

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:06 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Achievement First, Inc. -- Organization Development, (S385A100155)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Evaluation Criteria		
Absolute Priority 1		
1.Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
1.Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluaton Criteria		
Absolute Priority 3		
1.Absolute Priority 3	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Requirement		
Requirement		
1.Requirement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluation Criteria		
Core Element 1		
1.Core Element 1	0	0
Core Element 2		
1.Core Element 2	0	0
Core Element 3		
1.Core Element 3	0	0
Core Element 4		
1.Core Element 4	0	0
Core Element 5		
1.Core Element 5	0	0
High Quality Professional Development		
1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for the Project		
1.Need for Project	10	6
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	50
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	17
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	78

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	5
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	3
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Sub Total	10	8
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Total	110	86
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Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - Panel - 8: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Achievement First, Inc. -- Organization Development, (S385A100155)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

1. Priority 1: Differentiated Levels of Compensation for Effective Teachers and Principals:

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

It will develop and implement a PBCS that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness by improving student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as part of the coherent and integrated approach of the local educational agency (LEA) to strengthening the educator workforce.

In determining teacher and principal effectiveness as part of the PBCS, the LEA - -

- (a) Must give significant weight to student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice), based on objective data on student performance;
- (b) Must include observation-based assessments of teacher and principal performance at multiple points in the year, carried out by evaluators trained in using objective evidence-based rubrics for observation, aligned with professional teaching standards; and, if applicable, as part of the LEA's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce; and
- (c) May include other measures, such as evidence of leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice), that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

In determining principal effectiveness as part of a PBCS, the LEA must give significant weight to student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and may include supplemental measures such as high school graduation and college enrollment rates. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that the differentiated effectiveness incentive payments will provide incentive amounts that are substantial and provide justification for the level of incentive amounts chosen. While the Department does not propose a minimum incentive amount, the Department encourages applicants to be thorough in their explanation of why the selected incentive amounts are likely high enough to create change in the behavior of current and prospective teachers and principals in order to ultimately improve student outcomes.

General:

In determining educator effectiveness as part of the PBCS, the applicant plans to include student growth based on objective data of student performance as 40% in tested subjects and 20% in untested subjects. (Pgs. 21-22). The proposal indicates that teachers will be evaluated using The Teaching Excellence Rubric which is aligned with the existing teacher Professional Growth Plan and the Essentials of Effective Instruction. Evaluations will include four formal lesson observations conducted by specially trained observers. (Pgs. 20-21, 24). In determining principal effectiveness, as a part of the PBCS, significant weight is currently given to student growth and bonus goals are based on bonus points earned as evidenced by the School Report Card, a document designed to define excellence with a goal of dramatic student achievement gains across multiple grade levels. (Pg. 27). The number of bonus points earned and reflected in the School Report Card equates to a PBCS award of up to 10% of base salary for all staff for outstanding school-wide performance. In order to ensure that incentive awards are substantial enough to create change in behavior, principals may earn up to \$15,000 in additional performance pay for student results. Teachers who demonstrate sustained excellence for at least two years may earn additional financial compensation as they move up through the Teacher Career Pathway

Tiers. It is a four step tier with increases between \$8,000 and \$12,000. (Pgs. 17-19). The proposed PBCS plan appears to include feasible strategies to reward teachers and principals for effectiveness in improving student achievement at differentiated levels.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

1. Priority 2: Fiscal Sustainability of the Performance-Based Compensation System (PBCS):

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

(a) The applicant has projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS, during the project period and beyond, and has accepted the responsibility to provide such performance-based compensation to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) who earn it under the system; and

(b) The applicant will provide from non-TIF funds over the course of the five-year project period an increasing share of performance-based compensation paid to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) in those project years in which the LEA provides such payments as part of its PBCS.

General:

The application includes a projection of costs associated with PBCS development and implementation over a five-year period which appear reasonable and include performance-based compensation for teachers, principals and other school staff. The budget narrative indicates that the applicant accepts the responsibility to provide performance-based compensation to teachers, principals and other staff and will provide an increasing percentage of the PBCP from non-federal PBCS funds budgeted annually beginning in the 2011-12 school year. (Pgs. e1-e14).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

1. Priority 3: Comprehensive Approaches to the Performance-Based Compensation System:

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

The proposed PBCS is aligned with a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce, including in the use of data and evaluations for professional development and retention and tenure decisions in the LEA or LEAs participating in the project during and after the end of the TIF project period.

General:

The proposed PBCS appears to be aligned with a coordinated strategy to strengthen the educator workforce and address teacher retention issues through multiple approaches including data-driven professional development and instructional planning; individualized coaching and the Teacher Career Pathway. (Pgs. 30-31). Tenure decisions are not referenced and may not be a consideration in this charter school program at this time. The plans for professional development appear to be feasible in terms of strengthening the teacher educator workforce.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

1. **REQUIREMENT:** Comment on the quality of the applicant's description of how its proposed PBCS will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice).

General:

The applicant expresses commitment to introducing the Teacher Career Pathway as a major part of the PBCS model to recognize and motivate teaching excellence. The applicant indicates that teachers will have the opportunity to advance through four tiers or salary bands which are accompanied by increased financial compensation and teacher leadership growth opportunities. (Pg. 18). It appears that the PBCS is adequately designed to help identify teachers to serve in leadership roles based on demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom and includes financial incentives significant enough to encourage these teachers to remain in the participating schools.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's plan for effectively communicating to teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and the community at-large the components of its performance based compensation system.

General:

The applicant partially meets the criteria for Core Element 1. The applicant indicates that a team composed of teachers and principals from each participating AF school assembled to form the AF Organization Development Team and undertook the initial design process for the Teacher Career Pathway in spring 2009. The applicant states that throughout the development process, the design team solicited teacher and principal feedback.

Feedback has been provided by over 150 AF teachers and school leaders through group input meetings or open forums. Teachers and principals provided regular feedback and input on the design process of evaluation tools through quarterly meetings and open forums. An annual survey will be administered to gather feedback from teachers and input groups on key communication. (Pgs. 19-20)

Beyond the involvement of teachers and principals in the development of the Teacher Career Pathway and performance evaluation tools, additional strategies to ensure continuous communication with staff were not described. Communication with the community at-large regarding the components of the PBCS is not referenced in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's involvement and support of teachers, principals, and other personnel (including input from teachers, principals, and other personnel in the schools and LEAs to be served by the grant) and the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs (where they are the designated exclusive representatives for the purpose of collective bargaining) that is needed to carry out the grant.

General:

The applicant meets the criteria for Core Element 2. As indicated in Core Element 1, the application provides evidence that teachers and principals were involved in the development of the Teacher Career Pathway, a major component of the PBCS and the development of performance evaluation tool. The applicant indicated that teacher and principal input will continue to be sought during the planning year and subsequently on an annual basis. (Pgs. 19-20). The applicant did not address the involvement and support of unions which may not be a factor in this charter school program at this time. The applicant appears to make a significant effort to involve teachers and principals in the developing stages of the project but strategies to be implemented about the planning year to maintain teacher and principal involvement and support are limited to an annual survey.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation, or plan to implement, a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year. The evaluation process must: (1) use an objective, evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards and the LEA's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce; (2) provide for observations of each teacher or principal at least twice during the school year by individuals (who may include peer reviewers) who are provided specialized training; (3) incorporate the collection and evaluation of additional forms of evidence; and (4) ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability (i.e., agreement among two or more raters who score approximately the same).

