

Status: Submitted

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

### Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** North Dakota Department of Public Instruction -- ND Dept. of Public Instruction Title I (S371C110042)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Quality of State-level activities</b>		
<b>Quality of State-level activities</b>		
1. State-level activities	37	27.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	37	27.5
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
1. State subgrant comp	28	20.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	28	20.5
<b>Project management</b>		
<b>Project management</b>		
1. Project management	15	12
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	12
<b>Adequacy of resources</b>		
<b>Adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	12.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	12.5
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Priority</b>		
<b>Effective Use of Technology</b>		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		
<b>Improving Learning Outcomes</b>		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Absolute Priority 2</b>		
<b>Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making</b>		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	105	77.5

# Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - SRCL - 8: 84.371C

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction -- ND Dept. of Public Instruction  
Title I (S371C110042)

## Questions

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

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

Reader's Score: 27.5

#### Sub Question

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

#### Strengths:

- The goal of the project is to implement a comprehensive and intentional literacy instruction program from early childhood through high school (p. e0) that will build upon a comprehensive State literacy plan.
- The State literacy plan will undergo regular updating and improvement (p. e0).
- School improvement efforts are being integrated through use of a web-based tool (NDMIL) that will help insure alignment of grant, state, and local funds (p. 32).

#### Weaknesses:

- Very limited information is provided about how the SEA will carry out state-level activities. The project administrator will meet regularly with all grantees (p. 13), but the schedule is not specified. She will provide technical assistance as necessary, but this does not ensure that activities will be ongoing and coordinate with the state literacy plan.
- There are no references cited showing that the proposed professional development (p. 14) activities are an effective means of providing professional development.
- The proposal does not provide information about intervention for students who have mastered material or about methods for implementing language and text rich classroom environments.

Reader's Score: 7.5

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

#### Strengths:

- Local concerns and needs are integral to the SEA literacy plan (p. 14) making it more likely that local teams will engage with State plans.
- Data considered include poverty rates, AYP and North Dakota state assessments (p. 14).
- The plan includes a focus on disadvantaged Native American students (p. 14) who have a demonstrated high level of need.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

- No plans for a needs assessment regarding kinds of professional development needed, particular needs of different ages of children, or different needs across LEAs are proposed.
- No data collection is proposed for growth in children 0-3.
- It is unclear how the SEA plans to target the specific need of improving the language skills of Native American children with limited English.
- The type of professional development opportunities are not linked to research showing that they can be effective for improving instruction.
- A tremendous amount of responsibility is vested in the instructional teams (p.15) which will require time outside of the school day; however, there is no money allocated in the budget to pay for extra time which may make it very difficult for LEAs to meet the SEA requirements for instructional teams.
- Because each instructional team may develop different plans (p. 15), implementation across the state could vary widely and reduce effectiveness and the State's ability to determine what does or does not work to improve student outcomes.
- More information is needed about the local literacy teams(p. 15) including qualifications and how they interface with the SEA, each other, and the LEAs. This is needed to promote collaborative goals for student outcomes.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

- Pre-application technical assistance will be provided to LEAs (p. 15), helping to improve the quality of LEA applications.
- Local colleges will be involved in supporting LEA efforts (p. 5), providing a valuable support for local literacy teams through volunteers and professional development.

**Weaknesses:**

- The plan for ongoing technical assistance for grantees lacks specificity (p. 15). For example, the schedule for onsite visits is regular but not defined and training and guidance will be provided as needed. The proposal states that some professional development may be provided. This does not ensure a high level of quality.

**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 evaluation will be conducted by an independent team of qualified measurement professionals (p. 19).
- The evaluation measures growth in student literacy, teacher effectiveness and growth, and program effectiveness (p. 19).
- A data collection timeline is included (p. 19).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

- The majority of data collected are qualitative rather than quantitative (p. 19). In particular, the proposal does not include provisions for collecting standardized student achievement data except in preschool, 3rd, 5th, 8th and 11th grades. To provide timely feedback to teachers and project leaders that will inform instruction, more comprehensive data is required.
- Progress is not measured for children ages 0-3, making it difficult to adjust instruction to improve student outcomes.
- No measures of teacher fidelity to trained skills is proposed. If the planned program activities are not successful in the first year, this will make it difficult to determine whether it is the activities themselves or their implementation that is the problem.
- More details are needed on how teachers will have the time to complete observations on all students (p. 21), whether these observations provide reliable and valid results, and whether teachers have the time to consolidate and analyze the data for all of their students so that it can be used in a meaningful way to improve student outcomes.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**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:**

- Information will be disseminated through a variety of outlets including local teams (p. 24) which will make it accessible to local stakeholders.
- Local teams have a variety of stakeholders (p. 24) helping to insure that information will be useful to different groups and organizations.

**Weaknesses:**

- A data dissemination plan for parents of children 0-3 is not included in the proposal.
- It is unclear how qualitative data could be made part of the report cards at state and district levels, since those require a short format and report quantitative data.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

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

**Reader's Score: 20.5**

**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:**

- A three-part review process is in place (p. 26). This will help to insure a more accurate and unbiased review of applicants.

**Sub Question**

-A training review will be provided for three-member grant review team prior to scoring applications (26), making it more likely that LEA proposals will receive a thorough and accurate review aligned with SEA intents.

