-making process and what constitutes high-poverty.

Reader's Score: 1

- 5. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education**

Sub Question

whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.

Strengths:

The rubric used to evaluate the subgrantee applications will be geared towards measuring the research base of its literacy program. The SEA appropriately requires the LEAs to provide evidenced-based practices in their curricula (p 27). Specific examples per grade range are provided (p 27).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear who will judge the applications using the rubric mentioned on page 27. The examples listed on page 27 are not exhaustive of evidence-based practices and are not necessarily going to ensure that priority is given to LEAs with the strongest available evidence in their applications.

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:

A review team will be assembled and at least four readers will review each application (p. 30). Both internal and external SEA reviewers will review the applications.

Weaknesses:

The SEA addresses requiring the LEAs to align with the state curricula after being funded (p. 31). This is not addressed at the pre-funding or decision making level at all. There are no details provided as to how the evidence base of proposals or alignment of proposals with state standards will be reviewed or judged. There is no information about making the process and results publicly available.

Reader's Score: 1

Project management - Project management

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

Reader's Score: 3

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

A five-year project management table is provided (p 29-30) that highlights major activities per each year.

Weaknesses:

The activities listed are vague and the yearly timeframe (rather than more specific timeframes) makes it difficult to assess the feasibility of managing this project on time and within the budget. The activities should be tied to the objectives more clearly. It would also be helpful to turn this table into one that ties in the persons responsible for the implementation of each activity and what milestones will define

Sub Question

achievement. There is insufficient information to determine whether this is a feasible and manageable plan.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes minimum requirements for the program administrator including a Master's degree and minimum 6 years teaching experience (p. 31).

Weaknesses:

None of the key personnel were identified in the narrative. There is insufficient evidence provided to determine whether they have relevant training and experience. There is one resume included immediately following the reference list, but it is not tied directly to a position in the narrative.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The state literacy team (p. 32) will adequately bring a diversity of educator perspectives to the program. This team represents key stakeholders including various disciplines.

Weaknesses:

There is no tie in of families related to the implementation of the project. Beyond the state literacy team which is not comprehensive, it is unclear who else will be involved. It is unclear if anyone outside of the SEA and LEA will help to guide this project. Since the project will be run by the SEA and funds will be given to the LEA, it is important to include perspectives outside of these two groups to help design and implement the project so that a diversity of stakeholders can have input.

Reader's Score: 1

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: 6.5

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:

The budget provides adequate funds to LEAs to implement projects. These awards should be of sufficient size to allow them to hire experts and perform professional developments (p. 34, budget). The SEA will also provide support to LEAs to help develop protocols and measures (p. 33). SEA funds will be

Sub Question

appropriately used to support and sustain literacy gains (p. 33).

Weaknesses:

The objectives themselves are a bit vague which makes it difficult to assess the budget in relation to the objectives. The total impact in numbers of students is not addressed. It would be helpful to determine how many schools and therefore how many students would be reached via these funds. On or after page 33, it would have been helpful to have included a specific number of students or schools targeted to receive funds through the dollars given to LEAs. Also, if activities were tied to the objectives listed on pages 20-24, there would be more of a gauge of what would be accomplished with the money requested.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes the ratios required on p 33. The target funds listed match the priorities. The applicant plans to require the LEA to split the secondary funds equitably as described.

Weaknesses:

There is no plan in place to ensure these ratios will be enacted. A rudimentary statement is made that they will. It would be helpful to show how this can be ensured.

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 SEA is requiring subgrantee applicants to submit a plan to address implementation of coordinated funds (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

No mention is made of how the SEA may support these efforts. It is simply a requirement. It is not clear to what extent this will impact funding decisions. Sustainability is not addressed. It is not clear whether the SEA will use the grant to leverage any other funds.

Reader's Score: 0.5

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:

There is a statement (p. 34) that subgrantees will be provided subgrants of sufficient size to ensure for 4 key tasks. These tasks include hiring reading support, partnering with an institute of higher education, providing professional development, and hiring experts to work in schools. These tasks are appropriate for this type of grant. \$1 million dollars per year will be provided to LEAs.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The tie in of funds to high-need schools is not addressed. No specific plan for ensuring the significance of awards set aside for high need schools is provided. More detail about dollar amounts earmarked for high need schools would assist in gauging whether the subgrants would be of sufficient size to support services for high need students.

