

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:12 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lowndes County Public Schools -- Curriculum and Instruction, (S385A100119)

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	8
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	50
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	21
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	4
Sub Total	100	83

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	4
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	3
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Sub Total	10	7
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Total	110	90
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Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Panel - 12: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Lowndes County Public Schools -- Curriculum and Instruction, (S385A100119)

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 includes differentiated compensation levels for teachers, (based upon Silver and Golden Achievement Criteria, etc.) but a more limited differentiation for principals (one student standardized test and meeting ATP graduate rate goals). No weight is given to student growth for either teachers or principals. Levels of compensation differ significantly between teachers and principals; the example provided offers the teacher a maximum of \$3,000 and the principal \$37,500 per year above salary.

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 Budget Narrative shows that, beginning in Year 3, the district will use Title 1 funds to cover 2% of the costs of the performance-based compensations; this figure increases to 5% in Year 4 and 15% in Year 5. There is no discussion of the funding source to continue the program following grant funding.

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 design of the program strengthens the educator workforce within the district, with significant professional development, efforts towards retaining quality teachers and recruitment of additional quality teachers, and increased evaluation.

Project evaluation includes documentation on the quantity of teacher participation in professional development (number of hours) as well as the frequency and content of online support services by teachers (p. 58), which will assist in maintaining quality.

A primary professional development component, the Communities of Practice, will cover topics identified by teachers and schools as critical to teachers. Each group is encouraged to make recommendations for additional areas of study that will be addressed by the Alabama State University Teacher In-Service Center (p. 13). These strategies will allow all relevant topics to be addressed within the professional development sessions.

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:

Teachers can receive additional compensation through selection (by the Principal) as a Model Classroom Teacher beginning in the 3rd year of the program, serving as a mentor teacher and a demonstration classroom for a grade level or subject area. There is limited information on other opportunities within the PBCS.

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:

Communication has been effective at meetings (p. 8) as the district is small with only 160 teachers and 7 principals. The incentive plan was provided to all personnel for feedback with positive results, showing strong support (p. 8).

The communication plan has already been in effect, with the district sending out to all district staff the specifics of the compensation plan and receiving feedback indicating that 89% of the teachers and 100% of the principals were very satisfied with the plan as it stands (p. 8). Additional communication throughout the grant period can be handled through the professional learning groups that will meet every other week or at the school level.

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:

According to the narrative, planners had an initial system-wide meeting to inform all personnel about the intent to develop a PBCS and followed up with three meetings at each of the seven schools to answer questions (p. 8). Significant feedback was received, showing that 89% of teachers and all of the principals were very satisfied with the plan; no union representation was mentioned.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1.Core Element 3:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation, or plan to implement, a

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

General:

For teachers, there are two evaluations, the professional Education Personnel Evaluation program (PEPE) which is the annual standard teacher evaluation using a 4-point rubric on eight standard areas that includes assessment of student performance AND the Teacher Incentive Program evaluation that uses PEPE, student achievement on state and national tests, and other variables, to determine if extra compensation is awarded. The process includes observations (no number is provided) but no information is offered on inter-rater reliability.

No information is provided as to whether or not principals are evaluated separately by the Superintendent; there is no indication that student growth is a consideration.

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 district recently received funding for an educational software system, DataDirector, that directly links student performance to the teacher and principal, and will be able to link student performance data to payroll for incentive award eligibility (p. 9).

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 presented information to teachers, principals, and other school staff at a district-wide meeting and then a series of three meetings at each of the participant schools regarding supports necessary to increase student performance. The relationship between student performance and teacher effectiveness is clearly described throughout the narrative. While effectiveness may be a key topic in the Community of Practice professional development sessions, it is not described within the narrative.

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:

There is no professional development described specifically for principals, although they are able to participate in most opportunities outlined.

Teachers have a variety of professional development opportunities. Every teacher will be assigned to a Community of Practice according to grade level or subject area; these groups, led by a master teacher, will meet for five hours every other Saturday throughout the year. Each grade level or subject area will have an online Master Teacher Mentor located within 1-2 states with whom they can communicate regularly via Skype. As they progress through the system, teachers may qualify to lead Model Classrooms and demonstration classes.