**Weaknesses:**

- The proposal does not include plans to ensure that the grant review team will have no conflict of interest. Further, the actual team membership is not specified (i.e. will include at least one member from state literacy team; p. 26), suggesting that the SEA is not sure who they want to review the grant proposals. It is critical to ensure that reviewers have no conflict of interest.
- No plan for weighting or distribution of points is provided. This makes it difficult to tell how the SEA will judge applicants.
- No scoring checklist is provided, making it more difficult to conduct consistent reviews.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

- The SEA is targeting students with the highest needs in the state (p. 29) by targeting districts located on or near Native American reservations with very high poverty rates.
- LEAs must describe needs using needs assessment data (p. 30) that is aligned with the State comprehensive literacy plan.
- A number of other initiatives could potentially be coordinated with the SRCL project (p. 31) including those of Native American communities.
- The local literacy teams (p. 31) have representatives from many different local organizations.

**Weaknesses:**

- The draft application (appendix) does not specify the kinds of information the LEA must include to complete a needs assessment.
- No question on the draft LEA application (appendix) addresses capacity directly.
- The draft application (appendix) refers to building level applicants, which may not fit the profile of districts and the draft application does not ask specific questions targeting information outlined in the SEA application (e.g. specific plans for professional development).
- The draft LEA application (appendix) does not require applicants to describe how they will support effective teaching or how they will improve student achievement.
- The providers capacity to provide high quality instruction is not considered in the proposal.
- Description of what LEAs will be required to do in the text of the SEA application (beginning on p. 31), does not map directly onto questions in the draft LEA application.

**Reader's Score: 5**

3. (c) **The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a**

**Sub Question**

**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:**

- SEA states that LEA applicants must align literacy instruction efforts across projects (p. 31), helping to insure a more coherent approach to improving literacy outcomes.
- Applicants must indicate how they are using tools, such as web-based assessment, to coordinate literacy projects (p. 31). This will promote collection of uniform data across sites.

**Weaknesses:**

- The SEA draft application for LEAs (appendix) does not ask them to provide a plan for implementing a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction. Different measurement programs are discussed in the text of the SEA application, but nothing directly addresses improvement of literacy instruction.

**Reader's Score: 1.5**

- 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:**

- According to the SEA plan and requirements for LEAs, high poverty schools will be served (p. 35). North Dakota's Native American students are given high priority because of their poverty level.

**Weaknesses:**

- No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

- LEA applicants will be scored according to their alignment with the State plan (p. 35), which considered educational research during its formation.

**Weaknesses:**

- The draft application (appendix) does not require applicants to provide evidence that interventions are research-based or have the possibility of improving student achievement.
- Various terms used in the SEA and draft LEA applications include project, intervention, and strategy. It is not clear what kind of evidence the SEA requires from the LEA when these terms are not defined and are used interchangeably.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

- The subgrant review process has been updated from a prior Reading First process that was successful (p. 36).
- The subgrant review process will be published as required (p. 36), insuring that stakeholders statewide will receive the information.

**Weaknesses:**

- Limited information is included in the draft LEA application (appendix) for how LEAs should address the needs of children ages 0-5.
- The SEA application text states that LEAs must include evidence that research-based materials are used (p. 36), but no question addresses this in the draft LEA application (appendix).

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Project management - Project management**

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

**Reader's Score: 12**

**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 comprehensive timeline of activities is provided (p. 39).
- The management team has relevant experience (p. 36).

**Weaknesses:**

- More budget detail (budget narrative in appendix) is needed to determine whether the management plan is sufficient to achieve the objectives of the project.
- The FTE for project staff are low given the amount of technical assistance proposed in the SEA application - only 75% FTE for NDSRCL.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

- The training and experience of key personnel are sufficient for project purposes (p. 36; resumes in appendix).

**Weaknesses:**

- There is no indication that experts in early literacy or reading and writing will be utilized in any aspect of the project. This reduces the likelihood that programs will use the most effective programs of instruction.
- The resume for the project director is missing from the appendix.

**Sub Question**

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

-According to the SEA application (p. 25), local input from a variety of stakeholders will be very important in this project.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources**

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

**Reader's Score: 12.5**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

-Proposed salaries and fringe benefits are consistent with the State salary schedule (p. 43).

-Funds will be leveraged by sharing professional development with other educational agencies that are not a part of SR (p. 43).

**Weaknesses:**

-The amount of time devoted to the project from the state is 75% plus 25% (10% in kind) which may be insufficient to carry out the propose project. In addition the, FTE in the budget justification does not match figures in the text of the application.

-Insufficient detail is provided about who will provide professional development, what their qualifications are, and what their pay rate is to judge whether costs are reasonable. For example, the proposal does not designate how many teachers would be enrolled in how many locations and how many hours of professional development would be delivered.

**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.**

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

-The SEA proposal meets requirements for subgrant allocations.

**Weaknesses:**

-No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

-The SEA application meets requirements for coordinating funds with other projects (p. 45).  
-The SEA is collaborating on program objectives (p. 36), including one jointly funded conference.

**Weaknesses:**

-The SEA application does not address fiscal integration or leveraging of funds.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

-SEA states that grants will be of sufficient size for grantees to meet required objectives based on their prior experience with Title 1 and other literacy projects.