General:

The applicant meets the requirements of Core Element 3. The applicant explains that Achievement First will implement a rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation system that differentiates effectiveness using multiple rating categories. The applicant will use the Teaching Excellence Rubric, an evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching standards to evaluate individual teacher performance. The School Report Card will be included in the evaluation process to evaluate and reward teachers, leaders and support staff members for their combined impact on student achievement. These evaluation tools will be used to determine effectiveness for the purpose of the PBCS. (Pg. 20). Evaluations will include four classroom observations conducted by trained observers to ensure inter-rater reliability. (Pgs. 21-22, 24). The applicant's plans for teacher evaluations appear to be reasonable and appropriate to achieve the project objectives.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation or plan to implement, a data-management system that can link student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems.

General:

The applicant meets the criteria for Core Element 4. The applicant indicates that AF will invest heavily in information systems to support rigorous data-driven instructional planning, performance management and student achievement. To support the roll out of the Teacher Career Pathway, a major component of the PBCS, a new web-based human resources information system has been introduced. A process is in progress to identify a data warehousing platform that will effectively link human resources and other existing student data systems. The applicant is working to identify a data management system to meet its needs. (Pg 28). A chart is included in the proposal which outlines the current data management needs including the proposed data system to address each need and the current acquisition status. (Pgs. 29-30). The applicant's plans to address their data management needs appear to be appropriate and currently in progress.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's plan for ensuring that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS, and receive professional development that enables them to use data generated by these measures to improve their practice.

General:

The applicant meets the criteria for Core Element 5. The applicant provides evidence of plans to ensure that teachers and principals understand the goals of the PBCS and how they will be evaluated and compensated including strategies to ensure their involvement in the development of the PBCS throughout the planning stages and an annual survey to monitor understanding. A detailed guidebook is currently being developed which will provide information on all elements of the Teacher Career Pathway and School Bonus. The applicant states that 90% of teachers and 100% of principals indicated that they understand how they will be evaluated and compensated on the yearly April Network Support Survey. (Pg.32-33). The plans to ensure teacher and principal understanding appear adequate.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

Its proposed PBCS will include a high-quality professional development component for teachers and principals consistent with the definition of the term professional development in section 9101(34) of the ESEA. The applicant must demonstrate that its PBCS has a professional development component in place, or a specific plan for developing one, that is directly linked to the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS. The professional development component of the PBCS must - -

(1) Be based on needs assessed either at the high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) participating in the applicant's proposed PBCS or LEA-wide;

(2) Be targeted to individual teacher's and principal's needs as identified in the evaluation process;

(3) Provide --

(a) Those teachers and principals in participating TIF schools who do not receive differentiated compensation based on effectiveness under the PBCS with the tools and skills they need to improve their effectiveness in the classroom or school and be able to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(b) Those teachers and principals who are deemed to be effective and who, therefore, receive differentiated compensation under the PBCS, with the tools and skills they need to (1) continue effective practices in the classroom or school and raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), and (2) successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

(4) Support teachers and principals to better understand and use the measures of effectiveness in the PBCS to improve practice and student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(5) Include a process for regularly assessing the effectiveness of this professional development in improving teacher and leadership practice to increase student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and making modifications necessary to improve its effectiveness.

General:

Professional development is based on the assessed needs of the schools in the network. All schools are considered high-need. Professional development opportunities for teachers are differentiated to ensure that each teacher's needs and professional development goals are supported appropriately. The plan includes three weeks of training before the start of the school year and two hours of training each Friday during the year. A core component of professional development for teachers is individualized coaching sessions combined with target observations and feedback. Coaches work with teachers to develop individual learning plans to help them attain their goals. Six times per year, professional development will include a review of student data and be based upon periodic student assessment data. (Pgs. 30-31). The proposal does not specifically reference professional development for teachers and principals who do not receive differentiated compensation. The plans for professional development provided in the plan appear to be adequate to support the objectives of the project. It is difficult to determine the quality of the professional development because specific activities are not described and the method of determining effectiveness is not discussed.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

1.(A): Need for the project (10 points):

In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the applicant establishes that--

1) The high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) whose educators would be part of the PBCS have difficulty--

(i) Recruiting highly qualified or effective teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects or specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, English language acquisition, and special education; and

(ii) Retaining highly qualified or effective teachers and principals.

(2) Student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) in each of the schools whose educators would be part of the PBCS is lower than in what the applicant determines are comparable schools in the LEA, or another LEA in its State, in terms of key factors such as size, grade levels, and poverty levels; and

(3) A definition of what it considers a "comparable" school for the purposes of paragraph (2) of this selection criterion is established.

Strengths:

The applicant explains that all network schools serve students in low income neighborhoods and have difficulty recruiting and retaining highly qualified educators compared to similar schools.

Hard-to-staff positions include teachers certified in math, science and special education across all grade levels and English language arts in the middle school grades. Data indicates that as of June 2010, 34% of teaching positions were vacant throughout the AF network of schools; the annual attrition rate is 18% -22%. (Pgs. 5-7). The applicant provides data indicating that although students in network schools are outperforming students in comparable public schools in their communities, they are still performing lower than state averages. (Pgs. 7-14)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide sufficient evidence to indicate that students attending participating schools are high need students. (Pgs. 5-7). The applicant did not include data on size, grade-level or poverty-level of participating schools. The definition of comparable schools is provided but the data is not adequate for making inferences because the applicant's students are included in the state population for example, the applicant compared LEA students to students in New York state but students who attend LEA schools located in New York would be counted in both comparison groups. Therefore, the comparison is not appropriate. (Pg. 14).

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Project Design

1.(B): Project design (60 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the proposed PBCS--

(1) Is part of a proposed LEA or statewide strategy, as appropriate, for improving the process by which each participating LEA rewards teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) in high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) based upon their effectiveness as determined in significant part by student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice). With regard to the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel, the Secretary will consider whether--

(i) The methodology the LEA or SEA proposes to use in its PBCS to determine the effectiveness of a school's teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) includes valid and reliable measures of student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

(ii) The participating LEA would use the proposed PBCS to provide performance awards to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes

to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) that are of sufficient size to affect the behaviors of teachers, principals, and other personnel and their decisions as to whether to go to, or remain working in, the high-need school; and

(iii) The applicant provides a clear explanation of how teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) are determined to be "effective" for the purposes of the proposed PBCS.