In the case of the Community of Practice, the small groups can respond to individual teacher needs and questions.

The narrative does not address professional development for teachers who are not successful in the PBCS.

The system does not have an automatic feedback response to improve the programming or opportunities.

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 proposal describes a school system with all high-need schools based on eligibility for free and reduced meals (all exceeding 92%) and high minority (all exceeding 93%) (p. 2-3). The data is presented by school in a clear and concise format with other relevant data. The narrative specifically addresses challenges of attracting and retaining quality teachers in high-need areas, providing details and examples (p. 4) as well as how the new plan will begin to alleviate the problem.

Data is provided on student achievement in reading, math, and science that demonstrates the district's academic challenges (p. 5-6). The proposal identifies a comparable school district and matches student data on percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in academic areas, further supporting the case for need.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not address recruitment and retention of highly-qualified principals. If this is not an issue within the district, an explanation of why it would be a problem at the teacher level but not school administration level would be appropriate.

The narrative does not include any student assessments beyond 8th grade or any longitudinal data that might show a pattern; this information would be of value to support the needs section.

Reader's Score: 8

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 Lowndes County Teacher Incentive Program (LCTIP) is a district-wide strategy to reward the effectiveness of 160 teachers and seven principals who serve 2,086 low-income and high-minority students (Abstract, p. 2-3). Documentation is provided to support the status and situation of the seven schools. Methods to determine the effectiveness of teachers include student performance on national and state assessments (valid and reliable), multiple classroom observations, and completion of professional development opportunities (p. 17). For principals, effectiveness is based on student performance on the state and national measurements and meeting ATP graduate rate goals (p. 30).

External evaluators will develop assessments for courses not included in national and state tests and determine their validity (p. 16).

The amount of the performance awards for teachers (\$500 - \$3,000) is reasonable for salaries that range from \$34,500 to \$41,489.

Program planners conducted numerous meetings across schools and system wide to provide information on the opportunity to develop a PBCS and seek input from teachers and principals (p. 8). Each school submitted a report, indicating both knowledge and

interest, and 89% of the teachers and 100% of the principals were very satisfied with the plan (only 2% disagreed). This high level of support is critical to the success of a new system.

Professional development is offered through a variety of approaches including assignment to a Community of Practice by grade level or subject area that will meet Saturdays twice monthly throughout the year (p. 10, 12) and online Master Teacher mentoring that will supplement those learning groups (p. 11). These opportunities to meet and learn from peers across schools should prove invaluable.

The DataDirector management system will allow tracking of student performance data with direct links to teachers and principal performance as well as to payroll and Human Resources (p. 9).

Weaknesses :

While the project measures teacher effectiveness with national and state tests, it does not consider student growth as a measure. Without this factor, teachers receive incentives for students who are perrential high test scorers but do not make significant annual goals with no incentives for teachers who work with students three years behind who make one years worth of academic gains in a year.

The criteria for awards for teachers outlines definitions for Golden Achievement and Silver Achievement for each of the five years of the program (p. 17-22). For Year 1, Golden Achievement requires that 40% of students score at the 50th percentile or above on all State Assessments at the specific grade level. Earlier evidence shows that 50% to 56% of 3rd and 8th grade students are already meeting or exceeding both state math and reading standards (p. 6). Some explanation of how these figures align and how much of a challenge the achievement levels pose to students and teachers is appropriate.

Performance awards for teachers includes the completion of 50 hours of professional development (p. 21), but there is no qualitative component to this professional development; it could be as little as attendance, which would add little to student achievement. Evaluation should include a qualitative as well as quantitative element, analyzing the impact of the teacher's work implementing the work upon returning to the school and classroom.

The performance awards for principals do not include student growth (p. 30). While the salaries of the seven principals is not provided, the narrative example is that one principal would have a bonus of \$37,500 and two others would each receive \$18,750 based on student performance and meeting ATP rate goals (no explanation of what these are). Given the \$500 - \$3,000 awards for teachers, these potential awards for principals are significantly higher; the proposal has not demonstrated why there should be so much disparity between the levels of incentives between teachers and principals. The high incentive for principals may lead to resentment from teachers as well as negative community reaction in the low-income communities serviced by the schools.

