Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:09 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Austin Independent School District -- Office of Educator Quality,Division of Human Resources (S385A100111)
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	9
Project Design			

1. Project Design	60	47
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1. Adequacy of Support	25	20
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1. Quality of Local Eval.	5	4
Sub Total	100	80

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Competitve Priority 1	5	2
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Competitive Priority 2	5	3
Sub Total	10	5
Total	110	85

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - Panel - 10: 84.385A

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

Applicant: Austin Independent School District -- Office of Educator Quality,Division of Human Resources (S385A100111)

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:

   The proposal gives significant weight to student growth based on objective data such as student performance on school based assessments as measured by Student Learning Objectives, SLOs (p. e25) and campus wide measures of student growth indicated by performance on state assessment test, college readiness indicators and other measurable indicators like attendance and graduation rates (p. e26). The application states that their current teacher/ principal evaluation system does not adequately differentiate teacher and principle performance. Thus, the proposal includes a plan to restructure their evaluation system with rubrics and tools that will align with standards from the National Center for Educational Achievement. In regards to measuring principal effectiveness, the proposal states that during the planning year it would like to work on linking elements of their current principal appraisal model with more comprehensive assessments of student growth. T he application's substantial compensation incentives are based are targeted individual, team and campus wide SLOs for teachers and principals. It will also add an observation component to their PBCS. (p. 12). The proposal also provides

significant incentives for differentiated professional development.

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 project has successfully demonstrated that they understand the associated costs of their proposed PBCS based on their prior experience with implementing REACH. State funds will cover the cost of the mentoring component of the program (p. e44). The Texas District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) funds is expected to pay $5M for the in kind contribution for the duration of the grant (p. e44). The proposal does not indicate that this contribution will increase through the duration of the grant. The program plans to utilize district and public funds to sustain the program. Furthermore, additional grant and private foundation funding will be sought (p. 44-45).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton 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 program has a revised, coherent strategy that developed as a result of their previous PBCS program called Reach. Incentives will be based on targeted student learning objectives formulated on individual, team and campus wide student outcome measures. Data collected from teacher driven professional development sessions will drive the dispersal of incentives. A coherent system is not already in place for incentives based teacher and principal evaluations; however, the project presents a plan to create one during the planning year of the TIF grant. The project does not address the issue of teacher recruitment or teacher tenure in hard to staff schools at all.

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 program includes an intensive teacher mentoring program designed to support new teachers (p. e12). These teacher mentors receive a full release from their teaching responsibilities in order to support new teachers during their 1st through 3rd year of teaching (p. e 30). This opportunity is a huge financial incentive for experienced, master teachers. In addition, this project encourages teachers to take on additional roles as facilitators for the district's Professional Development Units Program, in addition to facilitating the SLO process (e35).

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 proposal designates one part time (.75 FTE) staff to focus solely on communicating important aspects of the PBCS. The application states that communication regarding compensations and payout must be transparent. (e.39) However, the quality of the proposal's communication strategy is lacking because it does not include detailed communication strategies in the plan.

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 application states that the first version of their PBCS was designed by a steering committee that included administrators, the teacher's union, and the business community. This committee will remain in tact for the proposed initiative. In addition, the application includes a strong letter of support by the president of Education Austin, Austin's local teacher's union.

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 LEAÃ¢ÂÂs 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 admits that their district does not have a rigorous principal and teacher evaluation system. Thus, it proposes to develop one during the TIF planning year (e13, e18). The proposal specifically states that the new teacher/ principal evaluation plan will focus on effectiveness and "utilize the tools from the National Center for Educational Achievement to identify teacher and campus progress toward meeting student achievement and college readiness goals, and will identify areas of need for professional development" (e 17). This new revised evaluation system should increase rigor and reliability throughout the district; thus, resulting in enhanced student achievement.

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 states that the district does not have an integrated data management system that can handle processing the data generated from the project (e16). However, plans to create a functional data system lack any specific details. The application states that the project will "explore assessment system options for implementation in year two of the TIF grant" (p. 17). Having a functional data management system is crucial to the success of a PBCS thus, more details about how this data management system will be created is warranted.

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:

This plan has a very innovative way that teachers and principals are clear about understanding the elements of teacher and principal effectiveness. In order to insure that each campus within the district is autonomous and has a clear definition of effectiveness, teacher and principal work collaboratively to define "effectiveness" at the campus level. Teachers and principals create learning targets individually, in teams and campus wide (e10). In order to create such targets, staff must engage in " analysis and deliberation around student data". As a result, their professional development plan is teacher driven and focused on student data (e 12).

