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### Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** South Dakota Department of Education -- South Dakota Department of Ed Office of Curriculum, Career a (S371C110036)

**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	31
<b>Sub Total</b>	37	31
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
1. State subgrant comp	28	18.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	28	18.5
<b>Project management</b>		
<b>Project management</b>		
1. Project management	15	11.5
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	11.5
<b>Adequacy of resources</b>		
<b>Adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	14
<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	80.0

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SRCL - 3: 84.371C

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

Applicant: South Dakota Department of Education -- South Dakota Department of Ed Office of Curriculum, Career a (S371C110036)

## 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: 31

#### 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). South Dakota has provided a thorough description of how it will carry out the Additional Requirements . (a). The State has adopted a State Literacy Plan based on The Common Core Standards (pp. 1, 3- 6) and (b) is consolidating its resources across all categorical programs at the State level to support implementing the Common Core Standards. (c) The process and results of its review of subgrant applications will be publicly available (pp. 37 - 38). The RFP will be disseminated to all LEAs, (Local Education Agency), Educational Service Agencies ( ESA), Early Childhood Enrichment Centers and Head Start/Early Head Start providers. The Department of Social Services and Child Care Services will assist in dissemination to preschool providers. The South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) will host a webinar for potential applicants to discuss the application and award process (p. 38). State Literacy Team members will serve as the review panel using a rubric to assist in scoring proposals based upon selection criteria. A press release will be prepared to announce subgrant awardees. (d). Throughout South Dakota's grant proposal it clearly notes that the monies received will serve students K - 12 ( pp. 18, 20, 31). Professional development (d1) is a strong component of this grant proposal, building upon the past successes and initiatives the State has been undertaking, e.g., RTI (Response to Intervention), (pp. 13 - 17) READING UP, a statewide professional development initiative, (pp. 9 -11) High School 2025, (p. 11) and professional development provided to those working with young children (p.8). In addition, the State will be conducting in-depth, sustaining professional development on the Common Core Standards, The Common Core Professional Development Series. (pp. 4 - 6). A detailed description of this PD initiative is provided in the grant proposal. (d2). The State is working diligently to ensure that its curriculum and instructional materials are aligned with its move to the Common Core Standards (p. 5) and it is evident that they base their understandings of effective literacy instruction on current research, e.g., references to brain based research (p. 15), an emphasis on having their state educators be knowledgeable about what is meant by the term "scientifically based research." (p. 15) Since the school districts are small and spread out throughout South Dakota, the State has had to utilize technology as a means of communication and instruction. (p. 23) Technology is described as an equalizer for supporting schools, educators, and students in this rural state. (p. 23). (d3). Various assessment measures are described that are utilized in the State literacy initiatives, e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (p. 15) and Achievement Series for pre and post assessment for READING UP (pp. 10, 26). The State's assessment discussions revolve around assessing all students in the State. (d4). State initiatives are currently in place for providing interventions for all their student population, e.g., Early Childhood undertakings, High School 2025 (p. 10), and use of RTI (pp. 13 - 17). Grant monies will extend current practices (p. 9). (d5). Providing an environment that will promote student learning is adequately addressed for the early childhood population. (d6). The

### Sub Question

State Literacy Team intends to utilize various ways to obtain evidence in order to continuously improve its Comprehensive State Literacy plan (p. 3). It describes the inclusion of four pillars as a framework for the State plan (p. 3). Moreover, it has thoughtfully addressed the implementation of the Common Core Standards (pp. 4 - 6) which includes refining its implementation based on implementation feedback (p. 4). As noted with the evidence provided, South Dakota has appropriately addressed the Additional Requirements section of their grant proposal.

### Weaknesses:

A.(i). More specificity is necessary on providing language and text-rich classrooms (p. 7) as well as on the use of assessments particularly in the beginning stages of the grant implementation (pp. 22, 25). South Dakota has joined other states in the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and will have access to a set of comprehensive and innovative assessments, including state-of-the-art adaptive online exams for grades 3-8 and high school aligned with the Common Core standards. (p. 26). However, these instruments will not be available until 2015 and it is unclear how and if they would be used with grant implementation. (p. 27) The proposed elementary assessments may not be informative enough to gather appropriate data. (p. 14) The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) contains short (one minute) fluency measures and it is stated that this assessment will serve as a progress measure to guide individual instruction and to serve the need for summative information across program sites. Another assessment measure that gathers additional data, e.g., on comprehension, might be considered. (pp. 13 - 14).

**Reader's Score: 8.5**

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

### Strengths:

A.(ii). South Dakota has clearly stated its primary goal, "to develop a statewide system of support for schools, educators, and students that will lead to measureable advancement in language and literacy skills as an essential foundation for school readiness, academic success and preparedness for college and careers" (p. e0). The SRLC program will provide an opportunity for South Dakota schools and educators to enhance and expand current efforts toward the implementation of a comprehensive and coherent approach to the instruction of language and literacy that results in all students attaining the ELA knowledge and skills necessary for educational and lifelong success. Improving student literacy outcomes is emphasized in South Dakota's grant application. South Dakota has provided a data-driven plan for improving student literacy outcomes (pp. 19 -23). The State utilizes The Dakota STEP (South Dakota Test of Educational Progress) Assessment (p. 19) to look at current performances and needs of their students. Charts are provided effectively summarizing the needs data (pp. 19 - 20). Intermediate goals for reading are likewise summarized in chart form (p. 20). Extensive demographic data are provided to reflect the unique nature of the South Dakota student population. Much of their student population is economically disadvantaged (p. 21). Other examples of disadvantaged populations include Native Americans living on reservations with their unique needs, a high incidence of English Language Learners, (reflecting the speaking of 84 languages other than English), and an incidence of 14.3% students with disabilities (p. 22). Adequate information has been provided to fulfill this requirement of the grant proposal.