(2) Has the involvement and support of teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools), including input from teachers, and principals, and other personnel in the schools and LEAs to be served by the grant, and the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs where they are the designated exclusive representatives for the purpose of collective bargaining that is needed to carry out the grant;

(3) Includes rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year;

(4) Includes a data-management system, consistent with the LEA's proposed PBCS, that can link student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems; and

(5) Incorporates high-quality professional development activities that increase the capacity of teachers and principals to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and are directly linked to the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS.

Strengths:

The project includes financial incentives for teachers, principals and other staff members to promote growth in student achievement and to help close the achievement gap by using the

PBCS to determine the effectiveness of teachers and other school personnel. The proposed incentive amounts for teachers and principals is of sufficient size to affect behavior and reduce attrition in high-need schools. (Pg. 28). The proposed plan has the support and involvement of teachers, principals and other personnel. The plan includes a clear, fair and reasonable evaluation system for teachers and principals that differentiates levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories, takes into account student growth as a significant factor and requires multiple classroom observations during the school year. The applicant plans to purchase a data-management system to link student achievement data to payroll and human resources systems. (Pg. 28) The plan incorporates professional development linked to measures of teacher and principal effectiveness. (Pg. 30-31).

Weaknesses:

The plan does not provide a clear explanation of plans to address inter-rater reliability in the evaluation process. (Pg. 26). The main professional development for teachers was identified as individualized coaching. However, more information about the content of the coaching meetings is needed to determine if this can be considered high quality professional development. The coaches will be the principal, academic dean or master teachers who will also serve as evaluators. This presents a conflict of interest as to whether they can provide a fair and non-biased evaluation. (Pg. 30).

Reader's Score: 50

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

1.(C): Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project (25 points):

In determining the adequacy of the support for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which--

- (1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;
- (2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the project effectively;
- (3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local financial or in-kind resources; and
- (4) The requested grant amount and project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Strengths:

The management plan defines the responsibilities of project personnel and includes the timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (Pgs. 28-29). The applicant stated they will leverage dollars committed from public and private partners such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (Pg. 44). The requested grant funding amount and project costs are reasonable and sufficient to attain project goals.

Weaknesses:

The expertise of project personnel identified to work with student achievement data is limited to the area of financial data. (Pg. 43). Although the applicant stated they will leverage funds from private partners, there is a lack of evidence of financial commitments from specific private partners. (Pg. 44).

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of Local Evaluation

1.(D) Quality of Local Evaluation (5 points):

In determining the quality of the local project evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant's evaluation plan--

- (1) Includes the use of strong and measurable performance objectives (that are clearly related to the goals of the project) for raising student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), increasing the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools), and retaining and recruiting effective teachers, principals, and other personnel;
- (2) Will produce evaluation data that are quantitative and qualitative; and
- (3) Includes adequate evaluation procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant will produce evaluation data that is both quantitative and qualitative to measure progress toward meeting and exceeding the performance objectives set forth in the proposal. (Pg. 47). The table on pages 45-47 identified strong measurable performance objectives to evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Career Pathway in raising student achievement. The applicant has hired a full-time senior associate of evaluation and recognition whose primary role will be to support and evaluate the implementation of the Teacher Career Pathway initiative.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority: Use of Value-Added Measures of Student Achievement. (Up to 5 points):

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate, in its application, that the proposed PBCS for teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) will use a value-added measure of the impact on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor in calculating differentiated levels of compensation provided to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools).

Under this priority, the applicant must also demonstrate that it has a plan to ensure that, as part of the PBCS, it has the capacity to (1) implement the proposed value-added model (e.g., through robust data systems that collect the necessary data and ensure data quality), and (2) clearly explain the chosen value-added model to teachers to enable them to use the data generated through the model to improve classroom practices.

Strengths:

The proposed plan indicates that when a standardized norm-referenced test is available, student achievement will be evaluated based a value-added assessment. The applicant states that it will use research-based value-added measures to compare student achievement growth on standardized tests to student growth predictions in order to create value-added outcomes.

(Pgs. 21-22). Staff will be trained on value-added measures during professional development.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority: Increased Recruitment and Retention of Effective Teachers to Serve High-Need Students and in Hard-to-Staff Subjects and Specialty Areas in High-Need Schools. (Up to 5 points):

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate in its application that its proposed PBCS is designed to assist high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) to (1) serve high-need students (as defined in the Federal Register notice), (2) retain effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, and English language acquisition, and (3) fill vacancies with teachers of those subjects or specialty areas who are effective or likely to be effective. The applicant must provide an explanation for how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. In addition, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications, the extent to which the subjects or specialty areas they propose to target are hard-to-staff. Lastly, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications that they will implement a process for effectively communicating to teachers which of the LEA's schools are high-need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff.

Strengths:

The applicant provides clear and substantial evidence that the proposed PBCP is designed to help its high-need schools to serve high-need students as evidenced by demographic and other data included in the explanation of need. The proposed project is also designed to help network schools reverse high attrition rates and to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas. (Pgs. 6-13)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address how it will determine if a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. The applicant did not demonstrate that there will be a process in place to effectively communicate to teachers the designation of project schools as high-need and which subjects or specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:06 PM

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Reader #2: *****

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High Quality Professional Development		
1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for the Project		
1.Need for Project	10	7
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	45
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	18
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	75

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	5
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	4
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Sub Total	10	9
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Total	110	84
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Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - Panel - 8: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Achievement First, Inc. -- Organization Development, (S385A100155)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

1. Priority 1: Differentiated Levels of Compensation for Effective Teachers and Principals:

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

It will develop and implement a PBCS that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness by improving student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as part of the coherent and integrated approach of the local educational agency (LEA) to strengthening the educator workforce.

In determining teacher and principal effectiveness as part of the PBCS, the LEA - -

- (a) Must give significant weight to student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice), based on objective data on student performance;
- (b) Must include observation-based assessments of teacher and principal performance at multiple points in the year, carried out by evaluators trained in using objective evidence-based rubrics for observation, aligned with professional teaching standards; and, if applicable, as part of the LEA's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce; and
- (c) May include other measures, such as evidence of leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice), that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

In determining principal effectiveness as part of a PBCS, the LEA must give significant weight to student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and may include supplemental measures such as high school graduation and college enrollment rates. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that the differentiated effectiveness incentive payments will provide incentive amounts that are substantial and provide justification for the level of incentive amounts chosen. While the Department does not propose a minimum incentive amount, the Department encourages applicants to be thorough in their explanation of why the selected incentive amounts are likely high enough to create change in the behavior of current and prospective teachers and principals in order to ultimately improve student outcomes.