The evaluation system for teachers will be based on student performance, school performance, increases in credentials, leadership activities, classroom evaluations, and participation in professional development activities (p. 16). The number of classroom observations is not provided and the criterion for awards notes that they must be satisfactory, along with school performance. No mention is made of student growth, a key concept in teacher effectiveness.

While the value of the Communities of Practice has high potential (p. 12), the narrative provides little in the direction of their efforts or guidance as to their ultimate purpose. The proposal would be strengthened if these groups were directed by data that revealed challenges in targeted discipline or low writing ability or some other focused area with the ability to have flexibility as needed. There is no direction provided that necessarily guides the groups towards increased effectiveness.

The incentives include additional payment for credentials (p. 23), but this funding is not included in the budget narrative nor as a match from the district on the budget.

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

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

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

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

Strengths:

The proposal includes a very detailed timeline for each year of the grant that clearly notes individuals responsible for specific tasks; this outline will be helpful in keeping the project on task (p. 31-47).

The Project Director has large federal grant experience and will be full time on the project, along with the Data Analyst (p. 48-50, Budget Narrative). Two other key staff will be 50% each; all of these time commitments are appropriate to the positions they will hold to fulfill the project goals.

The applicant provides evidence that either the district or other federal dollars (Title I) will be used to support the project beginning in Year 3 (p. 52), with a portion of the incentives and the cost of the Data Analyst. This is also reflected in the Budget Narrative.

The requested amount and costs should allow the applicant to meet the goals and objectives.

Weaknesses:

The timeline includes responsibilities for the Advisory Board (p. 34). Although a list of members is provided on page 54, there is no full description on the expectations of this group, their responsibilities, and their authority. With an annual meeting, there would be little they would be able to do. There is no working Implementation Group that would be of more immediate assistance to ensuring that the project will be implemented with fidelity, to include the Grant Accountant, representatives from Human Resources, IT, Professional Development, representative teacher and principal, and all key program staff. There is no indication that the Project Director will meet with the grant accountant at least on a monthly basis to review expenditures and encumbrances; given the size of the potential grant award, this would be a critical meeting to assure compliance. No milestones are included to ensure a timely pace for completing tasks and objectives.

The proposal states that all seven of the district's schools have principals who have been in the position for less than three years (p. 47), with the indication that this is a purposeful move towards a transformational leadership for all sites. Further, that these principals are novices and will receive significant support from the district. The

narrative would benefit from a discussion of why the district selected this strategy versus hiring more experienced educators for any of these positions.

There is no indication that the Project Director is a current employee with the district or is familiar with the district or the seven schools.

Of the two external evaluators (p. 51), one has limited experience having evaluated one U. S. Department of Education-funded program and then none since 2002 and the other has no background or experience in grant program evaluation at all. These are not strong candidates for an excellent evaluation and, if not highly qualified, will result in additional time, funding, workload, and/or poor performance. More qualified external evaluators should have been selected.

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 performance objectives (p. 55-56) are clear and measurable and directly related to student achievement; they focus on student standardized scores, high school graduation rates, increased pedagogy for teachers, and filling teacher vacancies in hard-to-fill areas (p. 58). Measurements will include quantitative and qualitative data from tests, surveys, and other methodologies (p. 55-56).

Weaknesses:

The goal of the project, to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement measured in significant part by student growth, is not clear on Table 14 (p. 55) or in the Logic Model.

The goal is inconsistent with the goal more generally described under Project Design on page 7. Implementing the PBCS should be a primary objective.

While feedback is a part of some segments of the program, it is not mentioned in the Logic Model (p. 58). It is critical that teachers, principals, and other school staff and observers provide feedback of how the project is working within the district. There is no built-in structure for high-quality continuous improvement.

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 district has access to the DataDirector software system that will link student achievement indicators directly to the classroom teacher and to the payroll system (p. 14). They have demonstrated the capacity to communicate effectively with teachers should they need to explain the value-added model.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address student growth as a part of student achievement.