## Sub Question

A.(ii). South Dakota has provided a data-driven plan for improving student literacy outcomes (e18-e22). The State utilizes The Dakota STEP Assessment (e18) to look at current performances and needs of their students. Tables are provided summarizing the needs data (e18-e19). Intermediate goals for reading are summarized in chart form (e19). Extensive demographic data

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

A. (ii). A more complete description of the path to achieve State goals is needed . (pp. 19 - 23) The provided information is insufficient regarding limited English proficiency students and students with disabilities. (pp. 14, 16).

**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:**

A.(iii). South Dakota currently provides comprehensive and extensive professional development and their PD (professional development) initiatives and offerings will be expanded with grant monies (p . 23). Due to the enormous impact that its geography and sparse population have on LEAs and early childhood providers, the State plans on using two strategies critical to the effective delivery of professional development and technical assistance. These strategies include the use of technology and regional delivery (p. 23). Professional development has been described as a hybrid of online resources and supports and face-to-face events. The State is adequately addressing support for its subgrantees that will enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and improve student achievement (pp. 23-25) It takes into account the unique challenges of the state, and capitalizes on processes already in place.

**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 proposes that its evaluation design will be rigorous to ensure that its goals and performance objectives are achieved (p. 28). It intends to contract with an agency, such as the Midwest Alliance for Professional Leadership and Learning (MAPLE) and will use data sources at the state, school, and individual level (pp. 25, 26). Data collection will occur on a continuous and systematic basis and will be part of a regular feedback loop using ongoing e-mails, phone calls, quarterly meetings, and quarterly reports. The intent is to ensure the continuous integration of data for decision-making. (p. 28) The evaluation plan uses spiraling cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The focus of the grant will be analyzed through several lenses, e.g., a "grant-wide view," "the grant's implementation", and "the grant's impact." (p. 29) These will serve as excellent guiding questions during the evaluation. The evaluation process the State intends to utilize is adequate.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

A. (iv). The proposal claims that it will contract with an agency "such" as the Midwest Alliance for Professional Leadership and Learning (MAPLE) and then names a specific evaluator from that agency. (p. 26). The State does not mention a contingency plan if it does not utilize this agency.

**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:**

A.(v). The State proposes to disseminate information on project outcomes using its State Literacy Team, the South Dakota Parent Information and Resource Center, Communities of Interest, and the Comprehensive Literacy Program staff (p. 30). It will use electronic communication and social networks. The State presents some means of disseminating the requisite information and has provided a beginning discussion on its means of dissemination. The information provided is adequate.

**Weaknesses:**

A.(v). The proposed means of disseminating information is limited and not specific enough. (p. 30) The South Dakota Parent Information and Resource Center (SDPIRC) has developed print and web-based guides and training events. (p. 30) These guides are aligned to the SD Early Learning Guides to promote language and literacy development at home. The information provided is insufficient regarding the diverse nature of South Dakota's population. It is unclear as to how all the unique needs of the many languages spoken in South Dakota will be addressed in these parent guides. (p. 30)

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

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

**Reader's Score: 18.5**

**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:**

B.(i.a). The State will hold two competitions, one for LEAs and consortiums of LEAs and one focusing on improving early literacy and learning for preschool age children (p. 31). LEAs will be required to address the K-12 continuum (p. 32). SDDOE will host a webinar for potential applicants to discuss the application and award process. The State Literacy Team will serve as the review panel for subgrant applications (p. 38). A rubric will be provided to assist in scoring proposals based upon selection criteria. As evidenced above, some details were provided as to the State's commitment to running a rigorous competition.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

B.(i.a). More details need to be provided on this topic, especially the process for reviewing and scoring the applications (p. 37). A rubric is referred to as part of the process but none of the criteria in the rubric are described. (p. 38). Limited information is given on the review process.

**Reader's Score: 1.5**

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

**Strengths:**

B.(i.b) As addressed in subsection A.(i), the State has sufficiently proposed a comprehensive, high-quality literacy program that meets all the requirements and will require its subapplicants to do likewise (pp. 31, 33). In addition, 1). Subapplicants must address the needs of disadvantaged students and implement activities in schools and learning programs with the highest level of need and capacity for improvement (pp. 31, 33, 36). (2). Subapplicants must address their use of a needs assessment (pp. 33, 34) and are required to map and align their K-12 curriculum to the state standards (p. 30) and improve early literacy and learning for preschool age children (p. 31). (3). Other agencies will be involved in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students, e.g., State Library with its assistance on determining student Lexile reader measures in order to match students with appropriate texts (p. 13) and Education Service Agencies/Educational Cooperatives (pp. 23 - 24) which delivers services and supports to schools, educators, and organizations throughout South Dakota.