**Weaknesses:**

-Based on information presented in the proposal, it should require about \$175 K for three professional salaries for project staff leaving about \$25K to \$125 K for all other SEA activities. Based on the proposed number of projects to be funded, this does not allow sufficient funds for travel, summer training, incentives or compensating for teacher planning time that are all activities specified in the proposal.

**Reader's Score: 2.5**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology**

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

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

**Strengths:**

- The State will provide professional development on tenets of use of technology.
- LEAs must explain how their strategy will increase student achievement and how they will provide professional development (appendix).
- Technology will be part of the evaluation plan.
- Increased use of technology is required for LEAs (appendix).
- Technology use is addressed in professional development.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 5

**Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes**

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

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

**Strengths:**

Priority is met.

- The project targets the lowest performing schools (10%) and students living in highest poverty areas. If these students can achieve better gains it is likely that practices learned from this project can be successful in other LEAS.
- Care is being taken to incorporate culturally appropriate materials and practices and to involve families in literacy improvement efforts

**Weaknesses:**

- The targets are oral language in early childhood, research-based instructional strategies in elementary school and fluency, vocabulary and comprehension in middle and high school. A comprehensive approach would include research-based recommendations at all age levels contributing to decoding, comprehension, writing and spelling.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

Priority is met.

-Each LEA will be required to appoint a literacy data coordinator to analyze project wide student achievement data. The coordinator will analyze data and provide it in digestible form to teachers at all grade levels and the local literacy team.

-A literacy coach will work with instructional teams and teachers to use student learning data to make instructional decisions.

-Local literacy teams will share data across grade levels.

**Weaknesses:**

-No literacy coach is required for projects under 400 students. It is unclear who will fulfill this important role in these LEAs?

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
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1. State-level activities	37	33
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1. Adequacy of resources	20	12
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<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Priority</b>		
<b>Effective Use of Technology</b>		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		
<b>Improving Learning Outcomes</b>		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Absolute Priority 2</b>		
<b>Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making</b>		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
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# Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - SRCL - 8: 84.371C

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction -- ND Dept. of Public Instruction  
Title I (S371C110042)

## Questions

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

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

Reader's Score: 33

#### Sub Question

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

#### Strengths:

The SEA has designated staff and responsibilities to cover the required Literacy Plan. Since the Plan is already in place, the level of time needed to monitor LEA activities has been established in advance. The Administrator role will manage the communication about the RFP and will supply the LEAs will technical assistance. The Administrator will also coordinate the selection and scoring activities on the submitted proposals.

Much of the communication will occur through the use of technology, reducing cost of travel across the rural school areas. The Evaluator will communicate with the Administrators frequently to establish a continuous feedback loop that can provide quick assistance and feedback around troublesome areas.

#### Weaknesses:

The Plan did not address how language and a text-rich environment would be implemented.

There were no specifics on the types of materials that will be provided for students who master instructional materials early.

Reader's Score: 9

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 primary target of the State Literacy Plan will focus on the Native American reservation population with their documented high level of poverty and poor literacy skills. The Plan, however, will include and be applicable for all North Dakota students. The SEA Literacy Plan will build on current and previous experiences from initiatives such as Reading First and School Improvement grants.

People who experienced these initiatives will be called upon to share their thoughts for the future. In

**Sub Question**

addition, the SEA Plan will expand upon the range of students served by including children from birth to grade 12. The Plan will also incorporate culturally relevant methods to encourage student, teacher and community participation.

Data considered in the Plan development include the State Database with demographic information on poverty and achievement. Although the SEA will target Native American youth, it will include and support all districts who want to participate in the implementation of the State Literacy Plan.

The internet will be used to communicate information about the Plan, using vehicles such as live Webinars. Each of the recipients of an LEA sub grant will need to show commitment to a number of conditions such as: finding time for teachers to meet and work on instructional teams on defining outcomes, aligning standards, planning strategies for students with special needs, reviewing and planning instruction based on achievement data, and participating in professional training on needed topics.

The Local Literacy Teams will also support the family and community connection with their schools and promote family literacy to help improve school readiness and strong achievement.

**Weaknesses:**

The professional development plans were not specified by grade span.

Disaggregated student achievement data were not provided to justify need.

**Reader's Score: 7**

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

**Strengths:**

The SEA will support the sub grant process by communicating specifics about the RFP via the internet, webinars, and postal service. There will be live, face-to-face workshops on a variety of topics from requirements of the grant process to professional development on best-practices for early childhood, new standards, and assessment.

Districts will be advised, using customized plans, to integrate technology into their local literacy plans. The Evaluator will also monitor the integration of the technology over time. Quarterly reports, onsite visits, emails, and phone conversations will serve to inform the SEA of progress on LEA plan implementation. This will allow the SEA to provide feedback to sub-grant recipients so that they can make adjustments to their projects.

Assessment resources will be posted on the state website. A listserv including staff involved in the LEA Plans will include contact information and news regarding the latest developments on the State and Local implementations. This electronic format will allow for just-in-time answers to implementation questions.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no information provided about how achievement will be supported in core subject areas.

It is unclear how often site visits will occur.

The timeline needs to be more specific.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Sub Question**

- 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 State will use a unique evaluation system that builds in cultural relevancy in dealings with the primary audiences. The evaluation system has been tested and refined over time; research citations about it are included and described in the proposal. The evaluation will be conducted by an external researcher who has been certified in evaluation. External evaluation will ensure impartial feedback on results.