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides clear evidence that all of its seven schools are high need (low income, high minority, low performing) (p. 2-6) and include as a primary objective that 50% of all critical-need vacant teacher positions will be filled each year (p. 56). The compensation system is designed, in part, to both attract teachers in critical-need areas and to retain effective teachers (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide an explanation of how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is likely to be effective or the extent to which any subjects or specialty areas are hard to staff. There is no description of a plan or process to let teachers know which subjects and specialty areas maybe considered hard to staff.

Reader's Score: 3

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Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:12 PM

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Applicant: Lowndes County Public Schools -- Curriculum and Instruction, (S385A100119)

Reader #2: *****

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Questions		
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Absolute Priority 3		
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Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	24
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	4
Sub Total	100	90

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	5
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	3
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Sub Total	10	8
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Total	110	98
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Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Panel - 12: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Lowndes County Public Schools -- Curriculum and Instruction, (S385A100119)

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 PBCS is clearly a part of a proposed LEA strategy for rewarding teachers, principals, and other personnel in a high-need school system. (pages 17-31) The strong incentive program is focused upon their effectiveness as determined in significant part by valid and reliable measures of student growth. (pages 15-17) For example, teachers in K-12 classrooms will be eligible for incentives based on participating in professional development activities, leadership activities, teacher evaluation outcomes (including observations), credentials, student performance, and school performance. Principals of schools will be eligible for monetary incentives based on the percentage of increase in student outcome data for their school and meeting district goals for graduation rate.

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 clearly demonstrated that they have accepted the responsibility to provide such performance-based compensation to teachers, principals, and other personnel. The budget details how the applicant will assume an increasing share of performance-based compensation paid to teachers, principals, and other personnel in project years three to five in which the LEA provides such payments.

The applicant states on page 53 that they assume the costs of the program beyond the funding period but they do not explain how they fund the project.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The proposed PBCS is clearly aligned with a strategy for strengthening the educator workforce. The proposed program is designed to prepare and reward K-12 teachers and principals in the School System for excellence in teaching as measured by student outcome data and factors related to increasing student performance. This strategy will include the use of data and evaluations for professional development. (pages 55-56)

The applicant does not demonstrate how data will be used for retention and tenure decisions.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

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

General:

The applicant has a clear and detailed description of how its proposed PBCS will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles. Teachers will be eligible for incentives based on participating in professional development activities, leadership activities, teacher evaluation outcomes, credentials, student performance, and school performance. Principals of schools will be eligible for monetary incentives based on the percentage of increase in student outcome data for their school and meeting district goals for graduation rate. (pages 17-31)

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 clearly demonstrates that teachers, principals, and other personnel understand the program and had significant input into the development of the program. For example, an initial system-wide meeting informed all personnel about the development of a teacher incentive program. The final draft of the plan was distributed to all personnel for feedback. (page 8)

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

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

General:

The applicant clearly demonstrates that teachers, principals, and other personnel understand the program and had significant input into the development of the program. For example, an initial system-wide meeting informed all personnel about the development of a teacher incentive program. A series of three meetings at each of the seven schools provided opportunity to discuss the criteria for the incentive plan and the types of teacher support that would be necessary to increase student performance. (page 8)

The applicant does not address the involvement of unions.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

The proposal clearly provides for a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals with levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth. Teachers in K-12 classrooms will be eligible for incentives based on participating in professional development activities, leadership activities, teacher evaluation outcomes (including at least two classroom observations), credentials, student performance, and school performance. Principals of schools will be eligible for monetary incentives based on the percentage of increase in student outcome data for their school and meeting district goals for graduation rate.

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 proposal clearly includes a data-management system (DataDirector software system) that can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems. For example, the DataDirector software system will allow student achievement indicators to be linked directly back to the teacher responsible for teaching the related learning objectives. (page 14)

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 proposal clearly incorporates a high-quality professional development plan to increase the capacity of teachers and principals to raise student achievement. For example, each teacher will be assigned to a Community of Practice which will meet twice a

month and have a master teacher as a mentor/consultant. The first three meetings will ensure that teachers understand the specific measures of teacher effectiveness included in the PBCS. The plan is very detailed and teachers will receive significant incentives for attending. (pages 10-13)

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 for this program is very detailed and specific to the needs of the targeted area. It clearly targets the support needed for each level and subject of instruction by creating Communities of Practice for each grade and subject (higher levels). (pages 10-13)

