

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Department of Education (S371C110048)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	34.5
Sub Total	37	34.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	16
Sub Total	28	16
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	14.5
Sub Total	15	14.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	16.5
Sub Total	20	16.5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	2
Sub Total	5	2
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	83.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SRCL - 3: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Oregon Department of Education (S371C110048)

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: 34.5

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:

(A.(i.) (a). Oregon has developed a state literacy plan, Oregon Literacy Plan (OLP), addressing School Readiness, Birth - Age 5, Reading and Language Proficiency, Kindergarten-Grade 12; and Writing Proficiency, Kindergarten-Grade 12. (p.1) The OLP is comprehensive and dynamic. It will be overseen by the Oregon Literacy Leadership State Team which will review data and recommend ongoing updates to the OLP. Oregon has complied with having a comprehensive literacy plan that is continuously improved. (pp. 10 - 12) (c). The State has specifically described its means of making the process and results of its review publicly available, along with the procedures used to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials (pp. 26- 28) A subgrant packet will provide an overview of the requirements and how scoring and awarding will occur (p. 30). Subgrant application scores will be based on demonstrated student need, comprehensiveness and cohesiveness, and capacity for change. (p. 30). (d). Many references are included that Oregon will use grant funding to implement a comprehensive literacy program serving students from birth through grade 12 (pp. 6, 11, 21). Discussion on Needs Assessments is very thorough and comprehensive. (pp. 6-7, 15, 31). All applicants must submit a Needs Assessment. (p. 6). Full Needs Assessments are presented in Appendix A., (d1). Professional development (PD) is integral to Oregon's literacy initiatives. ODE (Oregon Department of Education) has created a comprehensive technology-based PD website focusing on effective literacy practices.(p. 7). Final Action Plans submitted by the subapplicants must prioritize PD plans that enable teachers to provide effective instructional to all students. (p. 8). The Oregon Department of Education Striving Readers Center (ODESR) will provide technical assistance for professional development to ensure that it is aligned with grant priorities, Action Plan, and the OLP. It will ensure that the PD plan explicitly addresses the needs of targeted populations and is ongoing and sustainable. (pp. 20- 21) (d2). Effective service and support within and between tiers described in the Response to Intervention literature (RTI) is achieved through implementation of differentiated program and practices and are aligned with principles of universal design for learning (p. 3). Providing effective instruction and service that meet principles of universal design for learning will be achieved through differentiated instructional and programmatic supports (p. 28). Any purchase by subapplicants must involve a review of the evidence base for the program or service. This aspect has been adequately addressed. (p. 36) (d3). Thorough documentation is provided on the Needs Assessment used in implementation (pp. 6- 8). The State will use formative and summative assessments to evaluate student outcomes (p. 16). All participating schools must use a comprehensive system of formative and summative assessments. (p. 16). Detailed descriptions of the assessment measures are provided (pp. 16-18). (4). The State has in place the use of a three-tiered RTI model which addresses the needs of all children (p.9). This ensures that instruction and materials are differentiated and appropriate. (5). (e23). An Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale is provided in the Appendices (A156) for judging

Sub Question

the quality of the literacy environment. (6). Oregon has adequately addressed continuous improvement. (p. 24) An excellent summary of the ODESR Center Technical Assistance is provided. One of its responsibilities is to determine instructional adjustments and supports based on student performance data and adjust Action Plans accordingly (p. 20). Evaluation at the school level will use data to plan instruction and adjust Action plans (pp. 22-23). Oregon has adequately addressed this question.

Weaknesses:

A.(i.b). The alignment of Federal and State Funds and programs within the SEA and LEA in the State (including Title I, Title II-A, Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended under the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, is not adequately addressed. Information on this requirement is insufficient. (pp. 1-12). Subapplicants have to describe how they will use funding to enhance the development of their Action Plans, aligned with OLP and the Striving Readers grant but no specificity is provided. (p. 30)

A.(i.d.2). Discussion on the alignment of materials needs to be clearer and more detailed. The subapplicants must use a close review of the evidence base for any outside purchase. No further discussion is provided. (p. 36)

A.(i.d.5). The discussion of the provision of language and text-rich classrooms, schools, and early learning program environments, that engage and motivate students in speaking, listening, reading, and environment needs to be expanded beyond the early childhood years. The information provided is limiting. (pp. 1-11)

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:

A.(ii). The State of Oregon targets four major goals for improving language and literacy outcomes for all children and students in Oregon, including ELs (English Language Learners), students from high-poverty backgrounds, students at risk for language and literacy difficulties, students who are ethnically diverse, and students with disabilities (pp. 12- 14). The path is clearly outlined as to how Oregon will meet these four goals including Final Action Plans, Action Plan Implementation, and child/student language and literacy outcomes. (pp. 14-15). The process is well documented (pp.12-18).

Weaknesses:

A.(ii). There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 8

- 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**

Sub Question

high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.