The research questions and the data required for answers are neatly described. This will help to focus the evaluation. Questions about achievement overall and by subgroups, numbers of participants engaged and satisfaction with professional development are a part of the research focus.

Data will be collected through surveys, focus groups, and test data.

Surveys will be administered at the end of each professional development session. Teachers will be also be asked to document their reflections of the classroom in terms of the extent to which lessons learned by teachers are taken to the student level.

Focus groups will be held in the spring of each year. Evaluators will look for evidence that children and adults were satisfied and felt respected in their participating roles.

Intangibles or anecdotal experiences of participants will also be collected in the classroom and across the communities.

Cost -Benefit Analysis of the program costs against the value to the participant will be calculated.

Quarterly and Yearly reports will be reviewed by the local and State literacy teams. The frequency of these reports can allow for mid-course corrections.

**Weaknesses:**

The details on data analysis are not provided. Descriptions are missing on how the reports will be organized and reported for a variety of audiences.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

**Strengths:**

The communication regarding the State Literacy Plan will be disseminated in several ways including: the State website, State newsletters, a listserv, and state and district report cards, state conferences, other initiatives ( Title I), Summer Trainings and a number of national organizational conferences.

Local projects outcomes will be reported through the Local Literacy Teams. The teams include a diverse set of members who will help to craft messages to their particular constituent group.

Both the Project Director and the Project Evaluator will support the dissemination of findings.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

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

**Reader's Score: 24.5**

**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:**

The State has established a rigorous sub grant process with appropriate checks and balances to ensure fairness and consistency. The process has three stages: initial screening using a Reviewer's checklist, a 3-member panel review, a validity review to examine priority eligibility and appropriate volume and type of participant to be served. A member of the ND Literacy Committee will be on the final review team. All of the forms to be used in the scoring will be published on the State website and distributed to the applicants.

The review teams will be composed of teachers, tribal college faculty, administrators and other interested parties who are willing to attend training to learn about the sub grant qualifications, standards and research. The applications will be scored against their alignment with an electronic school planning tool and a tool that monitors school progress.

The role of the review team is to check on the quality of the LEA proposal in terms of data presented to establish need.

**Weaknesses:**

The final scoring checklist was not included. Without the checklist, the quality of decision-making could not be rated.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

1. The data presented on Native Americans living on North Dakota reservations clearly identify this group as among the highest in poverty, unemployment, and lowest achievement in the state. Of the 10 districts that are in Year 5 of the Title I Program Improvement status, 7 are on reservations. Almost 100% of the population is on Free or Reduced Price Lunch. The distances across the districts are far, which is typical of rural communities, but it adds to the problem of servicing large groups of students and gaining time and support for family participation. Sub-grants will be required to present local data consistent with the needs identified at the state level.

The State is highly aware of their targeted population and has experience in knowing how to work with them. In fact, a significant effort will be made to be considerate and respectful of the cultural values of the Native communities. The State will require the LEAs to include all of the local resources to support the Local Plan such as the tribal colleges, the surrounding communities, tribal leaders and people working on current or recently funded educational initiatives such as Title I.

The LEAs will be encouraged to hire a Literacy Coach and a Literacy Data Coordinator to provide addition technical and instructional support. The State and Local project leadership will communicate regularly to problem solve and locate necessary resources.

2. The sub grant application addresses the LEA needs assessment study that was conducted and provides data to support the district's eligibility. Data to be provided includes demographic information on poverty and achievement and evidence of success on currently funded programs. The SEA outlines the Local Plan requirements which specify 6 essential elements. The Local Plan will parallel the State Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

3. The North Dakota State Department has extensive experience providing to rural environments. They understand the challenges, such as distance, and appreciate the local support that is essential for any rural program to succeed. The State will require that LEAs include membership from school district staff, early childhood providers, special educators, libraries or book providers, community organizations, and non-profit organizations.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no specifications about how the needs assessment will be carried out.

There is no descriptive information about the types of professional development that will be offered.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

The SEA clearly states the need to integrate all funding and their related programs to support the literacy plan. The Local Plan will parallel the State Plan to support a consistent strategy.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

Priority points will be assigned to applications that intend to serve the highest 10% of poverty areas in the state. The NDDPI sub-grant review process includes a trained and knowledgeable committee of grant reviewers. The role of this group is to check on the size of the need based on collected needs assessment data.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

The applications are required to include research-based strategies that are aligned to the needs culled from the needs assessment.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

The State's sub grant application parallels the State Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The application is completed and in place. All of the scoring elements will be available, in advance, for applicants to review. The results of the reviews will also be available publicly. The application process has been used successfully in the past.

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear how the sub-grantees will be required, specifically, to address needs for birth to 3 year olds. The LEAs will be required to describe the Early Childhood programs included in the projects and the demographics of the of the population in the schools. They will also be required to describe the successes of the early childhood programs (p.e28). By clumping together 0-3 years olds and 4-5 year olds, the differences in types of activities needed for very young(0-3)are unclear.