General:

Through the development of a new Teacher Career Pathway, the LEA will institute a financial reward structure for individual teachers and also on a school wide basis (p. 15-19). It includes four tiers through which teachers advance throughout their careers, after they have demonstrated sustained excellence for at least two years. Rewards include substantial monetary and non monetary compensation. Each of the four levels of advancement increases are between \$8,000 and \$12,000. Performance is assessed through eleven observations of teachers. The main instrument for assessing individual teachers on an annual basis is the Teaching Excellence Rubric, which collects data on 1) student achievement growth, 2) development of student character, 3) quality instruction and planning, and 4) professional core values and contribution to team achievement. When a standardized norm referenced test is available it will be used to determine student growth. Actual student achievement growth on tests will be compared to student predicted growth in order to create value added outcomes. Teachers whose students take standardized tests will have 40 percent of their overall assessment based on value added assessments. In courses in which standardized tests are not yet used, end of course exams and interim assessments will be used and these will account for 20 percent of evaluation. One of the

elements of the evaluation of teachers will be their contribution to team effort and consistently modeling district core values, and this will be assessed by peers through surveys. The quality of the proposed PBCS good.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

1. Priority 2: Fiscal Sustainability of the Performance-Based Compensation System (PBCS):

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

(a) The applicant has projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS, during the project period and beyond, and has accepted the responsibility to provide such performance-based compensation to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) who earn it under the system; and

(b) The applicant will provide from non-TIF funds over the course of the five-year project period an increasing share of performance-based compensation paid to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) in those project years in which the LEA provides such payments as part of its PBCS.

General:

In the budget narrative the applicant explains well how the costs to develop the project have been carefully planned to implement the project with success during the five year initial period as well as beyond the grant. The LEA will leverage dollars committed from other public and private partners. One of the main sources of non-TIF funds is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant to develop the Teacher Career Pathway. Although other sources of funding are mentioned, no strategy to secure additional funding and no explanation on how the schools will assume increasing amounts of the share of the project costs is provided.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

1. Priority 3: Comprehensive Approaches to the Performance-Based Compensation System:

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

The proposed PBCS is aligned with a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce, including in the use of data and evaluations for professional development and retention and tenure decisions in the LEA or LEAs participating in the project during and after the end of the TIF project period.

General:

To build on its current application and selection process for hiring teachers, the LEA will establish a Teacher Career Pathway through the TIF grant, by which teachers will be rewarded for their performance in achieving student growth. On page 15, the LEA explains the current Network Talent Strategy through which it proactively attracts top teachers through marketing and selection based on criteria related to the Essentials of Effective Instruction and Core Values. The applicant does not clearly explain how the data produced through the evaluations will be used for professional development and retention and tenure decisions.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

- 1. REQUIREMENT: Comment on the quality of the applicant's description of how its proposed PBCS will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice.**

General:

The Teacher Career Pathway (PBCS) includes a component of Core Values and Contributions that evaluates teachers for their role in the success of peers, students and the school at large (p. 25), so that this evaluation is counted as part of the formula for differentiated pay. Besides monetary compensation, non-monetary compensation may include participation in a master teacher cohort, increased external professional development opportunities, a sabbatical, and/or the option of coaching other teachers, among others (p. 18). This is an excellent feature of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's plan for effectively communicating to teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and the community at-large the components of its performance based compensation system.

General:

Very scarce information was found related on a communication plan on the PBCS, other than a brief mention on the project implementation table on page 32.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's involvement and support of teachers, principals, and other personnel (including input from teachers, principals, and other personnel in the schools and LEAs to be served by the grant) and the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs (where they are the designated exclusive representatives for the purpose of collective bargaining) that is needed to carry out the grant.

General:

A team of teachers and principals from all LEA schools participated in the initial design process for the Teacher Career Pathway (p. 19-20). This team has sought teacher and principal feedback as key input for the design. Also the organizational development team held separate, two hour volunteer input group meetings during which teachers and leaders provided extensive input on both the evaluation criteria and the evaluation process, including how to best measure each of the four key categories of the evaluation, how to weigh each component, and determining how teachers will progress from one tier to the next. The described efforts seem to have addressed this core element effectively.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation, or plan to implement, a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year. The evaluation process must: (1) use an objective, evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards and the LEA's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce; (2) provide for observations of each teacher or principal at least twice during the school year by individuals (who may include peer reviewers) who are provided specialized training; (3) incorporate the collection and evaluation of additional forms of evidence; and (4) ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability (i.e., agreement among two or more raters who score approximately the same).

General:

The evaluation system to determine teacher effectiveness is thoroughly described on pages 20-26. It is centered on the use of an evidence based rubric that includes four criteria: student achievement growth, development of student character, quality instruction and planning and professional core values and contributions which are aligned with professional standards and the LEA's coherent approach to strengthening the educator workforce. Each of these criteria is well explained and data to be collected is clearly presented. New teachers will be observed weekly while others will be observed biweekly by coaches who will use the Teacher Effectiveness Rubric. The training for coaches and how inter rater reliability will be achieved are not well explained, except for a brief mention on the implementation table on page 34, which is not sufficient to ensure the rigor of the proposed system. The evaluation system to determine teacher and principal effectiveness seems well designed except for the lack of attention to the inter rater reliability element.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation or plan to implement, a data-management system that can link student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems.

General:

Data is gathered through various data management tools that are in place and a data warehouse tool will be sought to interface the data to produce the value added measures. They will ensure that student data and payroll data will interface smoothly (p. 28). The applicant addresses this core element well and explains in detail the data elements to be included in the system (p. 29-30).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's plan for ensuring that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS, and receive professional development that enables them to use data generated by these measures to improve their practice.

General:

Through recruitment and evaluation processes, and professional development sessions and meetings with coaches, the PBCS will be explained to all teachers. Six times a year, teachers and academic leaders convene to review, analyze, discuss and plan using assessment data (p. 24-25). This element is not sufficiently addressed by the applicant as the professional development proposed does not emphasize the use of data on teacher and principal effectiveness as an important element to improve classroom practice.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

Its proposed PBCS will include a high-quality professional development component for teachers and principals consistent with the definition of the term professional development in section 9101(34) of the ESEA. The applicant must demonstrate that its PBCS has a professional development component in place, or a specific plan for developing one, that is directly linked to the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS. The professional development component of the PBCS must - -

(1) Be based on needs assessed either at the high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) participating in the applicant's proposed PBCS or LEA-wide;

(2) Be targeted to individual teacher's and principal's needs as identified in the evaluation process;

(3) Provide --

(a) Those teachers and principals in participating TIF schools who do not receive differentiated compensation based on effectiveness under the PBCS with the tools and skills they need to improve their effectiveness in the classroom or school and be able to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(b) Those teachers and principals who are deemed to be effective and who, therefore, receive differentiated compensation under the PBCS, with the tools and skills they need to (1) continue effective practices in the classroom or school and raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), and (2) successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

(4) Support teachers and principals to better understand and use the measures of effectiveness in the PBCS to improve practice and student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(5) Include a process for regularly assessing the effectiveness of this professional development in improving teacher and leadership practice to increase student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and making modifications necessary to improve its effectiveness.