**Weaknesses:**

B.(i.b.3) Information on the involvement of other agencies is limiting and not thorough enough. (p. 37) There is little information regarding the involvement of families, nonprofit organizations, and other community-based organizations. (pp. 31 - 33). Applicants are asked to offer an assessment of student and educator needs but no further descriptions of these assessments are provided. (p. 33)

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

B.(1.c). It is indicated that subapplicants must address implementing a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds. Subapplicants will be asked to discuss current efforts and funding sources that support improvement in English Language Arts. Subapplicants must present information on the source of funds and approach used to support any existing efforts to improve literacy. It is noteworthy that the SEA has expressed its belief that the SRLC subgrant will supplement and not supplant existing efforts (pp. 35, 36)

**Weaknesses:**

B. (1.c) Applicants must present information on the source of funds and approach utilized to support any existing efforts to improve literacy. No further details on the nature of the funding, e.g., Title I, Title II-A, Title III, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds, are provided. More specificity is needed to respond to the discussion on implementing a coherent strategy that aligns with other funding sources. (pp. 35 - 36) The information provided is sparse and limiting.

**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:**

B.(ii). Successful applicants for the grant will be those LEAs and early childhood providers who prioritize services to children with economic and educational disadvantages (p. 37). Applicants must show evidence that the schools with the greatest number of students impacted by poverty, ethnicity, disabilities, and limited English proficiency and those that have failed to make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) are identified for improvement receive priority for support and intervention (p. 37). The State has adequately addressed the requirement that priority will be given to the intended student population.

**Weaknesses:**

B.(ii). The grant proposal states that successful applicants "will likely" present demographic characteristics of their student population correlated with academic performance. This is not clear and obscure and may result in inconsistent data upon which to review and evaluate subgrantees' proposals. (p. 36)

**Reader's Score: 4.5**

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

**Strengths:**

B.(iii). Successful applicants will be those that connect their design and strategies with scientifically based research and evidence-based best practices and address the pillars in their Comprehensive Literacy Program (p. 37). The State's intent is to award grants to those who provide supported evidence. Moreover, successful applicants must reflect the framework (the pillars of the Comprehensive Literacy Program) in their local literacy plans and design of their interventions. (p. 37). Having the subapplicants provide this connection enhances the quality of the grant proposal and supports current State initiatives. Discussion on strong evidence is adequate.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

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

**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:**

B.(iv). The State intends to modify its existing process for soliciting subgrant applications to reflect the priorities and focus of the Comprehensive Literacy Program, which is an excellent beginning for the process.

**Weaknesses:**

B.(iv). There is limited discussion regarding 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. Neither the curricula materials nor the process are explicitly described. (pp. 37 - 38)

**Reader's Score: 1**

**Project management - Project management**

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

**Reader's Score: 11.5**

**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 project plan is adequate for achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. Key personnel are named keeping in mind constraints on their State budget and hiring policies (pp. 38 - 39). A realistic timeline is proposed for the years 2011 and 2012, stating objectives, personnel responsible, milestones/timeline, and performance objectives. (pp. 40 - 41).

**Weaknesses:**

C.(i). The timeline could be more detailed regarding subsequent years of grant implementation, beyond 2011 and 2012. (pp. 40 - 41) Regarding defined responsibilities, one of the key personnel, the Project Co-Director, will only serve .5 FTE and the project may be understaffed as a result. The other Co-Director has other responsibilities in her current roles and it is unclear whether she will still assume these along with the grant responsibilities (p. 42)

**Reader's Score: 4.5**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

C.(ii). The personnel described in the grant proposal are qualified (pp. 42 - 44) and experienced. Most of the personnel currently serve the State in various capacities and bring that experience to help oversee the grant implementation and review. The information on the qualifications of key personnel is appropriate.

**Weaknesses:**

C.(ii). The grant proposal states that a key personnel member who would serve as Co-Director MAY serve in this capacity. It makes no mention as to an alternative plan if for some reason she is unable to assume these responsibilities. (p. 42) Therefore it is unclear who will assume this key role.

**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). The State Literacy team already consists of representatives who reflect diverse perspectives, e.g., First Lady of South Dakota, Office of the Secretary of Education, Office of the State Library, South Dakota Department of Social Services, etc. (p. 43) The membership would expand once subgrants have been awarded to include other educators, curriculum directors, etc. (p. 44) Diversity is appropriately addressed during aspects of the grant process.

**Weaknesses:**

C.(iii). The diversity of perspectives might be restrictive since not all perspectives will be addressed until the subgrants have been awarded (p. 44). Representatives to be added after the award announcement include educators, curriculum directors, project leadership, families, and students as appropriate. It is unclear how the concept of "appropriate" will be utilized.

**Reader's Score: 2.5**

**Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources**

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

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Sub Question**

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

D.(i). The applicant provides a budget and a budget narrative detailing planned expenditures. (p. 44). Based on the formula used, approximately 120,000 students would benefit from the SRCL subgrant. Therefore it is intended to provide instructional support to a significant number of students.

**Weaknesses:**

D. (i). The range of individual awards for K-12 subgrants is based at approximately \$50 per student based on the cumulative student population to be served. This amount seems low in order to make an impact on student learning outcomes (p. 44). The budget items for administering the project also appear to be inadequate for the project outcomes.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

D.(ii). The quality of the State's plan is adequate to serve the desired population distribution. This plan guarantees at least 15% to serve children from birth through age five, at least 40% to serve students in kindergarten through grade five, and at least 40% to serve students in middle and high school. (pp. 44 - 45) To ensure equal distribution between elementary, middle, and high school, applicants must present a project that addresses the entire K-12 grade student population and their teachers. (p. 45).

**Weaknesses:**

D.(ii). 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:**

D.(iii). South Dakota has provided a summary of the contributions of existing resources and initiatives in table form, which is informative and demonstrates evidence of how the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds. (pp. 45 - 47) The discussion on this topic is adequate.