Strengths:

A.(iii). The description of the technical assistance through the ODES Center is comprehensive and detailed. (pp. 18-21). To provide support and technical assistance to subgrantees, the State of Oregon has established the Oregon Department of Education Striving Readers Center (ODESR). The purpose of technical assistance will be to ensure that LEAs and Centers receive the support they need to implement their Action Plans. (p. 18). Technical assistance will be organized around the six components of the OLP and focus on assistance for implementing a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects. Technical assistance will be provided in two ways. (1). The ODES Center will be available to assist if LEAs and Centers are having difficulty implementing their Action Plans. (2). The ODES Center will process data that come to the Center through the website to identify potential problems with implementation. (p. 19) When more than a typical amount of technical assistance is necessary to adequately address a problem, the ODES Center will work with the LEA or Center and state personnel to identify and obtain appropriate professional development services. An excellent table summarizing the information is provided. (pp. 19-21) The table specifically addresses the technical assistance for language and learning goals, child/student, assessments, instructional services and supports, leadership, professional development, and commitment/sustainability.

Weaknesses:

A.(iii). There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

A.(iv). The State will engage in both internal and external evaluation activities. For internal evaluation purposes, data will be evaluated quarterly to inform State Action Planning. For external evaluation, the state will engage an independent evaluator through a competitive application process (p. 21). This evaluator will not have any other role in the State's improvement efforts. A detailed description of the evaluation methods is provided (pp. 21- 24). Implementation data will be linked to the Action Plan goals and objectives at the State, LEA/Region, and School levels (p. 22). All measures will align with the OLP and state standards (p. 22). For the external evaluation, the primary purpose is to provide summary information. At the school level, internal evaluation will consist of using the information for formative purposes, thereby addressing continuously improving the design and implementation of the undertaken activities. Discussion was entertained as to continuously improving grant efforts through the dissemination of reports (p. 24). Figure 1 (p. 5) provides documentation as to how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities. This question was appropriately addressed.

Weaknesses:

A.(iv). There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

A.(v). The ODESRCenter will disseminate information on project activities and outcomes through a full range of ODE (Oregon Department of Education) communication means. These are detailed in the SEA's discussion on Disseminating Information on Project Outcomes, including the dissemination targets (pp. 24- 25) and the dissemination processes (pp. 25- 26). Of particular note is the variety of communication means including translating the information into Spanish and other languages (p. 26).

Weaknesses:

A.(v). There are no identified weaknesses.

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: 16

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Strengths

B.(i). The Oregon Department of Education will run a rigorous, high-quality competition of subgrants by managing all aspects of the subgrant competition through the Oregon Department of Education Striving Readers Center (ODESRCenter). The five major grant parts of running the competitive subgrant process and how the subgrant process is connected to the other major grant objectives are thoroughly addressed (pp. 26- 37). B.(i.a). The ODESRCenter will be responsible for reviewing the subgrant applications, along with the involvement of the LLST. (p. 34). Each application will be scored in two ways. First questions related to the LEA/Region component will be scored and second, reviewers will score application content in relation to each School/Center in the application. At the LEA/Region level, scores will address the LEA/Region's current practice and infrastructure to support its Schools/Centers. This will result in a Capacity Rating that will target the six critical components of the OLP. Thus, the grant proposal adequately addresses the extent that the SEA will run a rigorous competition and the LEA/Region's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

Weaknesses:

B.(i). There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Sub Question

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

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

Strengths:

B.(i.b). Oregon clearly states that successful applicants must adhere to the requirements as proposed in the Striving Readers Grant, which entails (1) addressing the needs of disadvantaged students (pp. 7, 12, 14), (2) is informed by a needs assessment and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers (p. 6) (3) involves other agencies (p. 47). This is stated in several places as a necessity for consideration for receiving a grant (p. 27). One of the State's proposed goals is to develop an integrated system that explicitly addresses the needs of all major student groups, including ELs, students from high-poverty backgrounds, students at risk for language and literacy difficulties, students who are racially and ethnically diverse, and students with disabilities . (p. 14) The use of a needs assessment is a strong feature of this grant proposal (p. 6) and is thoroughly described and addressed. Input from other agencies is apparent in looking at the membership of the LLST (Oregon Literacy Leadership State Team). Oregon has adequately addressed 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.

Weaknesses:

B.(i.b). The information regarding implementing activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest level of need and capacity for improvement is limited. (pp. 12, 14) One of the described goals that Oregon provides (p. 13) is to build cohesion in student transitions at four critical time points along the developmental continuum, e.g., Pre-K to Kindergarten, elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college and/or work environments. Discussion revolved around these transition points as opposed to discussion on implementing activities with the highest level of need and capacity for improvement.

Reader's Score: 7

- 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:

B.(i.c). Oregon provides differentiated instruction through a three-tiered model, requiring that services and supports must be designed for the effectiveness for each child. (p. 3). Each section of the School level OLP is organized around three tiers of comprehensive service and support for students', based on their language and literacy needs. As a result, subgrantees generally would utilize monies from such sources as Title I in tier two situations, and monies from IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) for supporting Tier 3 efforts. This demonstrates that some additional funding is being utilized.