General:

The professional development opportunities offered by the LEA are described on pages 30-31 as differentiated to ensure that each teacher's needs and professional development goals are supported. Three weeks of training are provided for all teachers before the start of each school year and two hours of staff development take place each Friday. The

core component of professional development for all teachers is individualized coaching, weekly for new teachers or bi-weekly meetings for continuing teachers throughout the year, and targeted observation and feedback to ensure that teachers improve their performance. The coach works in collaboration with the teacher to develop goals and both teacher and coach debrief on the teachers progress towards their growth on a regular basis. Also, six times a year, teachers and academic leaders convene in teams to review, analyze, discuss and plan using data from the latest interim assessment cycle report to formulate individual and team level instructional plans that enable teachers to drive increased student achievement by focusing on problem areas. Even though student achievement needs are used as a basis to design lesson plans and instructional strategies, it is not clear if the needs to increase student achievement that have been assessed are used to drive the design of the professional development activities described. No mention is made of a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development program on improving teacher and principal effectiveness.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

1.(A): Need for the project (10 points):

In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the applicant establishes that--

1) The high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) whose educators would be part of the PBCS have difficulty--

(i) Recruiting highly qualified or effective teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects or specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, English language acquisition, and special education; and

(ii) Retaining highly qualified or effective teachers and principals.

(2) Student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) in each of the schools whose educators would be part of the PBCS is lower than in what the applicant determines are comparable schools in the LEA, or another LEA in its State, in terms of key factors such as size, grade levels, and poverty levels; and

(3) A definition of what it considers a "comparable" school for the purposes of paragraph (2) of this selection criterion is established.

Strengths:

The Achievement First Network serves the lowest performing students in the state, in terms of graduation, math and reading test results, and in meeting state goals in all subjects. The schools are facing the challenge of recruiting teachers for hard to staff subjects in all grades, e.g. math and science, as well as special education, and for ELL in the middle school. As of 2010, 34 percent of teaching positions were vacant for the next school year (69 percent of this in one school). On page 6, a table presents specific hiring needs projected to 2015. The proposer already has in place a strong recruiting strategy that includes broad outreach, which will be further strengthened with the PBCS. Annually, about 18- 22 percent of teachers leave AF schools. The PBCS will help to retain the best teachers according to their impact on student achievement.

Weaknesses:

The information on student achievement is not clearly based on information from comparable schools, as the definition of what comparable schools are is not provided.

Selection Criteria - Project Design

1.(B): Project design (60 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the proposed PBCS--

(1) Is part of a proposed LEA or statewide strategy, as appropriate, for improving the process by which each participating LEA rewards teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) in high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) based upon their effectiveness as determined in significant part by student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice). With regard to the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel, the Secretary will consider whether--

(i) The methodology the LEA or SEA proposes to use in its PBCS to determine the effectiveness of a school's teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) includes valid and reliable measures of student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

(ii) The participating LEA would use the proposed PBCS to provide performance awards to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) that are of sufficient size to affect the behaviors of teachers, principals, and other personnel and their decisions as to whether to go to, or remain working in, the high-need school; and

(iii) The applicant provides a clear explanation of how teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) are determined to be "effective" for the purposes of the proposed PBCS.

(2) Has the involvement and support of teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools), including input from teachers, and principals, and other personnel in the schools and LEAs to be served by the grant, and the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs where they are the designated exclusive representatives for the purpose of collective bargaining that is needed to carry out the grant;

(3) Includes rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year;

(4) Includes a data-management system, consistent with the LEA's proposed PBCS, that can link student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems; and

(5) Incorporates high-quality professional development activities that increase the capacity of teachers and principals to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and are directly linked to the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS.

Strengths:

The Achievement First Network has developed a talent strategy to attract and select the best teachers according to the Essentials of Effective Instruction, which are based on best practice research. The methodology to implement the PBCS is based on an evaluation system that includes measures of the teacher and principal impact on student achievement. The evaluation tool is the Professional Growth Plan based on student outcomes and the quality of instruction. The design of the Teacher Career Pathway (TCP) was designed through a team that sought broad participation from teachers and principals and the

evaluation tools were piloted with teachers who provided feedback to improve it. Through the TIF, this strategy will be strengthened by developing the TCP, with four tiers through which the teacher advances after demonstrating 2 years of sustained excellence in teaching through observations that use the Teaching Excellence Rubric. This rubric includes student achievement evaluated based on value added assessment, which is calculated through a predicted growth model, and weighs 40 percent of the compensation formula (p. 16) which seems to be an adequate percentage. Substantial incentives ranging between \$8,000 to \$12,000 will be awarded according to performance for advancement in each of the four tiers of the TCP. Data is gathered through various data management tools that are in place and a data warehouse tool will be sought to interface the student achievement and payroll data to produce the value added measures (p. 28). Professional development focuses on effective instructional strategies and is differentiated according to individual teachers needs (p. 16, 30).

Weaknesses:

Although the fundamental criteria to determine teacher effectiveness are identified, clearly defined evidence based measures of effectiveness are not presented. The amounts proposed for providing performance based compensation were not adequately justified. The lack of outside evaluators for the teacher and principal effectiveness evaluation systems presents a weakness in terms of the rigor of the system. No explanation was provided on how inter rater reliability will be ensured to make the evaluation system consistent and fair for all teachers (p. 34).

Reader's Score: 45

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

1.(C): Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project (25 points):

In determining the adequacy of the support for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which--

- (1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;
- (2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the project effectively;
- (3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local financial or in-kind resources; and
- (4) The requested grant amount and project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Strengths:

The proposal has an excellent presentation of the major tasks to be undertaken within a specific timeline that seems achievable. The key personnel are presented very clearly and their expertise seems to be very adequate to successfully implement the project. The budget explanation for the use of TIF funds is very thorough and adequate for the project requirements.

Weaknesses:

No time commitments were specified for the key personnel. Although it is stated that AF Network will commit funding from the local school budgets, grants, and state funds, insufficient information of the commitment of local funding is provided in the budget narrative.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Local Evaluation

1.(D) Quality of Local Evaluation (5 points):

In determining the quality of the local project evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant's evaluation plan--

(1) Includes the use of strong and measurable performance objectives (that are clearly related to the goals of the project) for raising student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), increasing the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools), and retaining and recruiting effective teachers, principals, and other personnel;

(2) Will produce evaluation data that are quantitative and qualitative; and

(3) Includes adequate evaluation procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Teacher Career Pathway in raising student achievement, a set of clear objectives and measures of success are detailed on pages 45 to 47. Quantitative data to be collected include student achievement, teacher effectiveness, retention, and survey results from teachers, students, parents and network support teams. Qualitative data will be produced through meetings, and open ended surveys. The results will be presented and used through multiple means involving stakeholders at all levels on an ongoing and frequent basis to improve project implementation, through quarterly principal meetings, input group meetings, and end of year project team reflections (p. 47-48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Preference Priority: Use of Value-Added Measures of Student Achievement. (Up to 5 points):

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate, in its application, that the proposed PBCS for teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) will use a value-added measure of the impact on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor in calculating differentiated levels of compensation provided to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools).

Under this priority, the applicant must also demonstrate that it has a plan to ensure that, as part of the PBCS, it has the capacity to (1) implement the proposed value-added model (e.g., through robust data systems that collect the necessary data and ensure data quality), and (2) clearly explain the chosen value-added model to teachers to enable them

to use the data generated through the model to improve classroom practices.