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 clearly establishes that the targeted schools are high-need schools that have difficulty recruiting and retaining highly qualified or effective teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects or specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, English language acquisition, and special education. They demonstrate that this is due in part to salaries. For example, two science teachers and three math teachers in the high schools are teaching on emergency certificates due to the inability of the school system to attract qualified teachers. Qualified teachers are moving to better paying districts. (pages 2-4)

The applicant provides a clear and significant comparison of the targeted school and a comparable school to demonstrate the need for this program. Test scores are significantly higher in the comparison school due to the lack of resources in the targeted schools. (pages 4-7)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not demonstrate need for retaining principals.

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 proposed PBCS is clearly a part of a proposed LEA strategy for rewarding teachers, principals, and other personnel in a high-need school system. (pages 17-31) The strong incentive program is focused upon their effectiveness as determined in significant part by valid and reliable measures of student growth. (pages 15-17)

The applicant has clearly demonstrated that teachers, principals, and other personnel had significant input into the development of the program. For example, an initial system-wide meeting informed all personnel about the development of a teacher incentive program. A series of three meetings at each of the seven schools provided opportunity to discuss the criteria for the incentive plan and the types of teacher support that would be necessary to increase student performance. (page 8)

The proposal clearly provides for a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals with levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth. For example, the achievement Criteria includes four components: 1) student performance on the SAT 10; 2) student performance on all State assessments administer to students, the state Reading and Math Test administered to 7th and 8th grade students, and the state Direct Assessment of Writing test administered to 10th grade students; 3) classroom observation outcomes; and 4) completion of professional development activities. (page 17) The plan provides for at least two classroom observations by the principal and a senior level teacher. (page 14)

The proposal clearly includes a data-management system that can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems. For example, the DataDirector software system will allow student achievement indicators to be linked directly back to the teacher responsible for teaching the related learning objectives. (page 14)

The proposal clearly incorporates a high-quality professional development plan to increase the capacity of teachers and principals to raise student achievement. For example, each teacher will be assigned to a Community of Practice which will meet twice a month and have a master teacher as a mentor/consultant. The plan is very detailed and teachers will receive significant incentives for attending. (pages 10-13)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not adequately detail professional development specific just to principals or detail how they will receive professional development. (page 47)

Professional development is twice a month, five hours on Saturdays which will be difficult for teachers to accomplish.

Reader's Score: 53

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 clearly demonstrates that the management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. The plan clearly includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines for accomplishing project tasks. (pages 31-47)

Resumes clearly demonstrate that the project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities. Time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the project effectively. For example, the project director and the data analyst are 100% and the assistant director is 50% time committed. (pages 50-51)

The applicant will clearly support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs such as Title I and local financial or in-kind resources. (budget narrative)

The requested grant amount and project costs are clearly demonstrated to be sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project. (budget narrative)

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not address project milestones.

Reader's Score: 24

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's evaluation plan clearly includes the use of strong and measurable performance objectives for raising student achievement, increasing the effectiveness of teachers and retaining and recruiting effective teachers, principals, and other personnel. (pages 55-60)

The evaluation plan will clearly produce evaluation data that are quantitative and qualitative. (Table 14, pages 55-56)

The evaluation plan clearly includes adequate evaluation procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. A logic model clearly outlines the program showing objectives, activities, evaluation tools, short term and long term outcomes. (page 58)

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan does not adequately address principal effectiveness as correlated to student achievement data.

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 applicant clearly will use value-added modeling which rewards teachers according to the amount of academic growth that the students make over the course of a school year. The applicant clearly describes the tests and measurements that will be used to document academic growth each year. The applicant clearly demonstrates the capacity to implement the proposed value-added model (e.g., the DataDirect Software system will collect the necessary data and ensure data quality). (page 14) The applicant has clearly provided opportunities for teachers to clearly understand and utilize the value-added model.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates that the proposed PBCS is designed to assist high-need schools to serve high-need students by providing incentives for retaining effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, and English language acquisition.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate how they will fill vacancies with teachers of those subjects or specialty areas who are effective or likely to be effective. The applicant does not provide an explanation for how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective.