Weaknesses:

B.(i.c). Information on implementing a coherent strategy is not explicitly addressed. No where in the grant application does the applicant address how it will align activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA, and as appropriate the Head Start Act, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 0.5

- 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:

B.(ii). Subapplicants must provide information regarding the student population it serves, including poverty data. (p. 30) Subapplicants must utilize a thorough Needs Assessment process in filling out its grant applications and this includes poverty data. (p. 30) One of Oregon's goals for improving literacy outcomes for all students is to develop an integrated system that explicitly addresses the needs of all major student groups and this includes students from high-poverty backgrounds. With the information provided on the inclusion of students from high-poverty backgrounds in the grant proposal, Oregon has demonstrated that poverty is one of the criteria for successful grant approval (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

B. (ii). There is little reference made regarding the provision of giving priority to LEAs/Early Childhood Centers that propose to serve high-poverty schools. It is not clear how they will define and measure high poverty. Discussion on this topic is inadequate. (p. 30)

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:

B.(iii) Through the use of the Action plans and the needs assessments, the applicant lists the criteria that will require the LEAs and early childhood educators to demonstrate that their efforts will be grounded in scientifically-based early literacy research (p. 4).

Weaknesses:

B.(iii). More specificity is needed regarding giving priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education based on strongest available evidence. (p. 13) There was no discussion provided in giving priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education.

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:

B. (iv). The LEAs/Early Childhood Centers must prepare a budget for its Action Plan that includes a proposed dollar amount, a description, and a justification for that item (p. 35). Any outside purchases must involve a close review of the evidence base for the program or service and an alignment between the cost of the service, the likelihood of high-quality implementation, and the likelihood of the LEA/School or Region/Center to achieve sustainability (p. 36). The SEA will use its Action Plan method to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with the State standards. (p. 32) The SEA has provided some documentation that materials purchased must have an evidence base and be aligned with the State Standards. (pp. 35- 36)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

B.(iv). Discussion on reviewing and judging the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants is limiting and not extensive enough. The only mention of using a close review of the evidence base and alignment with State standards is with the mentioning of outside purchasing. Nothing else was provided. A fuller description of reviewing and judging the evidence base is needed. There is no discussion on how the process will be made publicly available (p. 36)

Reader's Score: 2.5

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: 14.5

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:

C.(i). The State has charged the ODESR Center with completing four main project objectives including: (1) manage the subgrant process; (2) provide technical assistance; (3) manage the external evaluation; and (4) communicate and disseminate project activities and outcomes (p. 38). A detailed timeline is provided describing the tasks, leads (those responsible for task execution), timelines, and milestones for task accomplishment (pp. 38- 45). The timeline is comprehensive and informative. This question has clearly been addressed.

Weaknesses:

C. (i). There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

C.(ii). The key personnel are well qualified and experienced (pp. 46-47). Specific qualified personnel have been assigned to the grant, e.g., ODE staff members as the Assistant Superintendent, ELL Director, ELL Literacy Education Program Specialist, among others. In addition, the Center on Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the College of Education will work with the ODE staff. CTL is the largest research and outreach center in the College of Education at the University of Oregon. (pp. 46-47). The response to this question is clear and appropriate.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

C.(ii). When describing the expertise of the key personnel, Oregon states that "many" Oregon Literacy Leadership State Team (LLST) members have deep expertise. This is vague regarding the qualifications of the other members of LLST. (p. 34)

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:

C.(iii). Diversity of perspectives throughout the project will be achieved in a number of ways. The LLST will play an active role and its membership consists of teachers and administrators, parents of students with disabilities, early childhood education professionals, State and LEA administrators, professional organizations and nonprofit agencies, and individuals from institutions from higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries. The ODESR Center Advisory Board also helps achieve a diversity of perspectives with its nationally prominent professional education researchers (p. 47). A diversity of perspectives is clearly delineated.

Weaknesses:

C.(iii). There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 4

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

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

Reader's Score: 16.5

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:

D.(i). The costs are reasonable in relation to objectives and potential significance. (p. 48). The process of grant implementation will focus on costs associated with addressing high-quality implementation in designated target areas. The costs are reasonable for the personnel, travel, meetings, and supplies (p. 1). The costs are appropriately delineated in the Budget Summary documents (p. 5)

Weaknesses:

D.(i). There is no justification for the numbers of children to be served and how those numbers map onto the cost.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 8.5

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

Strengths:

D.(ii). Oregon has clearly allocated the funding to be distributed as follows: 15% to serve children from birth through age five; 40% to serve students in kindergarten through grade five; and 40% to serve students in middle and high school through grade 12. (pp. 36, 49). The applicant plans to allocate the funding in line with the SRCL guidelines.