Strengths:

The Teaching Excellence Rubric, used to evaluate teacher performance, and the School Report Card, are the two main tools to assess impact on student achievement, and serve as the basis for determining value added measures. The Teaching Excellence Rubric is used to evaluate teachers annually on the outcomes of their teaching in terms of several factors that include: student achievement on standardized tests and other validated assessment, quality instruction through observations in the classroom, professional core values, and contributions to team achievement. The process for developing the value added measures of student achievement based on key variables and teacher input is clearly explained (p. 21-23). The existing data management system includes various highly efficient data solutions that will be enhanced and interfaced to calculate the value added measures for teacher evaluation. The system is communicated to the teachers through forums, events, and especially through the professional development and evaluation process as the foundation for instructional planning cycles.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority: Increased Recruitment and Retention of Effective Teachers to Serve High-Need Students and in Hard-to-Staff Subjects and Specialty Areas in High-Need Schools. (Up to 5 points):**

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate in its application that its proposed PBCS is designed to assist high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) to (1) serve high-need students (as defined in the Federal Register notice), (2) retain effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, and English language acquisition, and (3) fill vacancies with teachers of those subjects or specialty areas who are effective or likely to be effective. The applicant must provide an explanation for how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. In addition, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications, the extent to which the subjects or specialty areas they propose to target are hard-to-staff. Lastly, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications that they will implement a process for effectively communicating to teachers which of the LEA's schools are high-need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff.

Strengths:

The applicant presents evidence of needs to increase student achievement, and that it will target high need schools in which the levels of poverty are higher than other LEAs in the state, evidenced by 72% eligible for reduced and free lunch (p. 7-14). The LEA is facing the challenge of recruiting teachers for hard to staff subjects in all grades, i.e. math and science, as well as special education, and for ELL in the middle school. As of 2010, 34 percent of teaching positions were vacant (69 percent of this in one school). On page 6, a table presents specific hiring needs projected to 2015. The proposer already has in place a strong recruiting strategy that includes broad outreach, which will be further strengthened with the PBCS. Annually, about 18- 22 percent of teachers leave AF schools. The PBCS will help to retain the best teachers according to their impact on student achievement.

Weaknesses:

No plan was found to communicate to teachers which school were high need and which areas are hard to staff.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:06 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:06 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Achievement First, Inc. -- Organization Development, (S385A100155)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Evaluation Criteria		
Absolute Priority 1		
1.Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
1.Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluaton Criteria		
Absolute Priority 3		
1.Absolute Priority 3	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Requirement		
Requirement		
1.Requirement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluation Criteria		
Core Element 1		
1.Core Element 1	0	0
Core Element 2		
1.Core Element 2	0	0
Core Element 3		
1.Core Element 3	0	0
Core Element 4		
1.Core Element 4	0	0
Core Element 5		
1.Core Element 5	0	0
High Quality Professional Development		
1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for the Project		
1.Need for Project	10	5
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	45
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	20
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	75

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	5
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	2
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Sub Total	10	7
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Total	110	82
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Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - Panel - 8: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Achievement First, Inc. -- Organization Development, (S385A100155)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

1. Priority 1: Differentiated Levels of Compensation for Effective Teachers and Principals:

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

It will develop and implement a PBCS that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness by improving student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as part of the coherent and integrated approach of the local educational agency (LEA) to strengthening the educator workforce.

In determining teacher and principal effectiveness as part of the PBCS, the LEA - -

- (a) Must give significant weight to student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice), based on objective data on student performance;
- (b) Must include observation-based assessments of teacher and principal performance at multiple points in the year, carried out by evaluators trained in using objective evidence-based rubrics for observation, aligned with professional teaching standards; and, if applicable, as part of the LEA's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce; and
- (c) May include other measures, such as evidence of leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice), that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

In determining principal effectiveness as part of a PBCS, the LEA must give significant weight to student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and may include supplemental measures such as high school graduation and college enrollment rates. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate that the differentiated effectiveness incentive payments will provide incentive amounts that are substantial and provide justification for the level of incentive amounts chosen. While the Department does not propose a minimum incentive amount, the Department encourages applicants to be thorough in their explanation of why the selected incentive amounts are likely high enough to create change in the behavior of current and prospective teachers and principals in order to ultimately improve student outcomes.

General:

To measure teacher effectiveness in tested subjects, 40% of the weight will be from student achievement. In non-tested subjects, 20% of the weight will be from student achievement (pg. 23). The applicant mentioned student growth as a focus of the project, but when specific information was provided as to the way teacher effectiveness would be determined (pg. 23), the term academic achievement was used without mentioning growth (pg. 23), therefore the extent to which 40% and 20% are significant enough weights for determining teacher effectiveness is questionable. Each week or bi-weekly teachers will be observed and meet with their coach to debrief and reinforce their instructional plans (pg. 16). The applicant does not provide any evidence of training for evaluators or other specific leadership opportunities for teachers (pg. 30). If the coach and evaluator is the same person, there may be bias in the observation evaluations.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

1. Priority 2: Fiscal Sustainability of the Performance-Based Compensation System (PBCS):

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

(a) The applicant has projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS, during the project period and beyond, and has accepted the responsibility to provide such performance-based compensation to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) who earn it under the system; and

(b) The applicant will provide from non-TIF funds over the course of the five-year project period an increasing share of performance-based compensation paid to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) in those project years in which the LEA provides such payments as part of its PBCS.

General:

The applicant provided an appropriate budget narrative with information regarding the dollar amounts required for compensation (pg. 19). Beyond the project period a clear plan for funding and acceptance of the responsibility to provide such funding for the performance-based compensation was unclear. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funds will be used to leverage some of the costs (pg. 44). The proposal was unclear regarding the LEA's role in providing payments as part of the PBCS.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

1. Priority 3: Comprehensive Approaches to the Performance-Based Compensation System:

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

The proposed PBCS is aligned with a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce, including in the use of data and evaluations for professional development and retention and tenure decisions in the LEA or LEAs participating in the project during and after the end of the TIF project period.

General:

A coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce by using data and evaluations for professional development and retention was limited in details. Professional development activities were not very descriptive as to explaining what will occur during the activities (pg. 16). The descriptions for the weekly and bi-weekly meetings were vague. The content and quality of the weekly and bi-weekly meeting cannot be determined due to lack of information. The proposal did not include information on tenure decisions.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

1. REQUIREMENT: Comment on the quality of the applicant's description of how its proposed PBCS will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and

leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice.

General:

The applicant did not provide a description of how its proposed PBCS will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's plan for effectively communicating to teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and the community at-large the components of its performance based compensation system.

General:

The applicant plans to make a detailed guidebook to explain the Teacher Career Pathway and Teacher Bonus, however, the target audience for the guidebook was not clear (pg. 32). The proposal does not include other information as to the ways in which they will effectively communicate to teachers, administrators, other school personnel, or the community at-large the components of its performance based compensation system. The applicant met the criteria for Core Element 1, but in a limited way.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's involvement and support of teachers, principals, and other personnel (including input from teachers, principals, and other personnel in the schools and LEAs to be served by the grant) and the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs (where they are the designated exclusive representatives for the purpose of collective bargaining) that is needed to carry out the grant.