The applicant does not demonstrate 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.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:12 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:12 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Lowndes County Public Schools -- Curriculum and Instruction, (S385A100119)

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	51
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	24
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	4
Sub Total	100	88

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	4
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	3
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Sub Total	10	7
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Total	110	95
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Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - Panel - 12: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Lowndes County Public Schools -- Curriculum and Instruction, (S385A100119)

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:

Lowndes County Teacher Incentive will develop and implement a PBCS that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness by improving student achievement 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 Lowndes County Teacher Incentive--

- (a) gives significant weight to student growth based on objective data on student performance;
- (b) includes observation-based assessments of teacher and principal performance at multiple points in the year, and (c) include other measures, such as evidence of leadership roles that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school. (pgs. 7 -12)

In determining principal effectiveness as part of a PBCS, the Lowndes County gives significant weight to student growth. The percentage of pay for principals seems

disproportionate to that of teachers.

In addition, Lowndes County demonstrated that the differentiated effectiveness incentive payments will provide incentive amounts that are substantial and provide justification for the level of incentive amounts chosen. Incentive amounts are high enough to create change in the behavior of current and prospective teachers and principals in order to ultimately improve student outcomes.

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:

Lowndes County Teacher Incentive project has a plan in place to ensure fiscal sustainability for the PBCS. (pgs. 7-12)

The district will increase its share over the course of the grant and expand coverage to new staff. In year three 2% or \$19,200 of the budget will be in-kind match using Title 1 funding. In year 4, 5% or \$52,100 will be in-kind match using Title 1 funding. The district will also cover the cost of the data analyst for a total match of \$107,120 for year 4. The district, through Title 1 funds, will pay 15% of incentives with Title 1 money, the costs for the data analyst, and the costs of refreshments at professional development workshops for a total in-kind of \$218,520 in year 5. (budget)

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:

Lowndes County Teacher Incentive project incorporates ongoing professional development for existing and new staff. This includes training in the PBCS system, interpretation of evaluation rubrics, and improvement of classroom practice. Practices and outcomes will be evaluated for continuous improvement. Communication will be ongoing to staff, students and the larger community. Data, classroom practice, objective evaluation and professional development will be linked to ensure success.

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:

Lowndes County Teacher Incentive project has provided career incentives that are linked to student achievement. Additional responsibilities and leadership roles are available to teachers in the form of mentoring and teacher leaders. For instance, teachers are eligible for Level II Leadership roles incentives if they meet all previous criteria on student performance and credentialing, participate in at least 75% of Community of Practice hours, model classroom designation, and provide leadership training for colleagues and visiting teachers. (pgs. 24-30)

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 Lowndes County Teacher Incentive project has a clear level of planning. Communication among stakeholders about the overall plan and PBCS plan as well as obtaining feedback was done in multiple ways and through multiple venues. After initial feedback was obtained, a plan was developed and then staff had opportunities for additional feedback. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers and 100% of the principals agreed with the plan. Staff had multiple opportunities for input. Pgs. 7-8

Stakeholders will be given updates on the successes of changes made in their classrooms and schools as well as the project. Communication seems to be two-way with a clear feedback loop available for teacher and principal successes and project successes. Every component of each student's record will be directly linked to a responsible teacher and principal through the DataDirector system.

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:

Teachers and principals did have opportunity to provide support through focus groups and surveys conducted. Feedback from district personnel was obtained in multiple ways and through multiple venues. After initial feedback was obtained, a plan for the proposal was developed and then staff had opportunities for additional feedback. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers and 100% of the principals agreed with the plan. Staff had multiple opportunities for input. Pgs. 7-8

Support of the Lowndes County Superintendent and the Alabama State University Office of Foundation and Psychology is evident through letters of support. The Lowndes County Board of Education approved unanimously to change the mission statement of the district to reflect the goals of this project. It is uncertain about the union's approval of this project.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

The applicant has a clear plan for implementation of an evaluation system for teachers and principals based upon the goals addressed in the mission statement of the district. (pg. 7) Outcomes are clearly stated and assessed through both qualitative and quantitative measures. Outcomes are directly linked to Teacher Incentive Program Achievement Criteria. (pgs. 17-31) Assessments are multiple and in multiple formats. Most because they are state and national instruments have been tested for reliability and validity.