**Reader's Score: 4.5**

**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: 13

Sub Question

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

**Strengths:**

The SEA Plan is comprehensive, easy to read and is well-documented with roles and responsibilities of key staff. The timeline and milestones are clearly stated in narrative and in a table. Targeted schools have been on School Improvement for several years, so a strong management plan will help to ensure that changes will be made in student achievement. The State Plan includes a mixture of requiring solid credentials and experience in leadership and pedagogy, attention to cultural values, extensive technical and instructional support, written updates quarterly, actual site visits to monitor progress and a well planned formative and summative assessment and evaluation.

**Weaknesses:**

The sharing of staff among various funded projects may result in under-estimating the amount of time a staff member needs to support a particular position. There are no full time staff members. Given the complexity of the plan and the distances from site to site, a greater allocation of time is needed. Currently, the Project Director is .75 time, the program administrative assistant is .5 and the fiscal management is .25.

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

The staff will be well grounded in working with the Native American population and will attend to the respectful details of communication to the group. The Literacy Data Coordinator and the Literacy Coach will be selected based on their background and experience in reading and data analysis, respectively. The Title I Director will serve as the SCRL Director. The teams will work in close proximity to provide support and encourage creative, problem-solving as a group. Administrative and financial support will also be available to schedule and organize functions and control spending.

**Weaknesses:**

The Project Director's resume is not included.

Reader's Score: 4

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

**Strengths:**

The State describes, in detail, how diversity of perspective will be ensured. The diversity is actually a key component to the success of the plan, given the rural and reservation environments. Resources are scarce and needs are high. There will be little contention on this issue. The kind of encouragement and hopefulness engendered by the involvement of families, teachers, and community-based organizations will be an important element to watch; if lacking, the success of the Plan could be negatively impacted.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources**

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

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

The highest expense in the 5% administrative will go to professional development and evaluation.

The state salaries and fringe benefits are aligned to the State salary schedule.

The professional development will be open to anyone in the State.

**Weaknesses:**

Time commitments for the Project Director appear inadequate.

The travel costs are not itemized.

The supply costs are not itemized.

**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 State commits to ensuring the federal regulation on division of funds across age bands. The State believes that provided for the separate groups and yet forcing collaboration across them is an excellent way to support success. Applicants for the sub grants will be required to show the distribution of funds per age band.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Sub Question**

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 scarcity of resources on the reservations will facilitate the need to integrate resources across programs. Since the schools on the reservations are state schools, a level of collaboration among them already exists. The State also works with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the school improvement process using data and planning management tools. There are a number of organizations in place to collaborate and build strength for a sustained effort after the funding has ended.

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear how the leveraging of funds across projects will be done.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

The State Plan is designed to serve about 5,500 students at \$5,700,000 per year. The State will award approximately 15-20 sub grants to districts who serve the areas in most need as evidenced by data provided from a local needs assessment. Each of the grants will be between \$200,000 and \$350,000 per year.

The formula is carefully calculated. SEA will provide generous support for instruction and technical issues. Professional development will be conducted using local tribal colleges. Staff will serve on jointly funded positions. The overall level of coordination and expectations are reasonable and should provide for incremental changes in achievement for students in poverty and who are struggling in literacy achievement.

**Weaknesses:**

LEAs will receive an average of \$300,000 per year to build and expand the services in place from the NCLB legislation. After the allocation of funds for staff, there may not be sufficient funds to implement the program.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The SEA will provide priority preference to LEAs/ ECPs that propose to embed technology that supports Universal Design. The use of software that demonstrates evidence of increased student engagement and achievement will be supported. Software programs that are aligned to the Common Core Standards will be required. Finally, evaluations of the implementation of the district literacy plan will include a specific line item that addresses the effective integration of technology into the instructional plans.

Teacher's effective use of technology will be provided in the evaluation.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes**

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

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

**Strengths:**

MET. The North Dakota proposal is well-written and easy to follow. Mostly all of the require components are established and in place. Critical details such as roles and responsibilities of staff, background statistics to show evidence of need, diversity of opinion, and 'birth through grade 12' coverage are addressed. The background research and citations demonstrate that the proposal foundation is backed by carefully thought through and vetted ideas.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

**Background:** Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with

**the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.**

**Strengths:**

MET. The data collection plan is firm and the training on how to use data for decision-making will be supported by formal training and accessible staff technical assistance. The privacy of participants will be monitored, especially because there are some rural environments that will have small numbers involved in the effort. Given the nature of rural living combined with the poverty of the Native American population on the reservation, the proposal successfully coordinates scarce resources to support and implement the State Literacy Plan. Families, tribal college and community agencies will serve on various committees and have a voice in Plan changes based on incoming data.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score:     0**

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

Status: Submitted

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

### Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** North Dakota Department of Public Instruction -- ND Dept. of Public Instruction Title I (S371C110042)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Quality of State-level activities</b>		
<b>Quality of State-level activities</b>		
1. State-level activities	37	32.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	37	32.5
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
1. State subgrant comp	28	24.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	28	24.5
<b>Project management</b>		
<b>Project management</b>		
1. Project management	15	13.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	13.5
<b>Adequacy of resources</b>		
<b>Adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	10
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Priority</b>		
<b>Effective Use of Technology</b>		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		
<b>Improving Learning Outcomes</b>		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Absolute Priority 2</b>		
<b>Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making</b>		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	105	85.5

# Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - SRCL - 8: 84.371C

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction -- ND Dept. of Public Instruction  
Title I (S371C110042)