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 teacher and principal generated SLOs drive professional development at the campus level. The project's professional development plan is focused around the teacher led Professional Development Units (PDUs). These groups will include 3 to 5 teachers and their work will focus on researching " an evidence-based problem of practice" (e18). In other words, their professional development will focus on the needs assessed at the high-need schools and will be aligned with the newly revised teacher/ principal evaluation

system (e30). These PDUs will also create opportunities for leadership. Facilitators will lead the groups and a panel of teachers/ principals will analyze research outcomes that will eventually led to improve practice and student achievement. It is not clear if PDU facilitators will conduct periodic assessments of the PDUs in order to gauge the groups' progress and effectiveness or if non-TIF teachers will participate in PDUs. The plan does not state if PDU facilitators will conduct periodic formative assessments to gauge the effectiveness of the process and to make modifications to the process.

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 application adequately describes why the 37 proposed TIF schools qualify to participate in the project based on key factors such as high poverty rates, low student achievement, and low teacher retention especially in hard to staff subjects. For example, 32 of the 37 selected TIF schools serve a population that has "90 percent or more economically disadvantaged students" (p. 4). The application successfully argues for the need for the project by providing state assessment scores that reveal a wide disparity between non-TIF schools and schools that have been selected to participate in the project. At the secondary level, students at TIF proposed schools scored significantly lower in all subjects including reading, math, science and social studies. Data regarding teacher and principal attrition rates provide additional grounds for establishing a need for the proposed PBCS. The application provides data for non-TIF schools in the district in all categories mentioned in order to demonstrate the need for support for the TIF proposed schools

Weaknesses:

One weakness in the application's need of support is that it does not provide any specific data to back the stated claim that " The grant would allow the district to recruit and retain effective teachers in all subjects, especially in hard to staff subjects like math and science at all levels" (p. e8). It does not provide any specific evidence that math and science teachers have higher attrition rates than other subjects at the TIF proposed schools.

Reader's Score: 9

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:

This application outlines a comprehensive plan to use a variety of methods to determine student growth. Teachers and administrators in participating schools will create student learning objectives (SLOs) on an individual, team and campus wide level. In addition, student growth will be measured by performance on both the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test and the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. These methods should provide a thorough measure of student growth by which to base the incentive compensations. The application presents a very unique proposal for

incentivizing professional development. Essentially the program will grant teachers and principals who participate in an action research projects (called Professional Development Units- PDUs) with 3 to 5 other teachers or principals a stipend of $1500 if the results of their research is approved by a peer review panel. In addition, the application specifies that the teachers and principals will receive incentive compensation for retention and for meeting their individual, team and campus wide SLOs . The significant compensation incentives range from $1k to $10k and should convincingly impact teacher and principal performance. The grant proposal outlines an inventive method of determining effectiveness that allows each school in the project to collaborate and identify weaknesses in student performance and create goals that will specifically address their unique concerns (e12). The plan includes a detailed teacher professional development plan that includes a well developed mentoring program which is partnered with the New Teacher Center, and teacher led Professional Development Units

Weaknesses:

One weakness in the project design is that it does not specifically address how important stakeholders like the teacher unions will continue to play a role in the expansion of the PBCS. Although the application states that teachers and union representatives participated in the early formation of their first compensation system, the application did not address how they will contribute to the TIF inspired improved version of the PBCS. Although the project design recognizes that it must develop a "robust identification system for professional development" which will include" two classroom observations, student achievement, and multiple rating categories to differentiate effectiveness", "student achievement" was never defined. Thus, how they will develop this evaluation system is vague (e13). The project design includes a nondescript plan to redesign the teacher's evaluation system (the Professional Development Appraisal System) since it does not clearly differentiate teacher effectiveness (e17), However, the project design does not provide any specific details about how the teacher evaluation system will be improved. Similarly, the design plan mentions that the principal evaluation system also needs to more closely link student achievement with principal performance (e18). However, no specific details about how this transformation will be achieved are given. The district acknowledges that it does not have a data management system that can handle linking student achievement data with their payroll and Human Resource data systems. The plan proposes, "to explore assessment system options for implementation in year two of the TIF grant" (p. e16). Since successful implementation of the PBCS is based on a functional integrated data management system, the scheduling of this crucial aspect of the program seems in adequate. Although the plan outlines a detailed mentoring program for teachers, it does not include a supportive mentoring program for principals. In fact, the only professional development support described for principals are the Professional Development Units. Principals who are assigned to lead high needs schools will require more support to successful raise teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Reader's Score: 47