General:

The proposal does not provide information on the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs. A team of Achievement First teachers and principals from each school were included in the initial design process of the project (pg. 19). The ways in which teachers and principals were selected for the teams was not provided. Feedback from every teacher will be sought at the end of each year with an annual survey (pg. 20). The applicant also states they will continue to collect information from input groups (pg. 20). The applicant met the criteria for Core Element 2.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation, or plan to implement, a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year. The evaluation process must: (1) use an objective, evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards and the LEA's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce; (2) provide for observations of each teacher or principal at least twice during the school year by individuals (who may include peer reviewers) who are provided specialized training; (3) incorporate the collection and evaluation of additional forms of evidence; and (4) ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability (i.e., agreement among two or more raters who score approximately the same).

General:

The evaluation process will include the use of the Teaching Excellence Rubric to evaluate individual teacher performance and the school report card for award determination (pg. 20). Based on the information provided, the Teaching Excellence Rubric meets the requirements of an objective, evidence-based rubric (pg. 20). Observations of teachers by their coach are planned for weekly for seasoned teachers and bi-weekly for newer teachers (pg. 30). The applicant did not provide information or evidence of training the observers. Additional forms of evidence such as student surveys are planned to be collected in addition to student achievement (pg. 21). The ways in which inter-rater reliability will be ensured was not provided (pg. 34). The applicant met the criteria for Core Element 3.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation or plan to implement, a data-management system that can link student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems.

General:

The details on the data-management system are limited, because some of the hardware and software have not been determined. The Achievement First Athena system has been developed to house student data for instruction decision making (pg. 28). A platform for data warehouse is still under research (pg. 28). A proposed set of data solutions was presented in a table which demonstrated the research and investigation towards developing the data-management system (pg. 29-30). The applicant ensures student achievement data will be linked to teacher and principal payroll and human resource systems once the system has been purchased prior to the start of the project (pg. 28). The applicant met the criteria for Core Element 4.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's plan for ensuring that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS, and receive professional development that enables them to use data generated by these measures to improve their practice.

General:

The applicant provided evidence of ways in which they will ensure that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness through formal and informal methods (pg. 20-21). Quarterly meetings, surveys, open forums and bi-annual professional development events, and informal conversations will be used to solicit feedback from teachers and principals on the system (pg. 20). Details on professional development activities for educators to use data to improve instructional practice were lacking. The applicant met the criteria for Core Element 5.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

Its proposed PBCS will include a high-quality professional development component for teachers and principals consistent with the definition of the term professional development in section 9101(34) of the ESEA. The applicant must demonstrate that its PBCS has a professional development component in place, or a specific plan for developing one, that is directly linked to the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS. The professional development component of the PBCS must - -

(1) Be based on needs assessed either at the high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) participating in the applicant's proposed PBCS or LEA-wide;

(2) Be targeted to individual teacher's and principal's needs as identified in the evaluation process;

(3) Provide --

(a) Those teachers and principals in participating TIF schools who do not receive differentiated compensation based on effectiveness under the PBCS with the tools and skills they need to improve their effectiveness in the classroom or school and be able to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(b) Those teachers and principals who are deemed to be effective and who, therefore, receive differentiated compensation under the PBCS, with the tools and skills they need to (1) continue effective practices in the classroom or school and raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), and (2) successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

(4) Support teachers and principals to better understand and use the measures of effectiveness in the PBCS to improve practice and student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(5) Include a process for regularly assessing the effectiveness of this professional development in improving teacher and leadership practice to increase student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and making modifications necessary to improve its effectiveness.

General:

Three weeks of training prior to the start of the school year is planned for professional development (pg. 30). The proposal states that the professional development will be highly differentiated and the core of the professional development is the weekly or bi-weekly coach meetings, but the ways in which this will occur is unknown (pg. 30). The activities planned for the professional development including the three weeks prior to the start of school and weekly/bi-weekly meetings are lacking. The quality of the professional development cannot be determined due to lack of information regarding the activities to take place. Specific ways in which the effectiveness of the professional development activities will be evaluated were unclear.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

1.(A): Need for the project (10 points):

In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the applicant establishes that--

1) The high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) whose educators would be part of the PBCS have difficulty--

(i) Recruiting highly qualified or effective teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects or specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, English language acquisition, and special education; and

(ii) Retaining highly qualified or effective teachers and principals.

(2) Student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) in each of the schools whose educators would be part of the PBCS is lower than in what the applicant determines are comparable schools in the LEA, or another LEA in its State, in terms of key factors such as size, grade levels, and poverty levels; and

(3) A definition of what it considers a "comparable" school for the purposes of paragraph (2) of this selection criterion is established.

Strengths:

STRENGTHS: The applicant provided evidence of difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers, particularly difficulty recruiting high quality teachers in areas such as mathematics, science, and special education across grade levels (pg. 5, 7. Specifically, 34% of positions for the 2010-2011 positions remain open (pg. 5). Support was provided to justify the number of teachers needed for the next five years due to projected growth in student population and attrition from teachers (20% teacher attrition rate).

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES: The applicant provides details of the low academic achievement in students' home districts, but not the current students who attend the LEA schools (pg. 7-8). The applicant did not demonstrate lower student achievement in each of the schools whose educators would be part of the PBCS. The applicant provided a description of the way they compared schools, however, the comparable schools were not appropriate, as the schools selected were not comparable schools in size, grade levels, and poverty levels to the LEA (pg. 14). The comparisons made are not appropriate for making inferences due to inconsistencies in the population (pg. 14). For example, when the applicant compared LEA students to students in New York State, students who attend LEA schools in New York State would be included in both comparison group, which is not appropriate for making comparisons. The applicant has provided evidence from multiple sources supporting the applicant's ability to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap which does not demonstrate lower student achievement based on current students at the LEA schools (pg. 43). Students enter the school with lower academic achievement, but the school appears to have the resources to increase academic achievement as demonstrated by the studies conducted by outside parties (pg. 43-44). The applicant used strong words when describing its ability to already increase academic achievement which does not demonstrate low student achievement at the LEA (pg. 9).

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Project Design

1.(B): Project design (60 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the proposed PBCS--

(1) Is part of a proposed LEA or statewide strategy, as appropriate, for improving the process by which each participating LEA rewards teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) in high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) based upon their effectiveness as determined in significant part by student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice). With regard to the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel, the Secretary will consider whether--

(i) The methodology the LEA or SEA proposes to use in its PBCS to determine the effectiveness of a school's teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) includes valid and reliable measures of student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

(ii) The participating LEA would use the proposed PBCS to provide performance awards to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) that are of sufficient size to affect the behaviors of teachers, principals, and other personnel and their decisions as to whether to go to, or remain working in, the high-need school; and

(iii) The applicant provides a clear explanation of how teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) are determined to be "effective" for the purposes of the proposed PBCS.