**Weaknesses:**

D.(iii). There is no discussion for developing a plan for sustaining funds after the end of the subgrant. (p. 45) No plan for sustainability is provided.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

### Sub Question

#### Strengths:

D.(iv). SDDOE believes that to be successful, there will need to be a significant population of students to generate sufficient funds to support a level of training and on-site support for schools and educators that will increase opportunities to improve student achievement. (p. 47). Therefore they have proposed to award grants either to schools of sufficient size or those who work in consortiums (p. 48). In addressing its unique rural population, South Dakota has demonstrated that the subgrants will be of sufficient size.

#### Weaknesses:

D. (iv). There are no identified weaknesses regarding the subgrants being of sufficient size.

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:

Technology has been described in the grant proposal as the great equalizer in South Dakota since it has such a rural population. Many of the Professional Development opportunities provided to South Dakota teachers (p. 23) make use of technology. South Dakota states that technology is essential to effectively deliver professional development (p. 23). Technology allows teachers, after receiving face to face professional development, the opportunity to go back to their schools to develop grade level instructional lessons directed aligned to the standards they have unpacked during their initial training. Teachers access internet resources to enhance instruction and work with colleagues throughout the state to enrich their work. Students likewise benefit from web-based resources, allowing them to connect to the world, conduct research, become exposed to the arts and literature, and receive supplemental instruction that may not be available in their local school (p. 25) Media and Technology Skills are included in the High Schools 2025 initiative (e11) South Dakota has assisted local school districts to build technology infrastructure and resources, e.g., The Governor's Wiring the Schools program, and One-on-One Laptop initiative (p. 24). Schools, educators, and students have received training and have accessed the technology resources necessary to capitalize on on-line learning environments. It is clear that South Dakota is capitalizing on technology to enhance the learning of their students and increase their teachers' knowledge of effective literacy practices.

#### Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses regarding South Dakota's use of technology.

Reader's Score: 5

### Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

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

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

**Strengths:**

It is evident that South Dakota is proposing a project that focuses on improving school readiness and success through grade 12 in the language and literacy development for disadvantaged students. It intends to build upon its successes and current initiatives such as RTI (pp. 14 - 16) and Early Learning Guidelines (p. 6). When describing the Early Learning Guidelines, it is noted that while all children can learn from the activities, there are additional adaptations for individual learners (p. 7). Included as one of the four primary pillars that form the framework of the Comprehensive State Literacy Plan, is "improving instructional opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged and struggling learners" (p. 3). South Dakota's Comprehensive Literacy Plan must take into account the unique challenges of meeting the needs of ALL CHILDREN in this extremely rural and sparsely populated state (p. 20). Guiding the whole process is the State's dedication to implementing the Common Core Standards which will impact teaching practices, emphasize standards-driven curriculum, that should result in greater student achievement. (pp. 3 - 6)

South Dakota has met Priority Question 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no identified weaknesses in the State's responding to this Priority Question.

**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:**

South Dakota proposes a project that will collect, analyze, and use high quality and timely data to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early childhood settings and in elementary and secondary school. Four pillars provide the framework for the Comprehensive State Literacy Plan. One of these pillars addresses assessment measures that will reflect and inform practice and progress at all levels, e.g., state, school, classroom, and individual learner (pp. 3, 17). A stated goal in South Dakota's Comprehensive

Literacy Program is, "To develop a statewide system of support for schools, educators, and students that will lead to measurable advancement in language and literacy skills as an essential foundation for school readiness, academic success and preparedness for college and careers." (p. 17) The State will use data from a pilot program which is designed to help launch and implement the Common Core Standards (p. 4) These data will provide feedback for the refinement of the training series which will be initiated during the 2011-2112 school year (p. 4). Screening, assessments, and progress monitoring are part of the integrated data collection system currently used in the State's RTI model (p. 14). As evidenced in the examples cited above, South Dakota had provided detailed information to fulfill Absolute Priority 2.

South Dakota has met Priority Question 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision Making.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no identified weaknesses regarding the State's response to Priority Question 2.

**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:** South Dakota Department of Education -- South Dakota Department of Ed Office of Curriculum, Career a (S371C110036)

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

	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	37
<b>Sub Total</b>	37	37
<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	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	14
<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	88.5

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SRCL - 3: 84.371C

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

Applicant: South Dakota Department of Education -- South Dakota Department of Ed Office of Curriculum, Career a (S371C110036)

## 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: 37

#### 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 SD SEA has developed a comprehensive set of Common Core Standards for language arts and math that will frame their efforts to develop, update, and implement and improve their existing state literacy plan with the SRLC funding. A State Literacy Team, described in detail (Table on page 1) will provide strong leadership for the refinement and implementation of the state's literacy plan and the alignment of the interventions with this plan.

(b) The subgrantees will be required to demonstrate how they will align federal and state funds with the SRCL funds (p. 45).

(c) The applicant will hold a public competition for the subgrants which will make the process transparent (p. 36-37).

d (1) Professional development will be provided at multiple levels and will support the goals for the project. Professional development seems to provide the backbone to their efforts and a key aspect to reaching their goals. Accordingly, the applicant proposes a three phase approach to professional development with measurable objectives. This is described in detail (p. 4-6). For example, the applicant mentions how their Common Core standards are aligned with the professional development. Similarly, there is an existing READING Up program that contains a strong professional development initiative that is also designed for elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers. Overall, the applicant has supplied clear evidence of the intended efforts with stated measurable goals and outcomes (p. 9-10).