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 structure of the management plan is strong since the proposed PBCS is based on a compensation system that has been in practice for several years. For instance, the management structure successfully incorporates key stakeholders via the Strategic Planning Committee, Teacher and Principal Advisory Groups along with the technical and operational staff. The profiles and resumes of the recommended staff seem to prove that they are well qualified to administer the program (e.84). The project states that local financial resources will be used to partially fund the proposal. The Texas District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) funds is expected to pay $5M towards the total budget each year for the duration of the grant (p. e44). According to the budget narrative the projected costs of the grant seem practical.

Weaknesses:

One of the weaknesses of the management plan is that the timeline (p. e43) does not include a list of activities that show how the project goals will be met. It includes a number of schools and percentage of specific standards they will meet in each year; but it does not include a timeline that outlines how and when specific aspects of the program components will be implemented

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:

Overall the evaluation design includes strong tools for measuring student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Classroom observations and student assessment data will be collected and analyzed (e48). The evaluation plan adequately includes both qualitative and quantitative data such as "summaries of survey responses in key areas of interest such as Data Use, Professional Learning Communities, Reflective Practice, Teacher Self-Efficacy, School Climate, Attachment to School and the Profession, and Job Satisfaction (e48), in addition to quantitative measures. For instance, "District human resources data and student performance data will be used to evaluate the relationships among program elements and activities, educator recruitment and retention, and student performance" (e48).

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan does not specifically identity the "teacher value added" data that will be used to measure program effectiveness. (e48) In addition, it is unclear what the specific protocols will be for providing continuous feedback to the Strategic Compensation Steering Committee, AISD Board of Trustees, and the District Advisory Council for program improvement. (e47)

Reader's Score: 4

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 proposal states that it plans to create a teacher and student value added measures and will work with experts to develop "statistical regression models at each grade level to allow for campus campuses (p. 28).

   Weaknesses:

   The application admits the model does not have a value-added component in place to measure student growth and teacher effectiveness, but it does not include specific details about how this will be achieved "beyond working with a consultant" (budget narrative). In addition, the application does not explain how the model will be explained and communicated to teachers (p. 28).

Reader's Score: 2

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 application provides strong evidence that the selected schools serve high needs students (e4 to e8). A part time communications staff person will be responsible for relating pertinent information regarding the PBCS to staff and the community (e39).

Weaknesses:

In regards to hard to staff positions, the applicant did not demonstrate that they have identified these positions. Instead, the application state that " hard to staff positions will be identified for additional Compensation" (E13). Thus, these positions have not already been identified. Similarly, the application does not address whether teachers selected for hard to staff positions are effective or likely to be effective.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:09 PM

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Applicant: Austin Independent School District -- Office of Educator Quality,Division of Human Resources (S385A100111)
Reader #2: **********

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Absolute Priority 3			
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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	7
Project Design			

1. Project Design	60	50
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1. Adequacy of Support	25	20
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1. Quality of Local Eval.	5	3
Sub Total	100	80

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Competitve Priority 1	5	2
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Competitive Priority 2	5	2
Sub Total	10	4
Total	110	84

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - Panel - 10: 84.385A

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

Applicant: Austin Independent School District -- Office of Educator Quality,Division of Human Resources (S385A100111)

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:

   Reviewer Comment Priority 1:
   The applicant proposes a PBCS model that offers differentiated levels of compensation to teachers and principals who demonstrate effectiveness by improving student growth and academic achievement in high needs schools. The Austin Independent School District already has a PBCS, which they have been piloting since 2007. The addition of an observation-based evaluation is proposed for this project, as well as the incorporation of professional development for mentors and coaches who are already effective. (pp. 12-20)

   The proposed differentiated compensation for effectiveness is substantial and reasonable. Teachers can receive up to $7000 for various activities which have an impact on student growth and principals can receive up to $10,000. The applicant provides a justification for the level of incentive amounts for each activity. (pp. 25-29)

   The applicant describes the proposed PBCS model, which places significant weight on

student growth using a "basket of measures" which include Texas state standardized (TAKS and STAR) and value added assessments. (pp. 19-26)