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:

All subgrantees will be required to include technology into their comprehensive literacy plan (p. 19). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is appropriately required for students with ELL or disabilities (p 19). Professional development will be provided to ensure technology is used throughout the curriculum.

Weaknesses:

The plans for use of technology (p. 18-19) are vague. It is unclear how this will differ from current technology use. Learning activities related to technology are only presented for secondary grades (p. 15-16).

Reader's Score: 3

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

This project proposes to require states to design projects to improve literacy through grades 12. The applicant addresses disadvantaged students. A project goal is to improve achievement of disadvantaged youth. This priority has been met.

Weaknesses:

Few specifics of the plan are already determined. The SEA is not proposing specific measures, but rather proposing that they fund LEAs. The LEAs will determine how this work is done.

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 project will hire an evaluator to evaluate project-related data. LEAs are required to evaluate their projects to determine achievement and report this back to the SEA. On page 31 it is stated that literacy specialists will work with LEAs to ensure that teachers effectively employ evidence-based strategies, screen and continually assess students, and intervene. This priority has been met.

Weaknesses:

The SEA doesn't address data collection specifically, but rather it is addressed by requiring this of LEAs. The SEA may want to take more of a role in this data usage.

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: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Language Arts Acad. Standards, Curr. & Asses
(S371C110034)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	13.5
Sub Total	37	13.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	10
Sub Total	28	10
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	3
Sub Total	15	3
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	5
Sub Total	20	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	3
Sub Total	5	3
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	34.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SRCL - 1: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Language Arts Acad. Standards, Curr. & Asses (S371C110034)

Questions

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

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

Reader's Score: 13.5

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:

New Jersey has developed a plan for addressing New Jersey literacy needs. The threads identified in this proposal (e.g., academic language, increased access to informational texts, instruction in text features) are consistent with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and research-based instructional strategies (p. 7). The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDE) partnership with higher education in action research around academic vocabulary instructional strategies and Professor-in-Residence programs is a unique use of the Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) resources (p. 8, 15-16). The CCSS professional development plans are differentiated for various educator groups and aspiring teachers (p. 9), a practice supported by research. The State Education Agency (SEA) recognizes the importance of families in the language and literacy development of young children and provides detailed descriptions of research-based activities for infants through grade 5 that sub-grantees will be required to incorporate into their proposals (p. 10). The SEA will require sub-grantees to provide materials for homes and family literacy centers to engage families with their children for the purpose of literacy achievement (p. 14-15). Instruction in grades K-12 is appropriately focused on the needs of each student, with differentiated instruction based on student reading proficiency (p. 15-17). It would be helpful to other Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to learn more about the activities implemented in the schools that evidenced considerable success with poverty and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students (p. 5-6). This SEA attends to mobile students (p. 17). Often the achievement of students suffers as they move from LEA to LEA. How NJ tracks and supports these students would be of interest to other proposal recipients.

Weaknesses:

There is little information regarding the details of the New Jersey Comprehensive Literacy Plan for Birth (B)-grade 12 students in the proposal. It is not clear how the actions (e.g., action research on academic language instructional strategies [p. 8], bilingual English as a Second Language activities [9-10], one-to-one intervention sessions for students in grade 6-12 [p. 11]) described are consistent with those proposed in the literacy plan (p. 8-10). The family and community components are limited to B to grade 5; engaging parents across the B-grade 12 levels is central to ensuring student achievement of the English Language Arts CCSS (p. 9, 10, 12, 14). There is no description of any explicit teaching strategies to be used to support the literacy development of preschoolers (p. 14-15), and the consistency between the instruction for K-12 students (p. 15-17) and the CCSS is unclear. Clarity on the research-based strategies the SEA will require LEAs to use is missing. While reference to specific programs is not required, the criteria required to select the program or strategies should be noted (p. 15-17). It is not clear that what the reading and writing projects provide to sub-grantees will be linked to the CCSS or to

Sub Question

the state literacy plan (p.15). Further, the link between the text complexity of the assessments and the CCSS text requirements is important; CCSS increases the reading level demands at each grade level significantly (p. 17).