(2) The applicant devotes 17 pages to a careful description of their existing efforts and standards that will support the intended intervention and that address the additional requirements section of the RFA. For example, there are early curriculum learning guidelines described for pre-K children that were developed by professionals, stakeholders, parents, and the SD National Association for the Education of the Young Child (p. 5-8). This document will inform the pre-K intervention. For older children, a "rigorous instruction" standards-based curriculum will prepare students using "real world" application assignments (p. 10). A clear strength is a focus on student-centered learning across the curriculum- this is key to their ability to address students' individual needs and to provide the relevant resources (p. 10).

(3) (4) Critical to the assessment of student outcomes will be the applicant's use of the response to intervention model (RtI). Screening, assessments, and progress monitoring are all part of an integrated assessment system that also allows for fine tuning the intervention for individual children.

The applicant describes the framework for student-focused educational experiences that will help prepare high school students to be career-ready (p. 11). Known as High school 2025, this program is also grounded in a standards-based framework also with stated goals and measurable outcomes (p. 11). A personal learning plan is developed for each high school student (p. 12) to ensure that their progress is monitored and assessed. The applicant will use the RtI model to craft and implement the intervention;

**Sub Question**

particularly for struggling learners (p. 12). This will include a three component model that includes: multiple tiers of intervention (struggling students can be targeted in multiple levels of intervention); a problem-solving approach that follows the scientific method; and integrated data collection that involves screening and progress monitoring. The RtI model will use the Teaching Reading Source Book for effective reading instruction. These efforts will ensure that the interventions target individual children and their specific skill need.

(6) The applicant mentions a Student Information Management System (SIMS) (p. 26) that provides a unique identification number for each student. It appears that student assessment scores and other data could be keyed to these IDs to allow for tracking, monitoring and evaluation efforts.

**Weaknesses:**

none

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided adequate information (in several tables) demonstrating the need to improve academic outcomes for their students. Relevant to this needs assessment, the applicant also notes the special challenges SD faces in improving student outcomes with its predominantly rural population; nine Native American Reservations; high family poverty rates (39%); and students with identified disabilities (14%) and limited English proficiency (p. 18-23). Given the careful consideration of the particular needs of the children within SD, the applicant should be able to develop a clear and credible path for accomplishing the objectives.

**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.**

**Strengths:**

As discussed above in (a)(i) (d 1), the SEA will provide extensive professional development to support subgrantees efforts to implement their interventions. Technology will play an important role in disseminating teacher training, resources, and student access to resources across wide geographic areas in the state (p. 22).

**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**

**Sub Question**

**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 will contract with an outside consultant to evaluate their efforts (p. 24) at the state, school, and individual levels. To evaluate student level outcomes, the applicant mentions a Student Information Management System (SIMS) (p. 26) that provides a unique identification number for each student in the state. Using SIMS students can be followed across grades, schools, and districts. It appears that student assessment scores and other data are also keyed to these IDs to allow for tracking, monitoring and evaluation efforts using the Dakota State Test of Educational Progress (STEP) reading assessment (p. 25). Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) will be used to assess student outcomes from kindergarten to grade 6 and AIM web for grade 6 to grade 12. A noted strength is that the applicant plans to use common student level assessments across program sites to be able to make systematic comparisons across students, classrooms, schools, and programs to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of the overall project.

**Weaknesses:**

none

**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:**

On page 30, the applicant describes a comprehensive plan to disseminate information regarding strategies and results utilized within the South Dakota Comprehensive Literacy Program across state programs to inform and improve all state-level literacy efforts. Results will be shared among all subgrantees and LEAs to learn from successful applications and promising approaches.

Information regarding process, implementation and results of the project will also be provided to parents. The South Dakota Parent Information and Resource Center (SDPIRC) has been a critical partner with SDDOE in developing family friendly materials and in building partnerships between schools and families to improve educational outcomes for children. For example, in the past, SDPIRC has developed print and web-based guides and training events to introduce families to Academic Content Standards and strategies to support their child's learning the associated knowledge and skills at home. For the proposed project, the SDPIRC will update the Parent Guides and training opportunities to align with the newly adopted Common Core Standards. Additionally, the Comprehensive Literacy Program will disseminate project information and findings through Communities of Interest organized through the US Department of Education for Striving Readers projects. Comprehensive Literacy Program staff will be available to present at state and national level events. Electronic communication and social networks will be used extensively to disseminate project information and resources.

**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: 20.5

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 has outlined a basic plan for the subgrant competition. Requests for proposals will be disseminated to all LEAs, ECE programs, schools, etc. (p. 36-37). A webinar will be provided to discuss the application process. These efforts will ensure the competition is announced state-wide. The applicant states that the State Literacy Team will review the subgrant applications (p. 37). This is evidence of a competitive process.

**Weaknesses:**

Missing from the evaluation plan is how the applicant will review, score, and judge the quality of the subgrantee proposals particularly with regard to the capacity of the applicants to successfully implement their plans. For example, apart from requiring the applicants to address the absolute priorities (i.e., providing evidence of a rigorous intervention) it was not made clear how the proposals will be scored to provide an indication of their capacity. It would be helpful to know more specifically what the "rubric" (p. 37), provided by the applicant for the subgrantee applications, will contain.