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 has indicated that funding for the differentiated PBCS compensation is already in place through local and state resources with some foundation support. The budget narrative is extensive and provides evidence of fiscal sustainability during the project period and beyond.
   While the applicant provides evidence of sustainability and describes the sources of non-TIF funds to be used, the budget does not indicate increasing allocation from the district for the differentiated compensation throughout the life of the project. Funds for the existing project were provided by dedicating one penny of the local Maintenance and Operations Tax Rate, worth $4.3 million. The mentoring component has been supported by state funding during the second and third year of the pilot in the amounts of $5.5 and $5.8 million respectively. (pp. 44-45; Budget Narrative 1-79)

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton 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 applicant identifies the lessons learned during the initial pilot PBCS project and describes how this proposed project will be more aligned with a coherent and integrated strategy to improve teacher effectiveness and student academic growth in the identified high need schools. An initial step to achieve this was to conduct a major program review. Data gathering during the last 3 years resulted in the following program changes incorporated into this proposal: goal setting will be done at individual, team and campus levels; multiple measures of performance will be used to determine effectiveness; additional leadership pathways are established to allow accomplished teachers to lead from the classroom; professional development will be targeted and individualized to

improve effectiveness and student growth; incentives for principals will be more substantial; and benchmarked standards and assessments will be used to target student growth. (pp. 11-12)

The applicant does not address a plan to align the proposed PBCS with retention and tenure decisions. (p. 28)

While the applicant has not demonstrated that it has completely met the criteria for Priority 3, it has indicated that during the planning process, the evaluation process will be revised and aligned with tenure and retention decision making. (pp.29-30)

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 describes the leadership pathways for teachers and incentives to take on additional responsibilities, including mentoring with compensation of $3000. These teachers will be freed from their teaching duties to work directly with new teachers. They will also receive half of the campus wide award if the school's performance improves ($2000). Another option is to become Student Learning Objective Facilitators and Professional Development Unit Facilitators. Facilitators receive 4 substitute days and oversee specific professional development processes. The compensation for this is $1500 and $1000 respectively. (pp. e14-e15; 36-37)

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 indicates that during the planning of the initial pilot in 2002 and since stakeholders including teachers, administrators, other school personnel, the business community and the community at-large have been actively involved in the communication process. The governance model includes a Strategic Compensation Steering Committee that has met and will continue to meet monthly. The applicant describes constant feedback loops with campuses through staff assigned to the program, including teacher, principal and community advisory groups. The applicant indicates that the proposed project will provide partial (.75FTE) for a staff member from the district's Office of Planning and Community Relations to manage communication aspects of the project. (pp. 40-42)

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 letters of support from the teacher union president, the Chamber of Commerce, superintendent, and New Teacher Career Center indicate support and involvement in decision making since the inception of the pilot program. (pp. 41; Appendix e0-e4)

There is no letter of support included from principal or administrative representatives. (No page found)

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 LEAÃ¢ÂÂs 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 states that during the TIF planning year, a new rigorous, transparent, and fair system that will differentiate teacher and principal effectiveness will be developed and a more robust identification system for professional development will be created. The applicant indicates that the new system will incorporate at least 2 classroom observations, student achievement and multiple rating categories to differentiate effectiveness. This is one of the proposed changes recommended as a result of the major program review done for this proposed project. The applicant proposes to ensure that the criteria of Core Element 3 will be met by the end of the planning phase of the proposed project. (pp. 11; 14)

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 indicates that for the past three years the district has been working with a consultant group to develop a data management system to align and connect trend data, best practice, student achievement and other data to teacher and principal payroll and evaluation systems. With the expansion of the pilot program to this proposed TIF project, the applicant will require a level of technical support to ensure program effectiveness. Other than this plan for data management, the applicant does not describe how these data systems currently interface and align. The applicant has not yet met the criteria for Core Element 4 but proposes to do so during the planning phase of the project. (p. 42)

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 describes the roles of the Teacher and Principal Advisory Groups and the role of a communications staff member from the Office of Planning and Community Relations. The communications staff member will develop a proactive communication plan to not only serve to ensure full transparency of results and accuracy, but afford the opportunity to promote the program and professional development that enables the teachers and principals to use data to improve practice. The development of the Student Learning Objectives and professional development will also include the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness. The applicant proposes a high quality professional development process that ensures that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness and the use of data generated by these measures to improve practice. (pp. 40-42)

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:

Reviewer Comment High Quality Professional Development:
The applicant's plan for professional development demonstrates that it will be linked to specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS. There are job-embedded opportunities for teachers, principals and groups or teachers, or teachers and principals tailored to meet specific needs. These learning activities include sustained study of topics that expands beyond a single seminar, and is focused on student growth. After research, a set of materials, resources, research summaries, will be created and a plan of implementation developed. Presentations will then be made on the impact that this professional development has had on their classroom, including next steps for improvement. Student growth data will also be included.
All staff will participate in this professional development component. Student growth demonstrated through multiple measures will be tied to the PBCS compensation. For teachers deemed to be effective, leadership roles in the form of the Leadership Pathways will be able to continue their own professional growth and continue effective practices within the classroom or in the school. (pp. 33-37)

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 demonstrates the need for the proposed project with supporting data for the identified 37 schools to be served. The applicant provides information on the number of schools to be served. For example, the applicant states that it will focus its strategic compensation efforts at 33 high needs schools that comprise three targeted K-12 feeder patterns in East Austin as well as four additional high needs schools. This is a total of 37 schools that serve 19,000 students, or 21.4%, of the Austin Independent School District student population. The applicant provides data to support that these students face economic, language and other barriers, which challenge teachers and principals to help them to meet with academic success. (pp. 3-9)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address how the plan will retain highly qualified or effective teachers or what impact the proposed project data will have on teacher and principal tenure decisions. (No page found)

The applicant does not provide a definition of what it considers to be a "comparable" school for the purposes of the selection of schools to be targeted for the proposal who have the highest need. (No page found)

The applicant provides data on poverty and academic performance for the 37 identified schools for the proposed project, but does not includesome schools with higher poverty rates and academic deficiencies. The applicant does not explain why the other schools with greater needs are not included. (pp. 3-4; Appendix e0)

Reader's Score: 7

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 applicant proposes to determine the effectiveness of the school's principals and teachers based on student growth with multiple measures including the development of Student Learning Objectives based on common assessments for subjects and grade levels. A common pre-assessment, which sets a growth target, and post-assessments, will be used to determine if the target has been met.The development of the Student Learning Objectives affords opportunities for reflection on current practice and work toward increased accountability for student growth in the evaluation system. In addition, the applicant describes a "basket of measures" that campus leadership will create at the beginning of the year. These measures will include campus ratings based on performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills and the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness. The use of multiple measures, including the value-added assessments, linked to teacher and principal effectiveness demonstrates a fair, rigorous, and transparent system of evaluation. (pp. 19-24)

The applicant indicates that the amount of the differentiated performance compensation for teachers and principals was determined based on the collaboration process involving all stakeholders that has been in place in the district since the planning of the initial PBCS pilot began in 2004. The major program review conducted in 2009 indicated that increased compensation should be included for principals and that has been incorporated into this proposal. (pp. 25-28)

The applicant provides details of a differentiated and complex compensation that includes student growth and professional development for multiple awards. A teacher can earn up to a maximum of $15,000 each year based on the successful completion of specific goals and demonstration of student growth. (pp. 17-19)

The applicant has described a differentiated compensation for hard to staff high needs schools. Teachers in their first three years at the school will receive an additional $1000 and teachers with four or more years of experience will receive an additional $3000. In addition, the principals will receive a retention stipend for returning to a high-needs campus that is based on the size of the school. (p. 37)

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates that there is a data system already in place in the district, but does not describe the system or provide details on the proposed data management plan to be developed during the planning stage of the project or how the new system modifications will link all of the data, including student achievement data to the teacher and principal payroll, or human resource system. The applicant merely states that plans to develop a system and technical assistance will be decided in the proposed planning year. (p. 42)

The applicant identifies that the existing Professional Development Appraisal System for teachers does not differentiate teacher effectiveness and most teachers receive "proficient" or "exceeds expectations" ratings. The applicant indicates that during the planning year for the proposed project the current model of evaluation will be analyzed and modified to a more rigorous, fair and transparent system. Principals are evaluated using a district developed campus administrator appraisal system, which is only used to gather information about a principal's professional development needs, but does not clearly link this to principal evaluation. The applicant does not describe how any of the systems, new or planned, will contribute in decision making for retention and tenure. (pp. 29-30)

The applicant indicates that the proposed PBCS has included significant involvement and support of principals and teachers, other support personnel and the community at large. However, there is no letter of support from the principals or their representative included in the application. (No page found)