Weaknesses:

D. (ii). There are no identified weaknesses.

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:

D.(iii). There is a plan for sustainability as resources are to be targeted from the ODE in a plan to scale up the capacity of the systems available for data collection and technical assistance to LEAs, leading to a measurable increase in student achievement that is sustainable after the grant ends. (p. 49) The applicant provided a beginning discussion for how the ODESR Center will develop a plan for sustainability.

Weaknesses:

D. (iii). There is no mention of leveraging funds to maximize impact. (p. 49)

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:

D. (iv). Oregon did provide a section addressing the awarding of grants of sufficient size to support high-need sites. (p. 50). It reiterated its commitment to preparing its children for literacy success starting with some of its most vulnerable citizens, e.g., children living in poverty, children with disabilities, and ELs (p. 50). The grant proposal exceeded the limit of 50 pages and additional information might have been provided in the missing pages. (p. 50)

Weaknesses:

D. (iv). There are no identified weaknesses.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

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

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

Strengths:

Strengths

Technology: Technology is utilized to deliver professional development throughout the State of Oregon. ODE has created a comprehensive technology-based PD website that focuses on the six components of effective early childhood and K-12 reading and literacy practices that are in the OLP (p. 7). Oregon has a comprehensive statewide, technology-based assessment system, which includes both formative and summative data related to language and literacy outcomes (p. 14). Information about the project will be contained in a comprehensive website, created as part of the ODESR Center (p. 25).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Technology: Information about the use of technology to address student learning challenges and provide an evidence-based rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness is limited and lacking in some areas (pp. 7, 14, 25). There is little information provided on how technology will impact student achievement. Richer descriptions about the use of technology are needed.

Reader's Score: 2

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

Strengths:

Oregon has sufficiently presented 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. It takes into consideration its successes on implementing RTI to differentiate student instruction (p. 3) and notes that it plans to build upon its endeavors with this tiered instruction using grant monies. Scientific-based research is cited frequently throughout the grant proposal (pp. 4, 23, 28). Oregon clearly presents and describes its goals for improving literacy outcomes for all students (pp. 12-14). The State's OLP plan, which will be the framework for grant activities (p. 1) thoroughly addresses the priority of targeting learning outcomes for all children (p. 1).

Oregon has met Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses in Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes.

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:

Data collection and analysis are strengths throughout Oregon's Striving Readers proposal. Oregon utilizes a comprehensive and integrated statewide data system (p. 1). A very thorough discussion and description of Oregon's Needs Assessment process were provided in the grant proposal (pp. 6-7). Data to evaluate the quality and extent of the Action Plans of the subapplicants will be collected by the ODESR Center, the external evaluator, the LEA/Region, and the School/Center. Data will be used for data-based decisions, internal evaluation, and external evaluation (p. 8). The ODESR Center has extensive high-quality protocols for data-collection purposes and an example of a protocol may be viewed in Appendix L (A206) (p. 9). As evidenced by the above examples, which comprise a representation of the State's commitment to use high-quality data, it is apparent that Oregon has successfully fulfilled the requirement of Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making.

Oregon has met Absolute Priority 2.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Department of Education (S371C110048)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	34
Sub Total	37	34
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	20
Sub Total	28	20
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	17
Sub Total	20	17
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	2
Sub Total	5	2
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SRCL - 3: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Oregon Department of Education (S371C110048)

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: 34

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:

(i) (a) The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) established the Oregon Department of Education Striving Readers Center (ODESR Center) to support the Oregon Literacy Plan (OLP). This plan will strengthen and further develop their existing efforts to provide high quality instruction to accelerate student progress and close the achievement gap in literacy and other skills. The existing state-level literacy plan and the proposed system of multi-tiered supports and services provide a strong base for the efforts outlined in the application and demonstrate a commitment to the goals of the SRCL program; with a specific focus on disadvantaged at risk children (p. 1-12). A strength is that the OLP and the SEA level activities are grounded in evidence-based scientific research on curricula and intervention (p. 4; and reference pages). Figure 1 on page 5 provides a diagram for how the SRCL will be implemented if funded.

(b) In the subgrant applications, all proposals will be required to describe how the LEAs will leverage and align federal and state funds with their efforts to increase literacy instruction for disadvantaged children (p. 31).

(c) The applicant has outlined a fairly detailed description of the step-by-step process that will be used to make the process, the review, evaluation and results of subgrant applications transparent to the public and relevant organizations (discussed in detail below in part B) and to help applicants address all critical aspects of evidence-based literacy instruction. The ODE will lead the subgrant competition (p. 5). Subgrant applicants will complete needs assessments and initial action plans using worksheets provided by the OLP. The ODESR will provide technical assistance to subgrant applicants (p. 6). This action plan-needs assessment method has been used in Oregon for projects, such as Reading First to help applicants specify their goals and identify ways to accomplish them.