Reader's Score: 1.5

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

**Strengths:**

(b) The applicant provided evidence for how it will require high quality subgrantee proposals. For example, the applicant will hold a competition for the subgrants for LEAs applying for K-12 and one for the pre-K level. The rationale for the 2 tiers seems to be that the K-12 programs can align their curricula to state standards, whereas the pre-K standards have not been determined (p. 30), and they are expected to vary.

To be competitive, both K-12 and elementary LEA applicants must align their interventions with the four pillars of the SD standards (p. 31) and must demonstrate knowledge of current research from the National Reading Panel and the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (p. 32).

The subgrantee proposals must describe a comprehensive plan to develop a rigorous literacy intervention, demonstrate need, target at risk children (p. 34), and agree to participate in summative and formative evaluations (p. 34). These efforts will provide clear guidelines for potential subgrantees in preparing their proposals. In addition, competitive proposals will need to ground their efforts in line with Institute of Education Sciences recommendations regarding Response to Instruction (RtI) multi-tier interventions (p. 3).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

There was no evidence for how the applicant intends to ensure that the subgrantees will involve other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community programs, and parents in their intended interventions.

It was not made clear how the applicant will determine that the subgrantee proposals have provided an adequate needs assessment.

**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:**

Subgrantees will be required to discuss how their efforts will be aligned with other funding (p. 35-36). For example, they will need to demonstrate how their current efforts and funding sources support language arts; the source of their funding; how the funding is used to specifically improve literacy; and how the subgrant funds would be used to improve and support existing effective practices. The rationale is that the SEA wants to ensure that the SRCL funds supplement and not supplant, existing efforts.

**Weaknesses:**

none

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant stated priority points will be given to schools who demonstrate the greatest need in terms of serving low income, special needs, and limited proficiency English children (p. 35).

**Weaknesses:**

none

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant states subgrantee applications will be given priority if they demonstrate their proposals are grounded in scientifically based reading research and evidence-based practices (p. 36).

**Weaknesses:**

none

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Sub Question**

- 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 plans to modify an existing process to review subgrant proposals (p. 36).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not address how this review process will specifically inform evaluations of the curricula and materials that the subgrantee propose to use in their interventions.

**Reader's Score: 1**

**Project management - Project management**

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

**Reader's Score: 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:**

The SD Department of Education plans to provide project oversight (p. 37). This should provide accountability across grantees. For example, the applicant provides a fairly detailed Table on pages 39-40 linking each project goal with the overall objectives, performance objectives, personnel responsible for achieving the objectives, and time lines. This evidence of planning increases the likelihood that the activities of the proposed project will be accomplished and in a timely fashion.

**Weaknesses:**

The project seems understaffed. For example, in terms of defined responsibilities, the individual who will serve as co-director in charge of the day to day management of the project seems to be committed at only 50% (p. 42).

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

As shown in the three CVs included in the appendix, the key staff appear to be well qualified to carry out a project of this scope and magnitude. For example, the SD DOE Secretary, who will lead the project, has leadership experience in several discretionary grants for the state.

**Sub Question**

**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:**

The applicant lists intended team members on pages 2 and 43.

**Weaknesses:**

This list seems to be limited to professionals, administrators and educators and at present, does not include the full range of diverse individuals, organizations, agencies and especially, parents.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources**

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

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a cost estimate of \$50 per student (p. 43) to carry the objectives of the project. This will enable the applicant to serve an estimated 120,000 students.

**Weaknesses:**

Based on the budget provided by the applicant, it is unclear whether there are adequate resources to make a significant impact (p. 44). It would be helpful to know how the \$50/per student figure was determined and is justifiable given the scope and magnitude of the intended project.

The budget items for administrating the SRCL also seem low (p. e1).

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has described an adequate plan to allocate the funding in line with the guidelines in the SRCL (p. 44). The applicant mentions LEA subgrant proposals will be required to address the entire K- to grade 12 range. At present the SD school data shows an almost equal distribution of students and teachers at levels K-5 and 6-12. This indicates the funding will be spread across a range of schools and children in SD.

**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 has a reasonable plan in place to align the use of Federal and state funds with the SRCL (p. 44-47). There is a table of the expected contributions from different agencies and their funding sources for each of the participants and stakeholders. The applicant lists eight State level offices that will contribute to the project. For example, the Office of Special Education will provide some professional development and student assessment; the Office of Assessment and Technology Systems will contribute all data collection mechanisms, and so forth (p. 46)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide a plan for sustainability when funding is exhausted.

**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 applicant presents a straightforward plan to award grants to regional groups made up of small schools that are geographically disbursed across the state (p. 47-48). These efforts should ensure that the LEA projects will be of significant size to maximize resource allocation and overall funding to serve the most children.

**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 describes how technology will play an important role in disseminating training and communication across wide geographic areas in the state. The applicant states that in the past, technology has served as an "equalizer" across the state in supporting schools, educators, and students by providing broad band internet access (p. 23-24) and additional instructional resources for students (i.e., high level course work that may not be available at their local school). For example, in rural areas, web based resources connect students to the world, provide opportunities for research, and so forth. These existing technological tools will provide a strong base for the proposed efforts outlined in the applicant's narrative.

**Weaknesses:**

none

**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:**

This priority was MET.

Overall the applicant has proposed a project to impact on school readiness for SD children from pre-K to grade 12. A noted strength is the plan to use the Response to Intervention (RtI). This has the potential to successfully identify, screen, intervene, and monitor the progress of all children who participate in the SRLC program (p. 34). Given SD's unique geographic challenges with schools located in remote areas, the type of systematic instruction that RtI can provide increases the chances of helping struggling students.