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 applicant has provided resumes and biographies to indicate that the key project personnel have appropriate qualifications and experience to implement the project effectively. For example, the Administrative Supervisor for Strategic Compensation responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the project has extensive leadership experience in education of more than 20 years. (pp. 37-42; Appendix - No page number)

The applicant describes teams such as the Principal and Teachers Advisory Groups, the Steering Committee and the communication staff member who will work together to effectively implement the project. The Office of Educator Quality for the district has made efforts to ensure an integrated systems response to the participating schools. (p. 39)

The applicant indicates that non-TIF federal, state, and local sources including funding for Title 1, increased tax rates for Maintenance and Operations, and Texas District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) funds will be used to support the proposed TIF project. (pp. 44-45)

Weaknesses:

The applicant includes a timeline indicating student milestones year by year. There is no timeline of professional responsibilities, benchmarks or dates included. (p. 44)

Although the applicant proposes to commit non-TIF federal and other funding to the proposed PBCS project, the budget does not include increasing allocations for differentiated compensation by the district to indicate a commitment. (pp. 44-45; Budget Narrative 1-79)

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:

The applicant indicates that the district is conducting a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation that includes measurable performance objectives aligned with the goals of the project, specifically to improve student academic growth through increased teacher and principal effectiveness. The evaluation plan incorporates both formative questions and summative evaluation. (p. 45)

The applicant indicates that the purpose of the formative evaluation data is to document the pilot implementation over time and describe the progress of the pilot toward its key goals of rewards for educators, teacher retention, and student achievement. Data including student assessments, multiple observations, interviews, surveys on professional development, and focus groups will be collected and analyzed. (pp. 46-50)

The evaluation plan includes both summative and formative components. The summative aspect at the end of the 5-year period will compare the difference in outcome measures between treatment and comparison groups pre and post implementation. The formative questions will be on-going during the initiative. This component will ensure feedback and data driven decisions for continuous program improvement. (pp. 46-48)

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates that the results of statistical analyses will be provided to document the areas in which the participants in the proposed project do or do not outperform their comparison school peers, but does not describe how the data will be used to determine the impact on the differentiated performance based compensation component. (pp. 46-48)

Reader's Score: 3

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 applicant identifies that the first category of measures in the proposed project design will include a value-added model. Data will be collected on individual student growth over time due to specific teacher effectiveness. The district will be partnering with assessment experts to develop statistical regression models at each grade level to allow for campus value-added measures to be calculated. (p. 28)

   Weaknesses:

   While the applicant indicates that it will use a value-added model, it does not explain how the model will be clearly communicated to teachers to enable them to use the data generated through the model to improve classroom practices. (No page found)

Reader's Score: 2

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 demonstrates that the proposed PBCS is designed to assist high need schools, serve high need students, and recruit effective principals and teachers in teaching positions in high need schools. This will be accomplished through mentoring, professional development, collaboration with the New Teacher Center, and stipends for experience in the same schools. (pp. 32-37)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address which hard-to-staff or specialty area positions will be targeted or how the proposed project will recruit and retain teachers in those positions. (No page found)

The applicant does not explain how they will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective, or what the process for effectively communicating to teachers which of the district's schools are high need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard to staff. (No page found)

While the applicant describes a plan for recruitment of teachers and principals to serve in high needs schools and in hard-to-staff subject areas, it does not describe strategies to retain them after they have been hired. (pp. 32-37)

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:09 PM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:09 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Austin Independent School District -- Office of Educator Quality,Division of Human Resources (S385A100111)
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	9
Project Design			

1. Project Design	60	43
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1. Adequacy of Support	25	21
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1. Quality of Local Eval.	5	3
Sub Total	100	76

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. Competitve Priority 1	5	2
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. Competitive Priority 2	5	2
Sub Total	10	4
Total	110	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - Panel - 10: 84.385A

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

Applicant: Austin Independent School District -- Office of Educator Quality,Division of Human Resources (S385A100111)

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:

   The proposed program will provide rewards and incentives at different levels for teachers and principals (p.15-16). The bonuses are substantial. This plan does not seem to be tied to "student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice), based on objective data on student performance" since they are based on the locally developed student-learning objectives (p.19). The measures were not based on change over time nor on objective measures.