## 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: 32.5

#### 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. North Dakota has a Comprehensive Literacy Plan that addresses effective leadership, curriculum, research-based instruction and assessment, professional development, and family and community partnerships. The proposal emphasizes the dynamic nature of the Plan, noting that it will be revised based on lessons learned in this project (p. 13, 24, 30).
2. The proposal is designed to complement and build upon recent statewide initiatives (i.e., school improvement grants, Head Start, 21st Century Learning Centers, etc.). Coordinating such initiatives will assure that sub-grant recipients have the capacity to implement the project and will make sustainability a stronger possibility (Abstract).
3. The proposal includes fluency instruction at the secondary level, an oft-neglected, but critical component of instruction for struggling readers (p. 8).
4. At a grant writing workshop, the state will provide information on research-based strategies, early learning guidelines, K-12 core standards, the ND Comprehensive Literacy Plan, four types of assessment, how to analyze assessment data, and how to make data-driven decisions (p. 17).
5. The NDDPI recently developed a tool to integrate school improvement efforts of Title I and special education using a web-based instrument (NDMIL). The Bureau of Indian Education has also adopted the tool (p. 32). This instrument will support the alignment of SRCL funds with federal funds.
6. The ND State Parent Information Resource Center is a federally funded program that is aligning its efforts with the NDMILE (p. 34). The resources it provides (activities, games, and ideas to support parent involvement, information about child development) will complement the goals of the NDSRCL program.

#### Weaknesses:

1. The applicant did not address interventions for students who have mastered material ahead of peers as well as for students who struggle, as required in section d of Additional Requirements.
2. The applicant did not address language- and text-rich environments, as required in Section d of Additional Requirements.

Reader's Score: 9

2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the

**Sub Question**

**data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.**

**Strengths:**

1. A logic model undergirds the proposal (p. 16). Broad outcomes in the logic model (such as improved school readiness, improved reading, etc.) are specifically defined in the Data Management Plan (p. 23). This roadmap can provide direction and focus as the state and sub-grants plan and implement the project.
2. Need for the project is supported with data such as poverty rates, unemployment rates, Head Start, K-12 student achievement, AYP, and tribal college student achievement. Most of the supporting data is for Native American students, the primary group targeted in this proposal (pp. 2- 4, 7-8, 14).
3. Need for the project is supported with evidence from research regarding early language development, family impact, and poverty (p. 3).

**Weaknesses:**

1. Disaggregated student achievement data to justify a need were not included.

**Reader's Score: 7**

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

**Strengths:**

1. The project administrator will meet regularly with recipients of sub-grants, both face-to-face and via telecommunications (p. 13).
2. Tribal colleges in the state will support the project by providing professional development, teacher support, teacher education volunteers in classrooms, and engaging community members (p. 5).
3. The ND Department of Public Instruction will provide pre-application assistance for eligible schools interested in applying for a sub-grant. This will be done through WebEx presentation, telephone conferencing, and presentations at state conferences (p. 15-17).
4. Project and literacy resources will be posted on the NDDPI Listserv Resources will include information on various assessments, the state Literacy Initiative, resources for parents and community members, and updated research on effective teaching strategies. Sub-grant recipients will automatically be added to the Listserv (which is also available to anyone else who is interested) (p. 17). This resource will allow for just-in-time answers to implementation issues.

**Weaknesses:**

1. The proposal does not address how core student achievement in core academic subjects will be addressed.
2. The proposal state that technical assistance will be provided "as needed" (p. 17). It is unclear how the need will be determined.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Sub Question**

**evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.**

**Strengths:**

1. The external evaluator(s) will be certified as measurement and evaluation professionals (p. 19). This should ensure an impartial assessment of results.
2. The evaluation plan includes specific and measurable research questions (p. 19). This will allow for a focused and useful evaluation.
3. Categories and sources of data are comprehensive, clearly defined, and will allow for triangulation (pp. 19-23).
4. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. This will allow for measurement of objective results as well as perceptions and attitudes, which often have great impact on the success of an initiative.
5. A timeline for collection of the various data is specified (pp. 19-23).
6. The evaluator will provide quarterly and annual reports based on data collected (pp. 39-40). The frequency of such reports could allow for mid-course corrections.

**Weaknesses:**

1. Data analysis protocols are not defined. (For example, Spradley's Domain Analysis or Constant Comparative methodology could be used to analyze qualitative data such as site visits and surveys. A t-test of significance formula could be used to analyze quantitative data, etc.).
2. The project timeline indicates quarterly reports will be submitted, but The State Literacy Team will only meet yearly (March) to discuss reports and make recommendations (p. 40).