**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.

The applicant has proposed a plan for collecting data that will inform their efforts and the relative success of their project. These efforts will allow them to fine-tune their program over the lifetime of the funding. For example, key to this effort will be their ability to collect the same outcome data on their students across time and context (p. 16 & 26).

**Weaknesses:**

none.

**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:** South Dakota Department of Education -- South Dakota Department of Ed Office of Curriculum, Career a  
(S371C110036)

**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
<b>Sub Total</b>	37	32
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
<b>Quality of the State subgrant competition</b>		
1. State subgrant comp	28	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	28	25
<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	14
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	14
<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	88

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SRCL - 3: 84.371C

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

Applicant: South Dakota Department of Education -- South Dakota Department of Ed Office of Curriculum, Career a (S371C110036)

## 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

#### 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 describes that the State Literacy Team has drawn upon various streams of information and evidence based practice to provide the foundation and continuous improvement of a Comprehensive State Literacy Plan. The pillars that provide the framework for the South Dakota plan includes: High expectations and rigor through the adoption of the Common Core Standards and promotion of the state Early Learning Guidelines; Building capacity at the local level for the development of relevant curriculum and instructional practice that are coherent across the grade span and result in the attainment of ELA Common Core Standards and Early Learning Guidelines; Improving instructional opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged and struggling learners; and Developing and implementing appropriate assessment measures that will reflect and inform practice and progress at all level: state, school, classroom and individual learner (p. 3).

The applicant explains how project activities align with the comprehensive State literacy plan and are collaboratively worked on with multiple stakeholder groups (e.g. Department of Social Servies, Child Care Assistance, Offices of Special Education and Head Start), (p. 8).

The applicant provides background information on ways that the State is implementing a model of Response to Intervention (RtI) and three previously implemented initiatives: READING Up-Standards in Practice; High Schools 2025/Literacy Integration; and Lexile Framework for Reading (p. 9-12).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The State of South Dakota explains effective plans with an overarching goal (To develop a statewide system of support for schools, educators, and students that will lead to measureable advancement in language and literacy skills as an essential foundation for school readiness, academic success and preparedness for college and careers) (abstract, p. e0) which align with two primary objectives and accompanying performance objectives (abstract, p. e0-e1).

The applicant explains a reasonable plan with background development and implementation information on state of South Dakota Common Core Standards (pp. 3-8).

The applicant provides a demographic profile overview highlighting data that points to the challenges persisting for students who are economically disadvantaged; representatives from ethnic minorities; and those that present disabilities or have limited English proficiency (pp. 18-23).

The applicant provides a justifiable plan supported by disaggregated data showing strong evidence of the correlation between poverty, ethnicity, disability and English proficiency with academic achievement for South Dakota students (p. 23).

**Weaknesses:**

Insufficient information is provided that focuses on a credible path for achieving goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State. For example more information regarding students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities (pp. 14-16) is needed.

**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:**

The applicant describes efforts to address the needs of students with academic and behavioral challenges (pp. 12-16). They propose doing this using a Rtl model.

Due to the issues of geography and sparseness of population (p. 20) the subgrant applicants will rely heavily on regional delivery (Educational Cooperatives) and effective use of technology strategies. The applicant intends to build on the existing technology infrastructure and resources to provide needed technical assistance.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 will partner with the Midwest Alliance for Professional Leadership and Learning (MAPLE) (p. 25) for external evaluation services.

The selected evaluator appears well-qualified for the evaluation roles having provided services for other educational reform initiatives (p. 26).

The applicant provides a clear discussion of how they are committed to continuously improving the design and implementation of its activities beginning with the foundational work of the four pillars of the South Dakota framework described above and discussed on page 3 of the narrative.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear how practices will strategically focus on evaluation of disadvantaged students, in particular methods that are feasible and appropriate for students with disabilities and those who are linguistically diverse (p. 26).

**Reader's Score: 8**

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

**Strengths:**

This project intends to have data management functions supported within the Student Information Management System (SIMS) (p. 27).

The applicant has worked closely with Technology and Innovation in Education, a statewide research and development organization (p. 27).

The applicant describes how local educators have received extensive training in administration and analysis of progress monitoring tools such as AIMS web (p. 27) which will support dissemination of information.

**Weaknesses:**

Incomplete information about how the creation of parent guides will be developed and implemented to reflect and support specific subgroups such as the Indian population discussed by the applicant. (p. 30).

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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: 25**

**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 plans for two competitions beginning with LEAs and then a second subgrant competition for preschool age children (p. 31) to ensure that the K-12 continuum is present.

The applicant explains plans for LEAs to map and align their K-12 curriculum to the state standards. Those mapping and alignment requirements will help to ensure that LEAs and early childhood education providers will have the capacity to implement their proposals in ways that demonstrate consistent paths of instruction and smooth transitions across grade spans resulting in comprehensive and coherent literacy planning (p. 31).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant acknowledges that a formula for the range of awards in the early childhood area has yet to be established due to the variation of themes (p. 31). Additional information could be provided to guide subgrantees as to what must be planned for in order to demonstrate their capacity to successfully implement their proposals (p. 32).

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

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

**(2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support 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 explains effective plans for comprehensive high-quality literacy programs by requiring that all subgrantees meet the expectations of 1) High expectations and rigor; 2) Building capacity at the local level for the development of relevant curriculum; 3) Improving instructional opportunities and outcome for disadvantaged and struggling learners; and 4) Developing and implementing appropriate assessment measures (pp. 31-35). For example the applicant explains that to ensure high expectations and rigor all subgrantees must describe their plan and approach to developing and implementing a coherent literacy plan that aligns with curriculum, instruction and assessment with common core standards (p. 32).