The principal and a senior-level teacher at each school will conduct an observation of each teacher's classroom using the PEPE evaluation tool. There is no indication that this tool has been validated or proven reliable. There is also no indication that observers or teachers have been trained in using this tool. (pgs. 14-15) There is no indication that principals will be observed, but they are held accountable according to their success in bringing about student achievement within their schools. (pgs. 30-31)

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:

Lowndes County Teacher Incentive project will utilize data analysis and reports to the district's stakeholders. Multiple data collection tools were presented. Most are state and national assessment with proven reliability and validity. The observation instrument has not been proven reliable or valid. Nor has training been conducted to improve inter-rater reliability. (pgs. 14-15) The district will utilize the DataDirector educational software system. It allows for tracking of student performance data, both national and teacher-designed. It will also be able to link student performance data to teacher and principal payroll in the Human Resource Department for verification of incentive award eligibility. (pg. 9) Assessment, differentiated pay, and professional development are all linked to student success.

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:

In-depth conversations were had prior to the submission of the grant and will continue. Plans are available to ensure the successes of the grant are provided to stakeholders. Additional professional development will be provided throughout the school year. All activities of the grant seem to be collectively decided upon and data driven. (pgs. 7-13)

Professional development will take place throughout the project. Professional development will include a Community of Practice that involves effective teaching practices, classroom mentoring, and the effective measures of evaluating and preparing for evaluation under the RBCS plan. (Pgs. e10-11) The learning communities will interact with a face-to-face format as well as virtual formats. Bi-weekly community of practice workshops are a key element. Additional professional development includes online master teacher mentoring.

At the beginning of each year, all teachers and principals will attend a mandatory orientation meeting for the purpose of reviewing the LCTIP plan. A pamphlet will also be produced. (pg. 30)

It is not certain of the commitment of teachers for two Saturdays per month. Rotating teacher leaders is an important component of promoting leadership roles. (pgs. 12-13) Model classrooms will be showcased. (pg. 13)

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 will take place throughout the project. Professional development will include a Community of Practice that involves effective teaching practices, classroom mentoring, and the effective measures of evaluating and preparing for evaluation under the RBCS plan. (Pgs. e10-11) The learning communities will interact with a face-to-face format as well as virtual formats. Bi-weekly community of practice workshops are a key element. I am not certain of the commitment of teachers for two Saturdays per month. Rotating teacher leaders is an important component of promoting leadership roles. (pgs. 12-13) Model classrooms will be showcased. (pg. 13)

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:

Lowndes County Teacher Incentive Program includes seven schools housed in the heart of the Black Belt region on Alabama and is home to some of the poorest residents in the state. Mean per capita income is \$12,457. Thirty-nine percent of children live in poverty. The area is also ranked 63rd out of 67 counties in Alabama by the 2008 Kids Count Data Book which evaluates and ranks six quality indicators of a child's well-being. Ninety-seven percent of the students are African-American and 96% qualify for free/reduced lunches. Graduate rate is 68.4%. State contributions per student are \$850. Pgs. 2-3

Retaining quality teachers is difficult with low pay and low qualifications being prime indicators. To off-set low pay, the project will offer \$1000 incentive for non-certified teachers receiving certification in their subject area.

Lowndes applicants designated Midfield city School district as a comparable school due to size, racial make-up, free/reduced lunch rate, and district population. Data was provided to show similarities. Pg. 4-6 Data was also provided to show disparity in achievement scores of students. Lowndes children scored lower than their counterparts in both mathematics and reading state assessments at the third and eighth grades. Pg. 6

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not address recruitment and retention of principals. Longitudinal data is missing that might better support the need for the grant.