(2) Has the involvement and support of teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools), including input from teachers, and principals, and other personnel in the schools and LEAs to be served by the grant, and the involvement and support of unions in participating LEAs where they are the designated exclusive representatives for the purpose of collective bargaining that is needed to carry out the grant;

(3) Includes rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year;

(4) Includes a data-management system, consistent with the LEA's proposed PBCS, that can link student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems; and

(5) Incorporates high-quality professional development activities that increase the capacity of teachers and principals to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and are directly linked to the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS.

Strengths:

STRENGTHS:

The applicant plans to use the Teacher Career Pathways compensation with compensation amounts to affect teacher behavior, and provided the actual dollar amounts for the incentive pay (pg. 28). Each level of effectiveness provides substantial amounts which ranged from 8,000 to 12,000 (pg. 4 of the budget narrative). The applicant provided appropriate procedures for the ways in which the value-added measure will be calculated (pg. 22-24). The applicant provided a clear description of the ways in which they will determine whether teachers, principals, and staff are effective (pg. 26, 27). There was evidence of a clear plan for determining effectiveness and the ways teachers can move from one level to the next (pg. 26). Planning teams for the initial design process began in the spring of 2009 and included teachers and principals from every Achievement First (AF) school (pg. 19). A series of ten two hour sessions were held for teachers and leaders to provide input on the evaluation process and evaluation criteria (pg. 19). Achievement First teachers do not participant in a union so there was no need to include

union input (appendix). Feedback was collected from over 150 teachers and leaders regarding the PBCS (pg. 19). An appropriate rubric will be used titled the Teaching Excellence Rubric with inputs and outcomes will be assessed (pg. 20). Sample rubrics were provided for ways in which teacher in tested subjects and teachers in non-tested subjects will be assessed for effectiveness (pg. 26). A differential pay system was provided for principals (pg. 27). Evidence of exploring different data-management systems was provided (pg. 29). Professional development activities are proposed for three weeks before school begins and two hours every Friday which appears to provide enough support for teachers. The core component of the professional development will consist of weekly or bi-weekly coaching (pg. 30). Teachers and leaders will meet six times a year to analyze and discuss data from the last interim assessment cycle (pg. 25, 30). The meetings will focus on struggling student and identifying why they struggled (pg. 30). The applicant states they plan to offer content-focused professional development and create data-driven plans based on student achievement data to increase the capacity of teachers and principals (pg. 16).

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

Valid and reliable measures of student growth were not clearly defined. The applicant stated it will ensure the data-management system will be linked to human resources and payroll, but not all of the systems are in place so evidence of this occurring in the future is limited (pg. 28). More information about the weekly or bi-weekly coaching is needed (pg. 30). It is unclear as to what the coaching consists of and how it will provide high quality professional development (pg. 30). In addition, the coach, who is either a principal, academic dean, or master teacher, also serves as the evaluator which is a conflict of interest because the evaluators are not independent (pg. 30). Information about the training of evaluators and collecting measures of inter-rater reliability are missing. The description of the professional development activities is too scarce to determine the quality of the activities planned (pg. 16, 30).

Reader's Score: 45

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

1.(C): Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project (25 points):

In determining the adequacy of the support for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which--

- (1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;
- (2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the project effectively;
- (3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local financial or in-kind resources; and
- (4) The requested grant amount and project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Strengths:

STRENGTHS:

The applicant provided a detailed timeline with measures of success, milestones and responsible parties which looked feasible (pg. 32-38). The milestones are linked to the timeline which provided an adequate plan for completed major tasks for the project in a timely manner (pg. 32-38). The project director and other key personnel appear to have appropriate qualifications to carry out their responsibilities based on background and past work experience (pg. 41-44). Financial support received from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other private funds will be used to supplement the project funds (pg. 44). Based on the budget narrative and project objectives, the costs requested are sufficient to attain the goals of the project.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

The key personnel to assume the role of expertise in data analysis and practice were described as having expertise and experiences working with financial data which may not be appropriate for working with student achievement data (pg. 43). No time commitments were specified for key personnel.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Local Evaluation

1.(D) Quality of Local Evaluation (5 points):

In determining the quality of the local project evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant's evaluation plan--

(1) Includes the use of strong and measurable performance objectives (that are clearly related to the goals of the project) for raising student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), increasing the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools), and retaining and recruiting effective teachers, principals, and other personnel;

(2) Will produce evaluation data that are quantitative and qualitative; and

(3) Includes adequate evaluation procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Strengths:

STRENGTHS:

Strong objective measurable performance objectives were included and appropriate (pg. 45-47). Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and examples of the types of data were provided such as surveys from teachers, students, and parents (pg. 47). Quarterly principal meetings and regular input meetings will provide data for continuous feedback to improve and further refine the program (pg. 47, 48). The information provided in the budget narrative regarding competitiveness of salaries and compensation provided strong evidence of being able to recruit and retain effective teachers.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority: Use of Value-Added Measures of Student Achievement. (Up to 5 points):

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate, in its application, that the proposed PBCS for teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) will use a value-added measure of the impact on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor in calculating differentiated levels of compensation provided to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools).

Under this priority, the applicant must also demonstrate that it has a plan to ensure that, as part of the PBCS, it has the capacity to (1) implement the proposed value-added model (e.g., through robust data systems that collect the necessary data and ensure data quality), and (2) clearly explain the chosen value-added model to teachers to enable them to use the data generated through the model to improve classroom practices.

Strengths:

STRENGTHS:

Strong objective measurable performance objectives were included and appropriate (pg. 45-47). Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and examples of the types of data were provided such as surveys from teachers, students, and parents (pg. 47). Quarterly principal meetings and regular input meetings will provide data for continuous feedback to improve and further refine the program (pg. 47, 48). The information provided in the budget narrative regarding competitiveness of salaries and compensation provided strong evidence of being able to recruit and retain effective teachers.

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority: Increased Recruitment and Retention of Effective Teachers to Serve High-Need Students and in Hard-to-Staff Subjects and Specialty Areas in High-Need Schools. (Up to 5 points):

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate in its application that its proposed PBCS is designed to assist high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) to (1) serve high-need students (as defined in the Federal Register notice), (2) retain effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, and English language acquisition, and (3) fill vacancies with teachers of those subjects or specialty areas who are effective or likely to be effective. The applicant must provide an explanation for how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. In addition, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications, the extent to which the subjects or specialty areas they propose to target are hard-to-

staff. Lastly, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications that they will implement a process for effectively communicating to teachers which of the LEA's schools are high-need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff.

Strengths:

STRENGTHS:

The application provided evidence of serving high-need students based on free and reduced lunch eligibility (pg. 8-9).

Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

The applicant did not provide an explanation for how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. The applicant mentioned difficulty filling hard to staff positions but did not focus recruitment and retention efforts on those hard to staff positions. The applicant did not provide a plan for communicating to teachers which schools are high-need and which subjects are hard-to-staff.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

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