The applicant expresses a commitment to involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students. The applicant mentions that they will continue to partner with the South Dakota Parent Information and Resource Center (30), the Department of Social Services (p. 38), nonprofit organizations (p. 40) and other South Dakota government offices (p. 38).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 will require all subgrantees to discuss current efforts and funding sources that support improvement in English language arts in thier LEAs and school attendance centers (p. 35). Furthermore subgrantees are required to present information on the sources of funds and approach utilized to support any exisitng efforts (p. 36).

The applicant is clear that subgrants are intended to supplement and not to supplant those existing efforts (p. 36).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant is requiring subgrantees to highlight unique features about their diverse communities and how those students will actively participate (p. 36).

Subgrantees are required to show evidence that the schools with the greatest number of students impacted by poverty, ethnicity, disabilities and limited English proficiency and those that failed to make AYP and are identified for improvement will receive priority for support and intervention (p. 26).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant describes an effective plans that calls for subgrants to connect their design and strategies with scientificallty based research and evidence based best practices (p. 37).

**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:**

Applicant will modify its exising process for soliciting subgrant applications to reflect priorities and focus on judging evidence base and alignment with State standards (pp. 37-38).

State Literacy Team members will serve as the initalreview panel (p. 37) then the Board of Education will serve in a subsequent review process.

**Weaknesses:**

Inadequate information as to how the revised process will be used to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials (p. 37) for example it would be helpful to see sample items on the scoring rubric that is mentioned on page 38.

**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:**

The management chart on pp. 40-41 focuses on the two objectives and details personnel responsibilities, milestones and timetables as well as specific performance objectives. This evidence of planning increases the realities of project completion.

**Weaknesses:**

The project may be understaffed for example in terms of clearly defined responsibilities, one of the assigned co-directors is planned for at only half time. Additionally it is unclear if the other co-director will be released from what is already a full-time position (pp. 42-43).

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

Personnel appear qualified for the expectations of the project as they have experience with other large scale initiatives in this State (pp. 41-42).

**Weaknesses:**

Incomplete information as to how contracted personnel will be uniquely able to deepen supports for students with disabilities, those with linguistic needs and those highlighted as coming from diverse cultural backgrounds as well as those in poverty (pp. 41-42).

**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 applicant is committed to collaborative efforts with colleagues in the areas including: Common Core Standards, READING Up; High School 2025/21st Century Skills, RTI, reading Instruction, Formative Assessment and Data Analysis (p. 2 and 43).

The State of South Dakota will ensure a diversity of perspectives. The applicant provides a table (pp. 45-47) listing the representation and contributions of stakeholders including families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

Incomplete information as to how project personnel will maximize involvement with families including those families with children with linguistic needs and those highlighted as coming from diverse cultural backgrounds as well as those in poverty (p. 43).

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources**

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

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant plans to serve approximately 120,000 students (p. 44) and a budget narrative is provided as an appendix detailing planned expenditures.

The applicant describes a cost estimate of \$50.00 per student (p. 44).

**Weaknesses:**

Incomplete information as to how the calculation of \$50/student was arrived at (p. 44). It is unclear if \$50.00 is adequate to make a significant impact in relation to the number of objectives and design.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant commits to the 15/40/40% allocation formula (p. 44).

The applicant explains that school data confirms an almost equal distribution of students at each level: K-5 and 6-12 in South Dakota, as well as, equal number of teachers at each of the grade spans (p. 45) this indicating that the funding will be spread across South Dakota schools.

**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.

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a table (pp. 44-47) highlighting how key professionals from other agencies will make contributions. The applicant provides a listing of eight areas of representation that will contribute to this project. For example the Department of Social Services will provide existing efforts and resources related to Early Learning Guidelines and child care and education provides. It is explained that the Early Childhood Enrichment Centers provides an exceptional vehicle to build capacity for early learning and literacy.

**Weaknesses:**

Incomplete information as to a plan for sustainability of funding after the end of the subgrant.

**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 applicant is committed to work with small schools and plans to convene resources across multiple districts with sufficient student populations to allow schools to access on-going training, support, coaching/mentoring and data collection where existing expertise is available (pp. 47-48).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are 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 stress that technology efforts are seen as an equalizer for supporting schools, educators and students in this very rural state.

The State has assisted local school districts to build technology infrastructures and resources (p. 24) to increase teacher effectiveness.

The State also provides an on-line environment where lessons developed and approved are available throughout the State (p. 25) as another way to increase teacher effectiveness.

Students in South Dakota have access to web-based resources (p. 25) and are encouraged to use computer-assisted text displays (p. 34-35) as strategies to increase their engagement and achievement.

**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:**

Overall plans call for deepening existing services to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in language and literacy development for disadvantaged students (abstract and implementation schedule on pages 40-41). The applicant met this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

Limited discussion as to how programming will uniquely focus on disadvantaged students (p. 40-41).

**Reader's Score:** 0

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

The project is committed to collecting, analyzing, and using high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements. A key partner in this project is the Office of Assessment and Technology Systems (p. 46) which will contribute to all data collection for project evaluation and student assessment. The applicant met this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

Additional information on ways that data illustrating progress for students with special needs can be interfaced with existing structures (p. 46).

**Reader's Score:** 0

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