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 goal of the Lowndes project is for excellence in teaching as measured by student outcome data and factors related to increasing student performance. Teachers in grades K-12 will be eligible for incentives based on participating in professional development activities, leadership activities, teacher evaluation outcomes, credentials, student performance, and school performance. Principals will be eligible for monetary incentives based on the percentage of increase in student outcome data for their school and meeting district goals for graduation rate. Pgs. 15-22

The project has the involvement and support of the Lowndes County Board of Education through unanimous support of a mission statement that supports the ideals of the Teacher Incentive project. Additional support from teachers, principals, and other personnel was gathered in three system-wide meetings held at seven schools. The intent of the meetings was to discuss criteria for the incentive plan and the types of support teachers wanted. A report was then submitted from each school with directions used to drive the progress of the proposal. The plan was then distributed to all personnel for final review. Most were very satisfied with the results. Pgs. 7-9

The plan includes individualized teacher plans that will be evaluated at the end of each school year. A learning community entitled Community of Practice, with meetings twice a month, and online teacher mentoring will support the teachers with a master teacher leader. Skype meetings are also possible. A mandatory orientation meeting is also set. Criteria for the master teacher were presented. A state grant has been received to purchase DataDirector software for tracking student performance. Lead teachers will be designated and rotated through the group. The Alabama State University Teacher In-service Center is also available for consultation and training. Advancement protocols are in place for outstanding district teachers with monetary rewards and recognition built in. Model classrooms will be designated. Pgs. 9-10

A rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system (PEPE) for teachers is in place that differentiate levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year. Four assessments in reading, mathematics, writing and science are used to showcase student improvement. Pg. 14

Principals will receive monetary incentives based on student performance with a formulae established. Pgs. 30-31

Dissemination of project goals and successes will be presented annually. Pg. 31

Weaknesses:

It is uncertain that the administrators will receive training for the evaluation of the teachers. No evidence of teacher/administrator training was found for using the DataDirector. It is uncertain what the "three weekly meetings" of master teachers and LCTIP Community of Practice entails. It is uncertain as to why the model classroom experience and the administrator incentives need to be competitive.

There is uncertainty whether the teacher-created PEPE is validated and reliable. A social studies assessment is not used in determining student achievement.

Teacher incentive criteria start with year 1. It was previously stated that 2 years of successful data will be needed to earn incentive bonuses. Otherwise, pay is differentiated in accordance with teacher success. I am uncertain why teacher incentives are different for K-6 teachers and 7-12 teachers.

Commitment of the teachers to two monthly workshops held on Saturday may be a commitment that is difficult to support. Consideration of workshops during regular hours should be made.

Reader's Score: 51

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:

A management plan exists and clearly delineates activities, timelines, and those responsible for activities. It is likely that objectives will be achieved. Pgs. 31-47

The project has the support of district teachers, administrators, school board and community.

The project director and key personnel are well suited to carry out the work of the grant. Pgs. 48-52

Applicant has requested sufficient funds to carry out the project and has made provisions for the district to slowly increase payment of grant components. Pg. 52

Weaknesses:

It is uncertain about the qualifications of the assistant director and data analyst based on the fact that a project description for two new personnel positions does not exist. Pgs. 50-51

Reader's Score: 24

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:

Clear and measureable objectives are provided for raising student achievement. A clear evaluation protocol for teachers is provided that should increase effectiveness of teachers. Procedures for calculating principal incentives are also descriptive, thus providing principals with clear feedback on incentive expectations. (pgs. 30-31) Use of the Logic Model clearly showcases outcomes and the narrative supports evaluation. (pg. 58)

Both quantitative and qualitative data are used to evaluate teachers, principals and the overall project. A feedback loop exists in the clear levels of incentives that are outlined for teachers and principals on pages 23-28.

Weaknesses:

A clear evaluation protocol for administrators utilizing all achievement data was not presented. While the criteria has been established, no instrument was provided. Criteria do not include observation. Only two factors are utilized for principal

effectiveness--SAT 10 scores and ATP graduate rate goals.

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:

Lowndes County School System has demonstrated that it has a plan to ensure success of the project. Using value-added measures of student achievement, this applicant has used multiple measures effectively to show that professional development and teaching incentives will be linked to student achievement.

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not specifically state that they are addressing this competitive priority. However, all of the components are evident in the proposal.

No evidence of teacher/administrator training was found for using the DataDirector which would directly affect implementation of the value-added system. (pgs. 10-11)

Reader's Score: 4

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 proposal does service high need students. 50% of all vacant positions will be filled each year.

Weaknesses:

Retention of effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, and English language acquisition was not addressed.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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