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The New Jersey Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program set three goals: Goal 1 is aimed at improving student outcome by increasing the percentage of students, specifically special education and English language learners, by 5-10 percent per year (p. 0). The SEA studied the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) data to illustrate significant achievement gaps between the general population and the students from low income homes and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students (p. 2-3). It is clear that the SEA has been aware of these gaps and has invested federal and state dollars in several very successful efforts to impact poverty and LEP student achievement. These previous experiences provide a roadmap for the kinds of activities that might be implemented with SRCL funding. The SEA will use these funds to build on its legislation regarding the screening of students; this screening serves the important purpose of differentiating instruction for students (p. 11). In addition, the SEA proposes a mix of activities aimed at impact student achievement and student performance goals (p. 13-17).

Weaknesses:

No data were analyzed from the B to 5 age level or from the students with disabilities population (p. 2-3). . Though portfolios will be used to gather evidence of progress of ESL students toward English competence, the proposal is silent on the use of these portfolios as a data collection tool. Recognizing the challenges encountered in securing accurate data on English as Second Language (ESL) students, these portfolios might serve as a useful tool (p. 10). It is not clear how the needs assessment or screening measure map onto the CCSS. As the English Language Arts standards have changed, so too must the assessment tools (p. 2-3, 11). The SEA is not clear on how the activities proposed (p. 13-17) are consistent with current research and provide a clear and credible path forward to achieve the goal of improving student outcome. In addition, what is being improved by 5-10 percent per year is not clear (p. 0).

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The SEA will provide technical assistance in three areas: (1) Recognizing the lack of English as a Second Language and bilingual experts in the LEAs, the SEA will secure the services of consultants to provide professional development to the sub-grantees, with job-embedded follow-up coaching; (2) recognizing teachers need for assistance working with special needs students, the SEA will require LEAs to use special education experts to develop specific strategies and lesson plans so that lessons can be differentiated (p. 10); (3) recognizing the mobility of New Jersey students, the SEA will attempt to address the needs of mobile students (p. 17). These plans for technical support to sub-grantees are inclusive of group and job-embedded experiences for sub-grantees. Aspects of the content to be provided are consistent with CCSS (e.g., including content area teachers [21]; writing argument[p. 21], working with increasing complex texts [p. 21]).The SEA will provide support to the LEAs who are funded in the form of literacy specialists (p. 20-21), training in the CCSS and related instructional strategies (p. 21), professional development on bilingual and ESL strategies (p. 21), and current research linked to CCSS (p.

Sub Question

23). These will assist the LEAs in implementing high quality comprehensive literacy programs.

Weaknesses:

While the SEA encourages/requires sub-grantees to hire several experts and consultants, it does not describe how it will provide support to these new hires to ensure their knowledge of the state literacy plan (e.g., p. 9, 10, 13). While the SEA provides several directives regarding what LEAs must do (e.g., work with bilingual and ESL experts [p. 9], develop a partnership with an institution of higher education [p. 8-9], use special education experts [p. 10]), there is no description of the technical assistance the SEA will provide to support the SEAs. Further, it does not describe how it will provide support to these experts to ensure their knowledge of the state literacy plans (e.g., p. 9, 10, 13). The proposal is mute on the technical assistance the SEA will provide to the LEAs regarding the preparation of sub-grantee proposals. While sub-grantees are required to conduct a needs assessment as a part of the application process, the SEA provides directives to the LEAs regarding their use of screening, diagnostic and summative assessments, but no indication that technical support will be provided in the selection of these measures (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:

The SEA identifies seven goals of its SRCL project. Goal 1 focuses on student achievement, while the remaining goals were activity goals to aid the SEA in the achievement of goal 1 (p. 19-20). An external evaluator will work with the SEA to look at student outcomes and growth, the action research, and changes in instructional practices (p. 23).