(d) (1) (2) The applicant mentions that an Expert Advisory Board made up of prominent scholars will provide expertise on key grant activities (p. 4). The ODESR Center will guide the implementation, management, and oversight of the of the SRCL grant, the LEAs' efforts, and the overall state reading program (p. 1- 12). The coordination of these state level agencies will ensure that the subgrant funds are used to deliver a comprehensive literacy curriculum that is aligned with OLP (p. 1- 4).

The ODESR center will also ensure that professional development is coordinated across sites, is cohesive, and sustainable (p. 7). These efforts will be linked to the ODE created professional development website that focuses on the OLP's six components of effective literacy practices.

Sub Question

d (3) (4) The applicant provides a very detailed description of how student level, intervention level, and state level outcomes will be assessed to monitor and fine-tune the classroom interventions for individual students to ensure all children's educational needs are met (p. 8-10). The state has a tracking protocol for middle schools to collect information on reading intervention in five school districts which allow evaluators to make systematic comparisons across students, classrooms, and schools.

d (5) The applicant states that observations will be made of classrooms to ensure language rich learning environments are being provided (p. 9-10).

Weaknesses:

(i) (b) There was no mention of HOW the SEA would align the use of federal and state funding.

d (3) It was not made clear whether the state tracking protocol is also in place for the other grade levels and across schools that will potentially participate in the SRCL program. On page 16 the applicant mentions that the assessment data are slowly becoming linked through a state-wide plan. The applicant should clarify the extent to which this network is in place because a network like this is important for being able to compare data across students, classrooms, schools, districts and so forth.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant lists four primary goals for improving children's language and literacy statewide; with an emphasis on at risk children (p. 12-14). These goals are also aligned with specific implementation indicators that will be used to examine how these goals are achieved and will inform their evaluation plan.

The applicant mentions giving priority to LEA applicants who address the developmental continuum from birth to grade 12, and who incorporate transition-focused professional development into their efforts (p. 13), i.e., especially action plans that target transition routines for at risk students. Goal 4 also encompasses students with significant cognitive disabilities; and the applicant states the instructional needs for these students will be addressed at the individual level (p. 14).

As mentioned above, LEAs will complete needs assessments as part of their initial action plans in their subgrant applications (p. 15). If funded, these needs assessments will inform the LEAs action plans, objectives, and outcome evaluations. These data will be considered by the SEA to ensure there is a credible path to achieve the applicant's goals.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 8

- 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.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant will organize the technical assistance provided to the LEAs based on the six components of the OLP and on the state level and in the subgrantee's action plans. These action plans will allow the SEA to customize professional development, technical assistance, and other efforts to support the individual subgrantees.

The applicant devoted two pages to summarizing the ODEERS Center technical assistant plan (bottom p. 19 to middle page 21). The table spanning these pages provides a detailed summary of how the technical assistance areas are aligned with the relevant activities. A noted strength is the applicant's attempt to tailor training and assistance to the individual programs and their specific needs.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

(1) (2) (3) To evaluate their efforts, the applicant proposes a plan involving both internal and external activities. Data from the overall implementation of the OLP (i.e., student outcomes, technical assistance, and action plan data) will be examined quarterly to inform SEA level action planning (p. 21). These data will include classroom observations, online surveys, and interviews. These data will be used in team meetings to plan instruction and adjust action plans. The applicant includes examples of some of the protocols that will be used to measure these outcomes in the Appendices.

The external evaluation will be carried out by a hired external evaluator who will have access to implementation and student outcome data (p. 21). The student outcome data will include screening measures, progress monitoring measures, state test scores, and diagnostic indicators from pre-K to grade 12 (p. 22). Examples of assessments and observation protocols appear in the appendices.

The external evaluator will carry out a fairly elaborate review of the interventions. For example, to examine the magnitude of the effects of the SRCL intervention, the applicant mentions that the ODESR center will require the external evaluator to collect a random sample of language, reading and writing assessments from children age birth to grade 12, and to observe a random sample of classrooms; with a particular oversampling of underserved children (p. 23). The statistical analyses will examine student outcomes as well as potential moderating (e.g., risk and language minority status) and mediating (e.g., frequency and quality of teacher-child interactions) variables that may explain differences in outcomes across students, programs, schools and so forth (p. 23).

Annual reports for the state and LEAs will be generated to fine tune and sustain the SRCL intervention over time (p. 24).

Weaknesses:

(2) The plans to examine the outcome of the intervention using additional analyses needs further elaboration in terms of the size of these random samples and a discussion of the relevance of using language, reading and writing assessments for infants and pre-K children should be provided (p. 23).

Reader's Score: 9

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:

The applicant outlines a detailed plan for disseminating information on the project outcomes via a website, newsletters, reports, a webinar, and annual reports (p. 24-26). This information will help in the implementation of the project, (as mentioned above), and will provide a level of transparency and accountability for the OLP (p. 24). Educators, schools, administrators, parents, and other key stakeholders will receive varied information about the project according to their role and need for access to this information. For example, parents can find out about their children's individual school and access their children's data (p. 25).