**Reader's Score: 8.5**

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

**Strengths:**

1. Project outcomes will be disseminated through various means, including: Title I newsletter, listserv, communication by State Literacy Teams, reports from the evaluator, district website, state conferences, and various meetings (p. 24-25).
2. The state will add results of NDSRCL schools to the NCLB-required state and district report cards (p. 24). Because these reports are designed for public and community audiences, the information should be easily understood and accessible to all stakeholders.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

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

**Reader's Score: 24.5**

**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. Eligible schools will receive a letter informing them of the NDSRCL competition (p. 17). This will assure that the notice will not be missed as it could be if it were posted on the website, discussed in meetings, etc.
2. Applications will proceed through a 3-phase review process with the initial screening used to determine whether applicants have submitted all required materials, meet the eligibility criteria, and have fulfilled application requirements. The initial screening will be based on a checklist designed to assure the process is equitable (p. 26). Impartiality is more likely to occur since proposals are required to go through screenings by three separate groups.
3. The second phase of the review will be conducted by a member of the ND State Literacy Team, with two other members from either the state department, tribal college faculty, Title I practitioners, teachers, or administrators. Panel members will apply and will be selected based on their expertise in standards-based reading research (p. 26).
4. The selected grant panel will receive training to assure they are well-informed about the competition, scientifically-based reading research, and the ND Comprehensive State Literacy Plan (p. 26).
5. The NDDPI will complete the screening to determine if priority points for targeted populations should be awarded (p. 27).
6. All forms will be published on the NDDPI website and distributed electronically to potential applicants (p. 27).
7. Applicants will be encouraged to develop consortium applications. This will strengthen the capacity to implement the proposal, particularly for smaller entities (p. 27).
8. Applicants will be required to describe how members of their Local Literacy Team will promote literacy in the community (p. 27). Community/parent support is always essential, but will be especially important for the target populations in this proposal--Indian reservations steeped in poverty. This requirement will cause applicants to purposefully consider how this component will be supported.
9. Letters of support from partners will be required (p. 27-28). This assures the funder that partnerships are committed, not simply anticipated.
10. The Literacy Coach and Data Coordinator must be experienced teachers who have a reading credential and proven ability to teach reading (p. 28). This required expertise will enhance capacity.
11. A document spelling out requirements for sub-grant allocations are clear, detailed, and comprehensive (Part D in attachments).

**Weaknesses:**

1. Scoring checklists were not included. They would have helped reviewers to determine the quality of the competition's final decisions.

**Reader's Score: 2.5**

- 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. Assurances required of sub-grant applications are clear, comprehensive, and aligned with the Federal program (Part G of attachments).
2. Sub-grants will be required to address each of the essential elements the ND State Comprehensive State Literacy Plan (p. 30). A structured alignment will help to ensure a high-quality literacy program.
3. Sub-grants will be required to provide time for teachers to work in instructional teams. Topics to be addressed by the teams are clearly delineated and address topics essential for improved teaching and learning (p. 15). This requirement will enable local projects to become embedded in the culture so that they are more likely to be sustained.
4. Sub-grants will be required to describe the schools and early childhood programs included in the project as well as demographics of the target population (p. 29). This will ensure that awards address the needs of disadvantaged students as targeted by the state proposal.
5. Sub-grants will be required to provide needs assessment data including indicators of poverty, achievement data for school-aged children, developmental level data for early childhood children, and whether the building receives SIG funding (p. 30). This information will allow the grant review team to determine the need for funding.
6. Sub-grants will be required to identify literacy teams that include teachers, administrators, early childhood providers, families, libraries, community organizations, community members, and tribal college representative (p. 31). This broad base of influence will help to assure local needs are met, thus leading to an effective program.
7. Sub-grants are required to provide training for principals and other building leaders in the essential components of literacy instruction, as well a specific instructional programs and materials used in the building (Part G in Attachments). Training leaders will ensure support and accountability.

**Weaknesses:**

1. The applicant did not address how sub-grants will be required to meet the following requirements set out in paragraph d of the Additional Requirements section, (d2) alignment of materials with state standards, (d3iv) accommodations to ensure all students are reliably and accurately assessed, (d4) interventions for students who have mastered material ahead of peers as well as for students who struggle, and (d 5) language- and text-rich environments.
2. Descriptive Information required of sub-grants does not specify professional development (Part D in Attachments).

**Reader's Score: 6.5**

- 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:**

1. Sub-grants will be required to explain how they are using the tenets of the web-based instrument which aligns Title I and special education efforts (NDMILE) at the state level. This will ensure that literacy efforts are coordinated with, rather than disjointed from, the overall school improvement process (pp. 31-32).
3. Early childhood providers will be required to explain how funds from partner organizations such as Head Start will be leveraged for this project (p. 34).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

1. Requirements for the sub-grants to explain alignment of state, federal, and other funds is limited in the number of funding sources addressed (pp. 31-35).

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

**Strengths:**

1. Priority points will be assigned on the scoring rubric for schools that are located in the highest 10% poverty areas in the state as determined by free and reduced meals data. These areas are primarily Native American Indian reservations (p. 35).

**Weaknesses:**

1. There is limited evidence that 0-5 children of high poverty will be serviced.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

1. Applicants will be scored according to the following evidence: (a) research-based strategies that align with their needs assessment; (b) alignment with state-designated research (Wise Ways); (c) alignment with Indistar, a tool used to document program improvement; and (d) how well the application is aligned to the program improvement plan (p. 35).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

1. The sub-grant application process will be based on a review process already in place that has been successfully used for other projects, such as Reading First (p. 36).
2. The review process will be published on the state department website and presented at meetings held for potential sub-grant applicants (p. 36).

**Weaknesses:**

1. Because the checklists are not included in the proposal, it is unclear how the SEA will judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for curricula and materials (p. 36).