Weaknesses:

A specific evaluator is not identified and the criteria for hiring an external evaluator are not specified. The specific indicators of student achievement are not identified. How data will be disaggregated is not described (p. 23-24). What data will be gathered to assess progress toward each of the seven goals is not specified (p. 19). Finally, the goal of improving student outcome data lacks clarity (p. 0, 19). The SEA provides no information regarding how the evidence will be used to inform and continuously improve the project. Specific information regarding all items in the indicator are lacking.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The SEA intends to share the assessment results on the NJ Department of Education website. LEAs and providers will be required also to disseminate program outcome data (p. 24). Further, action research results will be shared throughout the state (p. 8). LEAs must develop a mechanism to share their data with students, families, grade-level teams, and professional learning communities (p. 27)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Insufficient information is provided on how data will be made available and to whom in what formats (p.24). Though action research data will be shared throughout the state, the how of this sharing is not described (p. 8). Sub-grantees are directed to develop a mechanism for sharing data without guidance from the SEA (p. 27). Further, the audiences with whom the LEAs are directed to share their data are not inclusive of the audiences defined in the criterion (p. 27).

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: 10

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 proposal suggests that districts with high percentages of English language learners and special-needs students will be contacted to encourage them to apply (p. 24) and that the LEA must provide evidence of capacity to administer the grant and improve student outcomes (p. 25).

Weaknesses:

The proposal provides no information on the how the SEA will determine capacity of LEAs or early childhood providers to implement a proposal of this scope. The SEA could have required the sub-grantees to provide evidence of their success in improving the literacy achievement of their students over the past two or three years, or it could have required information on accreditations (i.e., National Association for the Education of Young Children) or recognitions (i.e., Blue Ribbon Panel school) earned by the selected schools because of excellent instructional practices and student achievement. Only minimal information is provided regarding the announcement and review of application procedures (p. 29)

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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The specific populations of focus are English language learners and special education students (p. 9). Because the state recently adopted the CCSS, the SEA appropriately will require sub-grantees to implement a curriculum, with differentiated instruction, linked to the CCSS.

The proposal directs sub-grantees to do a needs assessment (p. 26-27).

Birth (B) to 5 sub-grantees are required to connect with families in their homes (p. 12) or in community settings (p. 13) and to locate family literacy programs in central places (p. 15). Families are proposed to be involved most directly in the B-5 level and minimally in the elementary grades (p. 27). The SEA will require each sub-grantee to form relationships with institutions of higher education and specific projects (i.e., reading and writing projects) at institutions of higher education (p. 8, 15, 28).

Weaknesses:

The SEA does not define what a sufficient number of English language learners and student with disabilities would be to apply for the SRCL funds (p. 24). In addition, the key focus of the SRCL funds is disadvantaged children, the proposal does not make clear whether or not the SEA intends to give priority to LEAs who serve high percentages of students who live in poverty who are English language learners (ELL) or who have special needs. How preference will be given to schools and providers with high percentages of poverty students is not defined (p. 25). The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant program is inclusive of ELL students and special needs students, but not exclusive to these populations only.

The SEA provides no guidance to LEAs or early childhood providers regarding the skills that must be assessed or kinds of assessment tools that must be used. There is no reference to the use of the state test as a measure of impact on student learning (p. 26-27). There is no reference to a needs assessment regarding the link between the current teaching practices in place in the district and the CCSS-required practices.

The proposal describes a minimal number of other agencies that the sub-grantees should partner with to promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for the target population of students. The most specific reference is to the mandatory partnership with institutions of higher education and with families (p. 8, 12).

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

LEAs receiving Federal and state funds will be required to develop specific plans describing how to use these funds to improve literacy; coordination of funds is required. Both Federal and state funds currently received by the LEA must be addressed in each sub-applicaition. The SEA aims for the coordinated use of funds to support the goals of the project (p. 28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The proposal indicates that high poverty populations will be determined by the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced lunch (p. 28).