Weaknesses:

none

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

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

(i) (a) The applicant has outlined a plan for running a competition for the subgrants (pages 26-37 and Figure 1). For example, information about the proposal process and what will be required to be competitive, will be made available via written notices, via webinars, and in town-hall meetings around the state. The latter is a novel idea, because potential applicants could ask questions on the spot. Subgrantee applicants will receive priority points for focusing on developmental transitions (mentioned above) (p. 29).

The ODE and the ODESR will judge the LEAs' capacity to implement their proposals based on the review of the LEAs' action plans (described below). In addition, the yearly evaluation data will be systematically reviewed to determine whether the applicant will continue to receive funding for the subsequent year. This mechanism should help to ensure accountability (p. 37) and reallocation of funds if they are unspent or not spent as intended.

(2) As mentioned above as part of an initial action plan, applicants will be required to carry out a needs assessment (p. 12; 30-33; Appendix A includes the full needs assessment battery). The subgrantee application has several stages; e.g., based on the needs assessment, an action plan is developed for each year of funding. This action plan is then supported by an implementation plan as reviewed by the OLP.

The review process will be conducted by the ODESR center (p. 34). Members of the Oregon Literacy

Sub Question

Leadership State Team (LLST) will review the subgrantee proposals (p. 34). The applicant states these individuals will be chosen based on their expertise, experience, and role as leading stakeholders (p. 34). These efforts should ensure that the subgrant competition is transparent and equitable.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 3

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant states that competitive subgrant applications will target high needs children (p. 14) demonstrated by a needs assessment and strong evidence of involving other agencies in their efforts (p. 6 and 47). For example, in (b) (1) and in line with the SRCL guidelines, applicants will be required to demonstrate need and the at risk populations they intend to serve; to discuss their current level performance; and to develop a comprehensive plan that is aligned with six components of the OLP (p. 31). These foci should ensure the subgrant applications target the relevant aspects of the SRCL program.

The applicant's action plan method for proposal preparation will ensure that the subgrantee applicants address the key criteria for effective teaching and improving student outcomes as well as emphasizing key developmental transition periods for children; an additional criteria required by the applicant (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 8

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 has outlined a plan for a 3-tiered instructional method to maximize outcomes for individual children. Generally, this would involve funding from federal and state agencies to support level three instruction (p. 3). The applicant also discusses extensive involvement with Head Start programs throughout the State of OR that serves approximately 12,000 children (p. 50).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not directly discuss a plan for how LEAs will be required to align their efforts with other state and federal funds.

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:

The applicant will require that subgrantee applicants demonstrate how they will give priority to high poverty children (p. 30). For example, using the needs assessment within their action plans, subgrantee applicants will be required to provide data on poverty and the early childhood programs that serve these children (p. 30).

Weaknesses:

It was not clear how the applicant defines or measures poverty.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

Throughout the action plans and needs assessments, the applicant lists numerous criteria that will require the LEAs and early childhood educators to demonstrate that their efforts will be grounded in scientifically based early literacy research (p. 4).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not make it clear how priority will be given to early childhood providers whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.

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 will use their action plan method to determine how the subgrant applicants' curricula and materials align with the OLP (p. 32-34).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not specify how this review process will be made public.

Reader's Score: 3

Project management - Project management

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

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

(i) The applicant states that the ODESR center will manage all SRCL activities. There are four main objectives. The applicant's plan to address these objectives is provided in an eight page table (p. 38-45). This table includes specific tasks related to the objectives, the responsible State level individual/agency, a time line, and indicators of accomplishment. This table shows the applicant has given careful thought to administrating and managing a large scale SRCL grant.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

The key personnel are listed and their training, experience, and responsibilities are described on p. 46-48. CVs for the key personnel are included in the Appendices. The key personnel seem to be well qualified and represent administrative expertise as well as a grounding in literacy education and curricula.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

A range of individuals are listed as representing a diversity of perspectives (p. 47).

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 4

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

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

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant's budget and justification for salaries for personnel seem reasonable (Budget justification section; p. e1). Costs for meetings, materials, and supplies also seem reasonable.

Weaknesses:

There was no justification for numbers of children to be served and how those numbers map onto the costs.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant plans to allocate the funding in line with the SRCL guidelines (p. 49). The applicant mentions there will be some flexibility in the plan to allow for the needs of each subgrantee. Again, these decisions will be made based on iterations of the action plan evaluations.

Weaknesses:

none

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 applicant provided a beginning discussion for how the ODESR center will develop a plan for sustainability (p. 49).

Weaknesses:

There was no mention of ODE leveraging other state or federal funding to maximize the impact of the grant.

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

Sub Question

learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.

Strengths:

The applicant provides some discussion for how early education will be expanded and the associated learning/educational foundations will be revised (p. 50). This indicates that the applicant has considered the magnitude of the intended impact for young children and their efforts may be awarding funding of sufficient size to make an impact. The narrative exceeded the page limit. There may have been additional information on this criteria beyond the 50-page limit.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 3

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 applicant mentions the use of webinars for communicating with subgrantee applicants and teacher professional development (p. 7). The applicant describes how the student assessments are slowly coming to an online database (p. 16).