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 has projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS during the project period (budget narrative). It is not clear what the projection of costs is beyond the project period (Section B and appendix) and the personnel costs from non-federal funds increase through the life of the contract, but it is not clear if this increase is in the teacher incentive portions of the grant (Section B). The discussion on page 45 of the application indicates funding sources, but not the specific commitment to the compensation fund so questions remain as to the specific commitment to the incentive portion of the program.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton 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 program is part of a coherent/integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce (p.10-16). There does not seem to be a component in this plan for removing teachers from practice who are not performing at expected levels (p.10-16). The coherent, campus-based model has strengths in that it supports a collaborative process and could lead to supportive school cultures. At the same time, this model may lack some important elements of independence and objectivity. Data and teacher evaluations are used in professional development. But, it is not clear how they are used in 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:

There are many incentives in this program, both monetary rewards and also the opportunity to take on leadership roles based on the participant's strengths and interests (p.19-36). These roles and responsibilities seem to be limited to teachers in program rather than principals (p.36-37).

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 communication strategy was not strong. There is a plan in the application that has elements to make it successful for facilitating communication. Further, the structure of this program is one where many stakeholders are included in substantive elements of the design and oversight leading to a probability of open communication channels. Still, the communication plan seems largely in the hands of a single specific staff person (page 40) at a .75 level. The strategy has benefits in that there is a single point of contact to coordinate different committees. At the same time, this strategy may have risks from staff issues/turnover. The application did not show how it would take advantage of other communication methods, including web sites and web 2.0 technologies.

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:

This is an excellent element of this proposal. The AISD has included teachers in the research and planning (p.10) as well as the oversight of the program (p41). It is not clear, however, if all stakeholder unions (ex: principals) support this program.

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 LEAÃ¢ÂÂs 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:

   These components are largely envisioned (p.14) rather than described in the proposal. The proposed evaluation process does not include an evidence-based rubric for the teacher or principal beyond the rubric used for the student learning objectives (SLOs). The SLOs represent both a great strength and potential weakness of this application. They are a strength in that they are developed by teachers within a collaborative campus setting. This could lead to strong staff commitment and the development of objectives that are specific to the needs of individual students in specific contexts. Further, the SLO structure and approach is well thought out. They could be a weakness, a serious weakness, should they diverge from the state standards. This applicant would need to be vigilant and perhaps take additional programmatic measures to ensure alignment of standards that would be required for comparisons and value-added modeling. The proposal is not clear on the issue of inter-rater reliability/agreement in the planned for evaluation approach. The planning year does call for two observations per year.

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 currently lacks a "Human Resources data management system that will allow the district to monitor a number of educator quality metrics in real time and link these to performance measures." (p.17). While significant budget is allocated to strengthening the data systems in use in the district, there is not enough information in the proposal to understand the extent to which the applicant has thought through the logistical issues of systems integration generally or the specific issues raised by linking of teacher and student data.

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's plan generally addresses this need by the way that teachers and principals are included in core activities, but little description of a plan to communicate specific details of measurement systems that have yet to be developed was included. The "basket of measures" approach is good in being inclusive, but more description was needed in terms of how this basket of measures would support comparisons across contexts.

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 one of two foci for this program during its initial phases and for which there is a lot of attention in the application as well on pages 27-29. It

is unclear how this compensation is tied to need other than the fact that need is part of the selection of schools in the program.

With both the teacher and principal evaluations, the applicant is building upon substantial existing work. For the teacher evaluation, they plan to strengthen it in alignment with the TIF requirements and the principal evaluation, based on research and a formal method, will be further strengthened. As to the specific measures for making the professional development available to all teachers, helping teachers and principals to be effective in their jobs, the application provides few details. Teachers and principals will have opportunities to learn about the specific measures used in this program by its design. However, since there are unresolved issues with the state test at the time of this application additional specification by the applicant may be helpful in describing how those new elements will be taught to teachers and principals. It is not clear that there are measures for regularly assessing the effectiveness of the professional development.

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:

This application does target high-needs students and schools. It represents a program that will not only impact high-risk populations, but one that has been thought through in terms of the variation that schools serving challenging populations face and the importance of cultural commitment in the school campus. The description (Page 3) of student transience strengthens the case for this project as does the attention to teams based around vertical feeder patterns (p.3-9). The applicant has selected schools from all levels of the system (p.5-7). And, the application does justify the needs for this program based on the high-risk characteristics of the students (p.5). The applicant provides incentives for hard-to-staff positions. The applicant does provide information on comparable schools in the district (p.5).

Weaknesses:

There are several minor deficiencies in this plan's approach to the issue of high need, including that language barriers (p. 3) are not clearly defined feeder patterns in schools in program are not described (p.5); economically disadvantaged is not fully defined (p. 5); and recruitment of principals is an important goal, but not clearly described in the application (p.9).