Weaknesses:

While the the SEA indicates that it will give priority to LEAs and providers who serve high poverty populations, the proposal provides no details regarding as to how this will occur (p. 28). The SEA could have provided information to indicate how points would be awarded to those sub-grantees who serve the highest percentage of poverty students. The description of how priority will be given to LEAs or providers of early childhood education who propose to serve high-poverty schools or populations is minimal.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The SEA will develop a rubric to judge the research base of the literacy program to be developed by the sub-applicants (p. 28). If provided prior to the call for proposals, this rubric will guide the LEAs and early childhood providers in the development of stronger applications. If developed as an evaluation tool, this will assist the SEA in selecting the highest quality sub-applicant proposals.

Weaknesses:

How this rubric will be used and who will do the evaluating is unclear. In addition, the strategies proposed at the B-5 level are inconsistent with the full range of early literacy skills research identifies as key to the development of children who are successful readers. Further, the SEA has not defined how the items identified as required in grades K-5 and 6-12 are consistent with the full complement of CCSS (p. 26). The SEA defines the features of the literacy program that each sub-grantee must implement, but not the research base associated with these features (p. 26).

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 SEA intends to develop a rubric to judge the sub-applications received. The SEA will select and train four reviewers, all with a literacy background; this will strengthen the review process. Sub-grantees will be notified of the approval or non-approval of their application (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not describe the criterion to be used to judge the quality of the proposals submitted by the sub-grantees (p. 29). Further, the link between the CCSS and the curricula and materials sub-grantees may purchase for use with their disadvantaged students is not described. Finally, the SEA does not indicate that it intends to make the process and results of the review publicly available.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 1.5

Project management - Project management

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

Reader's Score: 3

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 SEA provides a brief management plan, driven by brief statements of activities rather than the project goals (p. 29). Responsibilities are defined broadly (i.e., SEA or LEA/provider), with no indication of the milestones to be achieved each year.

Weaknesses:

The management plan does not indicate the objectives of the project and does not provide a plan for how each will be achieved (p. 29-30). The project management table is not linked to the project goals (p. 20-21). The plan focuses on activities, and the description of the activities are at the global level (i.e., academic year program), rather than providing the details needed to guide the implementation of the project. Similarly, responsibility is assigned at the global level (i.e., SEA or LEA/provider). No milestones are noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The proposal indicates that a program administrator with a graduate degree will manage the project. Five literacy specialists will work with the sub-grantees to align the literacy curriculum with the CCSS (p. 30-31). The SEA intends to employ or require the employment of several staff (i.e., project manager, literacy specialists), experts, home-based language arts literacy educators, and coordinators (p. 9, 10, 12, 14).

Weaknesses:

The SEA does not provide information regarding the training or experiences of the numerous staff who will be employed to aid in the achievement of the goals of the project (p. 9, 10, 12, 14). In addition to a graduate degree, the project manager must have six years of teaching; experience teaching is unrelated to the skills of managing a project like the one proposed (p. 30). No information is provided regarding the credentials/qualifications or training of the to-be-selected evaluator.

Reader's Score: 1

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The SEA will ensure that a range of perspectives guide the implementation of the project through the continued meeting of the State Literacy Team. This team includes representatives from the education field (p. 31).

Weaknesses:

The SEA does not describe its plans to ensure that the voices of families, Head Start Advisory Councils, community-based organizations and libraries will be heard in the design and implementation of the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 1

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: 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:

The amount requested for management is minimal, with portions of two positions dedicated to this project as in-kind. The majority of the dollars will be passed through the SEA to LEAs and providers. Funding is requested for the mandatory connections with institutions of higher education to conduct the action research (budget narrative, p. 6).

Weaknesses:

The goals of the project are extensive; the budget narrative does not link the funding to the achievement of the goals (p. 19-20). As the design of the project is not carefully and succinctly described in the proposal, it is difficult to judge the extent to which the costs are reasonable. The amount requested for the project evaluation (\$80,000 of a \$30,000,000 total budget) is unrealistically low for the assessment tasks minimally described in the project narrative. A specific New Jersey evaluation person or team is not identified. The proposal narrative provides no indication of the parameters needed to define the funding distribution to LEAs. Travel to national conferences is requested without clear indications of how this travel links to the State literacy plan or the project goals. The cost/person of the summer academies is not provided. There are no funds indicated in the budget for the purchase of assessment tools (budget narrative, p. 4).