Weaknesses:

It was not made clear at this point, that there is any direct benefit for the instruction of high need students.

Reader's Score: 2

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

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

Strengths:

This priority was MET.

The applicant has provided a comprehensive plan for improving the education and literacy development of children across the state of OR.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths:

This priority was MET.

On page 11-12 and in Figure 1, the applicant describes how the OLP is a highly responsive, dynamic system. Key to the planned intervention is the feedback loop in the center of the figure which shows how data are collected and used to fine tune and continuously update the needs and action plans over time.

This strategy will inform the evaluation efforts but will inform decision-making across the funding period for the Oregon leadership team, the steering committee, educators, policy makers, parents and other stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

none

Reader's Score: 0

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Oregon Department of Education (S371C110048)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	34.5
Sub Total	37	34.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	16.5
Sub Total	28	16.5
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	14.5
Sub Total	15	14.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	16
Sub Total	20	16
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	84.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SRCL - 3: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Oregon Department of Education (S371C110048)

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: 34.5

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 applicant provides a justification for state-level activities by describing that the Oregon current literacy plan (OLP) comprises three major sections and those sections address the two absolute priorities of the RFA (p. 1). The applicant provides a discussion of the following elements of their work: 1) Integrated Levels of Service Delivery Responsibilities; 2) Six Foundational Components; 3) Three Tiers of Comprehensive Service and Support; and 4) Central Role of Rigorous Scientific Research (pp. 2-4).

The applicant details the alignment of work within figure 1 on page 5 which illustrates how the Oregon Striving Readers grant will be implemented across three phases: 1) development and application process; 2) SEA, LEA/Region, and School/Center implementation; and 3) review and oversight of grant activities.

The OLP and SEA activities are grounded in evidence-based practices (pp. 1-12).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not discuss how the activities will be aligned within the State literacy plan.

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:

Applicant will require subgrants to submit a Needs Assessment and an Initial Action Plan (p.6). The action planning process is designed to highlight essential actions in: specifying literacy goals; developing a comprehensive assessment; establishing the processes; developing and refining implementation; selecting the evidence based programs and materials; establishing expectations and actions; prioritizing PD plans (p. 8). The applicant expresses a commitment to supporting LEAs in completing these requirements and provides sample materials in the appendix. The applicant provides a credible plan for data to be collected by including the involvement of multiple individuals across multiple organizations such as the Oregon Department Education Striving Readers (ODESR) Center, the external evaluator, the LEA/Region, and the School/Center (p. 8).

The applicant provides details for important data gathering measures including specific examples of

Sub Question

observation tools that could be used with preschoolers (p. 10).
The applicant gives priority to transition planning for students (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 8

- 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:

Applicant provided a focused historical overview of prior efforts in establishing and implementing the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework (2009) and prior funding from the SRC (2010) to develop the Oregon Literacy Plan (p. 10). Applicant articulates 4 project goals: achieve literacy readiness; build cohesion in student transitions; high quality implementation; and integrate systems that explicitly address the needs of all student groups, including ELLs, students from high-poverty backgrounds, students at risk for language and literacy difficulties, students who are racially and ethnically diverse, and students with disabilities (pp. 12-14) that comprise an innovative comprehensive literacy plan.

The applicant justifies attention to work with disadvantaged student populations through an expanded discussion of the final goal noting attention to Tier 3 programming with individualized programming (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant intends to use three primary data sources: final action plan; action plan implementation; and child/student language and literacy outcomes at Birth-Age 5, elementary, middle, and high school levels (pp. 15-18). The use of those multiple data sources will provide for a comprehensive analysis of the degree to which the project is or is not leading to improved student achievement in literacy.

The applicants provide an overview of the technical support services provided by the ODESR Center (pp. 18-21) which will enable subgrantees to access needed supports to ensure convincing results.

The applicant provides a thorough evaluation plan with attention to issues of reliability by planning for activities to occur both internally (managed by the ODESR Center) and externally with a yet to be identified independent evaluator (pp. 21-23).

The applicant is committed to continuous feedback to inform action planning as noted in figure 1, (p. 5).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant expresses a commitment to transparency and details several dissemination targets (primary and secondary project participants) and processes (website, newsletters, reports, and webinars) (p. 21). A commitment is made to report disaggregated student subgroups when appropriate (p. 25).

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: 16.5

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 applicant is committed to facilitating communication via written notices; real-time interactions; and strategic town-hall style meetings to ensure the information regarding the major components of the OLP and the precise requirements of the RFA are understood in a timely manner. The applicant intends to provide information regarding effective instruction and service appropriate to all children including processes to incorporate principles of universal design for learning and differentiated instructional and programmatic supports (p. 28).