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4.5

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: 13.5

Sub Question

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

**Strengths:**

1. An experienced management team has been identified, with each member's responsibilities and time commitments delineated (pp. 36-38).
2. The plan includes an adequate timeline (pp. 39-40).
3. Significant milestones are identified and are included in the evaluation plan (for example, "Teachers understand applications of research-based reading strategies" and "Increased parent and community involvement) (pp. 39-40). This will ensure that activities do not become an end in themselves.

**Weaknesses:**

1. It is unclear how the objectives can be met without at least one full time position.

Reader's Score: 5

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

**Strengths:**

1. As described in the narrative, the identified Project Director and Project Administrator have relevant experience and training to lead the project (pp. 36-38, 41-42).

**Weaknesses:**

1. A resume was not included for the Project Director.

Reader's Score: 4.5

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

**Strengths:**

1. A diversity of perspectives will be represented on state and local Literacy Teams that include teachers across all grade levels, families, administrators, community members, Head Start representatives, libraries, officials from state and local agencies, and tribal college representatives (pp. 25, 42).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources**

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

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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. The overall budget request is reasonable given the scope of the project. (pp. 42-45, Part F Budget).
2. Project personnel and fringe costs are aligned to the North Dakota state salary schedule (p. 43).
3. NDSRCL professional development activities will be open to any school who is not a grant recipient (p. 43). This will leverage NDSRCL grant funds to make a greater impact on literacy instruction in the state.

**Weaknesses:**

1. The budget allocation for an external evaluator is less than 1% (Budget Narrative). This is insufficient for a quality external evaluation.
2. There is no indication of how much time the evaluator will spend on the project.
3. The budget allocates \$7000 for a local evaluator, but the responsibilities of this evaluator are not spelled out (Budget Narrative).
4. The travel allocation does not provide an estimate for number of trips or an itemized estimate of transportation and subsistence.
5. An itemized estimate for supplies and the basis for the estimate are not included.
6. Itemized costs for professional development are not included.
7. The basis for cost estimates for contractors is not included.

**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:**

1. The SEA will award sub-grant funds according to statutory requirements (p. 44).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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:**

1. The ND State Literacy Team was established with federal funding as part of the FY 2010 Coordinated Appropriations Act under the Title I demonstration authority. The team will play a significant role in the grant application process and implementation. In addition, it will serve as a model for required local Literacy Teams (p. 42).
2. The Project Manager is ND Title I Director. Programs supervised by the Title I office include Education for Homeless Children and Youth, Even Start, Literacy Initiative, Migrant Education, Neglected and Delinquent, Private School Programs, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (pp. 36, 45). Placing the NDSRCL project under the Title I umbrella will allow for coordination of services.
3. The NDDPI will assist sub-grants in leveraging funds from various sources, including leveraging professional development through tribal colleges (p. 46).

**Weaknesses:**

1. It is unclear how State and Federal funds will be leveraged.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

1. North Dakota's plan will improve learning outcome of 5,500 disadvantaged children birth to grade 12, primarily on American Indian reservations. The budget will allow for sufficient funds to support this target number (Abstract).

**Weaknesses:**

1. It is unclear how literacy coaches will be funded (p.10).

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology**

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

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

**Strengths:**

1. Competitive preference will be given to sub-grants that propose the use of technology for Universal Design for Learning (p. 11).
2. Increased access to technology, as well as professional development in the effective use of such technology, will be a key component of sub-grants (p. 11, 12).
3. The ND Department of Education will provide professional development on effective uses of technology in the classroom, which will be tailored to specific needs and goals of individual schools (pp. 12, 17).
4. Sub-grant applications that propose to use technology will be required to justify their plan in terms of student achievement, student engagement, and ongoing support and professional development for teachers (p. 12).
5. Teachers' effective use of technology will be part of the project evaluation (p. 12).
6. Some professional development will be provided using WebEx.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 5

**Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes**

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

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

**Strengths:**

**PRIORITY MET**

1. The proposal's logic model identifies the overall goal: All children will have strong literacy skills in ND. Methods to reach this goal are defined by output activities. Significant and measurable outcomes/impacts are identified to ensure the goal is reached (p. 16).
2. The proposal targets 10% of the lowest performing schools in the state--over 5,500 children in 15 or more school districts and communities. The highest priority is for children living on Indian reservations, which are the highest poverty areas in North Dakota (Abstract, p. 14).
3. There is a strong emphasis on community involvement, which is critical in the context of Native American Indian reservations. Community members, parents, and local/tribal colleges will comprise Local Literacy Teams for each sub-grant (Abstract).
4. The project focuses on culturally responsive education (Abstract, p. 6-7).
5. The proposal is strong on the importance of oral language development for young children, citing seminal

research as evidence (p. 6).

**Weaknesses:**

1. Core academic subjects are not adequately addressed.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

PRIORITY MET

1. Each sub-grant will have a Literacy Data Coordinator who will coordinate data trends for children birth-grade 12 (Abstract).
2. Sub-grants that serve over 400 children will be required to hire a Literacy Coach who will work with the Data Coordinator in order to lead data-based instructional decisions (p. 10).
3. Data from other projects (i.e., SIG projects, RTI) will be coordinated with the NDSRCL project (p. 10).
4. At a grant writing workshop, the state will provide information on how to make data-driven decisions (p. 17).

**Weaknesses:**

1. A specific requirement for professional development for teachers on data-driven decision making is not included in the proposal.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

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