Reader's Score: 2

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.**

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The SEA intends to run three competitions, one at each level (i.e., B-5, K-5, 6-12). The SEA will grant LEAs flexibility in applying for one or all levels (p. 25), with the SEA ensuring that the amount awarded is reflective of the required distribution (p. 32).

Weaknesses:

How the funds to the LEAs will be used in a coordinated manner to ensure impact across the age/grade clusters is unclear. Given the flexibility the SEA intends to grant LEAs (p. 25), to ensure the appropriate distribution of funds to each grade cluster will be a challenge. For example, if LEAs or providers all submit outstanding proposals that meet all of the guidelines focused on B to 5, the SEA will be out of compliance if it funds them all. The SEA would need to ensure a balance of proposals at each grade cluster consistent with the statute mandate to be in compliance.

Reader's Score: 1

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 Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) staff will work with several offices at New Jersey Department of Education to ensure that full resources are used to ensure the success of the project. The funding sources these offices control appear linked to K-12 (p. 31).

Weaknesses:

While the proposal suggests that LEAs must leverage other state and federal funds, neither the proposal nor the budget provide any details on how this might occur (p. 31). Those listed appear linked only with K to 12 education; there is no mention of the Federal and state funds targeted to B to 5 and how these funds might be used to improve the possibility of the success of the project in improving student performance (p. 31). While the SEA suggests that it will use other federal funds as appropriate to support and sustain literacy gains, it provides no clear plans regarding how the SEA has or the LEA must plan for sustaining funding at the end of the SRCL funds.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The proposal provides information on the total amount to be awarded at each level (p. 25). It also provides information on the maximum number of LEAs or early childhood programs to be funded (p. 25). The SEA proposed these procedures to ensure that the funds awarded were consistent with the statute.

Weaknesses:

While the proposal indicates the maximum size of the requested funding per school or early childhood program and the maximum number of LEAs or early childhood programs to be funded, it does not describe how the amount links to the number of children to be served or the needs of the school. The proposal provides no insights into the why behind the selection of the amount or the limits in the number of programs/LEAs to be awarded funding (p. 25). The budget narrative provides no insights into what the LEAs and providers must use their funds to purchase (budget narrative, p. 4).

Sub Question

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 proposal details several plans for the use of technology (e.g., the goal of developing a model for educational technology use [p. 1]; use of technology in intervention program for grades 6-12 [p. 16]; use of assistive technology [p. 18]). The Internet will be used to share information with various audiences.

Weaknesses:

The proposal suggests the use of technology in learning activities, specifically with grades 6-12 students (p. 15-16) only. Though all sub-grantees will be required to develop a plan detailing the meaningful use of technology (p. 18), the SEA provides no guidance in the components of this plan or the integration of technology into the broader literacy plan.

Reader's Score: 3

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

The SEA proposes a broad range of activities aimed at improving students, specifically the achievement of special education students and English language learner students. The aim is to improve student outcomes by 5-10% a year (p. 0).

Met

Weaknesses:

The SEA does not provide a clear definition of disadvantaged. In the abstract, for example, the focus is on special needs and English language learner students, with no mention of students living in poverty. SRCL is inclusive of special needs and ELL students, but not focused on this group exclusively. The activities described in the proposal lack coherence and are not clearly connected to a state literacy plan; the New Jersey literacy plan is not included in an appendix. How the three grade clusters would be connected to reveal an impact on the literacy performance of disadvantaged students is not clear.

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 calls for the sub-grantees to create an evaluation plan for a formative assessment process (p. 27).

Weaknesses:

While the proposal calls for sub-grantees to create an evaluation plan for a formative assessment process (p. 27), what summative assessment data will be collected and how these data will be aggregated and disaggregated is not described. The SEA proposes that it will contract with a New Jersey institution of higher education as the evaluator, but the proposal provides no details to describe the evaluation or the criteria to be used in selecting the evaluator.

Met

Reader's Score: 0

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