The applicant will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants by reviewing and judging the subgrantee ability to address how they will promote effective and integrated practices across critical points of transition (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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

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 State of Oregon states that all subgrant applicants must involve students defined as at-risk (p. 14).

The use of the needs assessment which is designed to support effective teaching and to provide student achievement is thoroughly described (p. 32 and appendix).

The applicant values the deep expertise that key stakeholder groups hold (p. 34) and will require subgrantees to demonstrate involvement with other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.

Weaknesses:

Insufficient information about how transitions will be planned for that are unique to the cultural, linguistic, and ability levels of disadvantaged students (p. 31).

Reader's Score: 7

- 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 is committed to having subgrant applicants use three tiers of comprehensive services and support (p. 3) to improve literacy instruction. This demonstrates the applicants' use of supports such IDEA and Title funding.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not discuss how they will explicitly align activities to improve literacy instruction with other Federal funds including Title I, Title II-A, Title III of ESEA, Head Start, and IDEA.

Reader's Score: 0.5

- 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:

The applicant will require that subgrantee applications demonstrate how they will give priority to high poverty children (p. 30). For example, using the needs assessment within their action plans, subgrantee applications will be required to provide data on poverty and the early childhood program that serve these children (p. 30).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Insufficient information as to how priority will be given to LEAs or Early Childhood Centers that are committed to serving high poverty schools (p. 30). It is not clear how poverty is defined and how those individuals will be identified (p. 30).

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:

Throughout the action plans and needs assessment, the application lists numerous criteria that will require the LEAs and early childhood educators to demonstrate that their efforts will be grounded in scientifically based early literacy research (p. 4).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not make it clear how priority will be given to LEAs or providers of early childhood education programs whose applications are based on evidence (p. 13).

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:

The applicant provides a discussion of the multiple objectives included within the existing Needs Assessment (p. 32). The SEA will use that action planning method to review and judge how the subgrant applicants curricula and materials align with the Oregon Literacy Plan.

A two phase award system is described (p. 36) and followed by a detailed implementation contractual process. The applicant plans for an annual review process to ensure that continued funding is warranted (p. 37).

Weaknesses:

There is no discussion of how the process and results of the review will be available.

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: 14.5

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:

Applicant provides an organized table highlighting the tasks associated with each of the 4 objectives, lead responsibility, timelines, and milestones (pp. 38-45). Tasks are clearly profiled and represent a cohesive plan.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

Personnel in key Oregon Department of Education positions will assume responsibility for this project. Collaborative partners include the Center on Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the College of Education at the University of Oregon and will serve as the co-directors of the ODESR (pp. 46-47). CVs for the key personnel are included in the appendices. The key personnel seem to be well qualified and represent administrative expertise as well as a grounding in literacy education and curricula.

Weaknesses:

Insufficient information is provided as to who will lead efforts uniquely related to students with disabilities (p. 46-47).

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:

The applicant plans for the multiple stakeholders to contribute to the diversity of perspectives through the ODESR Center Advisory Board (p. 47) which will include nationally prominent professional education researchers and practitioners.

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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: 16

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 applicant is requesting \$15 million/year for five years (p. abstract) to be shared by the Oregon Department of Education and the Center on Teaching and Learning which both have a proven ability to assist Local Education Agencies in program implementation.

The buget seems reasonable for personnel, meetings, material, supplies and travel (p. e1).

Weaknesses:

No justification is provided for the number of students to be served and how those numbers align with projected expenditures.

Reader's Score: 8

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The field-tested needs assessment will guide the plan which is committed to the 15-40-40% formula (p. 49).

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 Oregon Department of Education Striving Readers Center will provide necessary guidance and leadership through agency collaboration (p. 49).

The applicant explains that current ODESR Center services are intended to provide the potential to sustain and scale this work over time. (p. 49).

Weaknesses:

Insufficient information about leveraging other State and Federal funds to maximize the impact of the grant (e.g. supports for special education related services and programs) (p. 49).

Reader's Score: 1

Sub Question

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 applicant is committed to preparing students for literacy success, with a focus on students in high-need schools or early learning programs (p. 50).

The State of Oregon did provide a section on sufficient size to serve high needs sites (p. 50).

The grant exceeded the page limit and additional information may have been provided there.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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 applicant acknowledges a commitment to using technology for trainings and data management (p. 20) to increase teacher effectiveness.

The applicant mentions the use of webinars for communicating with subgrantee applicants and teacher professional development (p. 7).

The applicant describes how the student assessments are in the process of being available via online databases (p. 16).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a limited discussion of how proposed technology programs, practices and/or strategies will increase student engagement and achievement.

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 applicant has provided a comprehensive plan for improving the education and literacy development of children across the state of Oregon.
Applicant met this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 0

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant is committed to continuing and extending collaborative relationships with the ODES SR Center, the LEA/Region, and the participant School/Center and the CLT to focus on data-driven decision making. The applicant will rely on data from the Needs Assessments and Action Plans as foundational to those data-driven efforts (p. 8, 9, 10).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 0

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