Reader's Score: 9

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 application describes a design that has been studied for two years and includes incentives, rewards, and targeted investments (p.10). The plan is the second iteration of a program that has been ongoing for several years and represents mature thinking about the complex organizational nature of these programs (p.11). The plan also includes multiple measures and leadership pathways for accomplished teachers (p.11). The plan relies upon teachers developing student learning objectives (SLOs). This is a powerful design concept since it gives teachers ownership of the instructional objectives (p.13).

The professional growth aspect of this application includes important elements, of using of evidence-based problems of practice, although much of this part is in the planning stage and not fully defined (p.13). Its greatest strengths are its use of collaborative teams and involvement of teachers in the development of learning objectives.

Weaknesses:

The professional growth aspect of this application also raises concerns since examples of what constitutes an evidence-based problem of practice are not clearly defined (p.13). The relationship between SLOs developed within this program and the state standards is not clear. The applicant did not demonstrate that the state objectives were deficient and the plan does not articulate how the teacher developed SLOs will align with the state framework (p.13). The Evaluation section provides too little detail to be able to assess its adequacy for this program (p.14). The application states the AISD will explore assessment system options. This raises concerns that this important element in the overall plan is undefined. More detail on the type of assessment system(s) to be sought would be helpful (p.17).
The applicant states they would develop a value-added system based upon the new state assessment system. This raises technical concerns as the state assessment may include a value-added component or may have technical barriers to some formal value-added approaches (p.18). The application states that student growth will be measured according to the teacher-developed SLOs. This raises concern about the validity of these growth measures (p.19). The described value-added approach may vary from widely accepted value-added definitions (p.27). The applicant notes that changes in the state assessment system are complicating efforts to develop student growth data. This seems a very plausible description. However, it is difficult to understand from this application how this work will align with/contribute to state efforts (p.28).

Reader's Score: 43

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:

Overall, this application represents a committed team in a district that has studied the issues pertinent to this plan and been working to address the issues before this TIF application. The applicant has a qualified leader of the Director of the Office of Education Quality. Other team members have extensive experience and qualifications to administer a program of this size. The applicant also includes many stakeholder groups in the management of the plan, which is a strong feature. The applicant has the ability to support the incentive portion out of local funds and has projected costs that seem

sufficient for local support and ownership (although the specific details of contribution to the incentive portion was not stated). The applicant seems largely prepared address many of the core issues associated with this program.

Weaknesses:

The plan does not describe support from the state education office, which would help the program in aligning to state-level efforts and possibly contribute to state-level efforts (p.37) given the nature of the dependence on state-level systems that either do not exist or are problematic. The plan does not appear to include unions in the ongoing management of the program or teacher representatives (p.38). This might weaken support for the plan (p.37).

However, it is not clear from the application what the exact chain of management responsibilities is. The management plan (p.38) aspect of this program was not as strong as it could have been in terms of the issues that different individuals/positions would be responsible for and the escalation/resolution of differences.

The applicant needs to clearly specify its contribution to the incentive portion of the program.

Reader's Score: 21

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 school system evaluators do seem to be qualified and the evaluation includes a range of evidence (p42) that could be used for qualitative and quantitative analysis. The evaluation plan is comprehensive and addresses important elements of evaluation questions and outlines the data to be collected.

Weaknesses:

The local evaluation includes staff members managed by the AISD office for this work (p. 42). It is not clear if this is an effective strategy for providing independent insights. The evaluation description does not include important details on the collection of qualitative data or its analysis (p.49). The plan does not address the use of evaluation data for continuous feedback and improvement in the program.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

   This application recognized the need and importance of value-added modeling for this program and the importance of connecting to this element of the program to the state assessment (p.28, 48). The applicant is developing a program that has the potential to help teachers use value-added models with their students.

   Weaknesses:

   The inability to clearly identify the connections to the state assessment system and the individualized nature of the SLOs may compromise the ability to produce reliable statistical results. The applicant has not described a value-added model and so cannot use it to explain to teachers.

Reader's Score: 2

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 application does include some attention to high-needs subject areas (P.37) and will reach students in high-need areas/hard-to-staff subjects.

Weaknesses:

The description of the recruitment/retention efforts is light on important detail regarding effectiveness and subject areas. The application does not include specific provisions for recruitment and few details on retention of these types of teachers.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

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