

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education --
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Center for
Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development
(S385A100151)

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
------------------	----------	----------

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 3

1. Absolute Priority 3	0	0
------------------------	---	---

Sub Total	0	0
------------------	----------	----------

Requirement

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
----------------	---	---

Sub Total	0	0
------------------	----------	----------

Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
-------------------	---	---

Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
-------------------	---	---

Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
-------------------	---	---

Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
-------------------	---	---

Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
-------------------	---	---

High Quality Professional Development

1. Professional Development	0	0
-----------------------------	---	---

Sub Total	0	0
------------------	----------	----------

Selection Criteria

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	9
---------------------	----	---

Project Design		
1. Project Design	60	47
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1. Adequacy of Support	25	14
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1. Quality of Local Eval.	5	3
Sub Total	100	73

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Priority 1	5	4
---------------------------	---	---

Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Priority 2	5	5
---------------------------	---	---

Sub Total	10	9
------------------	----	---

Total	110	82
--------------	-----	----

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Center for Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development (S385A100151)

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:

(a) The applicant has appropriate plans to use student growth data in implementing a system of differentiated compensation for teachers and principals by providing teachers and principals with group rewards for meeting growth targets (p. e44). These will consist of 10% additional compensation for principals in one district for meeting state growth targets (p. 47) and by rewarding principals in the other district with \$5,000 and \$10,000 payments (p. 52) and providing teachers with \$2000 in one district and \$5500 in the other district (p. 43). The applicant did not provide a rationale for establishing these amounts as likely to be substantial enough to create change in teachers or principals' behaviors so it is unclear if these incentive payments are substantial enough to impact efficacy.

(b) The districts have clear plans to develop new evaluation protocols with forms, procedures and timelines and a rubric to assess that the evaluation systems conforms to new state evaluation regulations (p. 40). The applicant has plans to create an evaluation

system that will include observations based on research on effective practices (Appendix e17), but does not describe efforts to create observation instruments to be administered at multiple points in the year aligned with professional teaching standards or clearly commit to using an observation based instrument.

(c) The applicant has appropriate plans to include measures of student performance, such as students' growth on the state test from one year to the next relative to other peers and use growth percentiles using median scores (p. 43).

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:

(a) The applicant has appropriate plans to provide teachers and principals in both districts with performance based compensation for teachers for both group and individual performance and for principals based on student growth (p. e0, 45).

(b) The applicant has appropriate plans to provide non-TIF funds from other sources, such as Title IIa funds, Race to the Top funding, BTR funds, and School Improvement grants (p. 73), as well as to solicit additional funds from corporations and foundations (p. 71) over the course of the five year period, but does not explain a specific plan for decreasing percentages of grant funds over the life of the grant.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The applicant alluded to using the proposed PBCS plan data to inform retention and tenure decisions in the two districts by describing new legislation allowing principals to make staff hiring and retention decisions including tenure based on merit (p. 11). The applicant appropriately described implementing a new evaluation system for principals and teachers that uses trends in student growth and will appropriate base professional

development on those data;both districts have replaced principals in turnaround schools and have required faculty to reapply for their positions (p. 11).

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 appropriate plans to provide incentives for teachers to commit to remaining at the school for an additional two years and allow their classrooms to be used as model classrooms that serve as learning labs for action research and support novice and struggling teachers (p. 17). The applicant has appropriately provided \$6000 in one district and \$5000 in the other to compensate teachers for taking new leadership roles (p. 18). The applicant also plans to create new leadership positions of Teacher Leaders and Instructional Leadership Specialists to lead professional development meetings for small groups of teachers, open their classrooms for observation and work with individual teachers in their classrooms to support instructional practice by modeling lessons, coaching, etc. (p. 22).

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 has extensive and appropriate plans for communication, including a plan to recruit teachers and do outreach by a website that will be expanded, online advertising, and email to educators' associations and use social networking sites of Twitter and Facebook (p. 22). The applicant has appropriate plans to enlist the assistance of Teach Plus in conducting forums to engage large numbers of teachers in both districts and use Audience Response Technology to solicit questions and feedback (p. 57-58). The applicant also appropriately plans for twice monthly email correspondence to the steering committee, a monthly newsletter to teachers and to leaders, and to disseminate the project through media, such as letters and opinion pieces in local newspapers and appearances on local radio and television talk shows (p. 59).

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 failed to demonstrate support for the project by including any letters of support from teachers or principals or by providing results of any survey or vote conducted with teachers and administrators. It is unclear if teachers were involved in planning the proposal. The applicant does, however, have appropriate plans to provide for teacher input by forming a steering committee of 20 members, including teachers and union representatives, principals, human resource, business and academic district staff, and the superintendents of both districts (p. 55) to oversee the project and resolve issues (p. 56).

The applicant has provided appropriate documentation of support from the local teachers' unions in both districts by including letters of support in the Appendix from the presidents of the local unions. The applicant also appropriately provided letters of support from related program leaders and from the superintendents from both districts (Appendix).

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:

(1) The applicant appropriately described using student growth scores calculated on the basis of student performance on state assessments as an objective and evidence based mechanism for evaluation of teachers and principals. The applicant did not describe plans to create a classroom observation measure based on national recognized teaching standards, however, and only one of the two districts has committed to using the Learning Walk Through protocol included in the Appendix (p. 31) as an observation guide.

(2) The applicant failed to describe the use of an observation protocol for teachers and principals to be administered at least twice yearly.

(3) The applicant appropriately described using a new formative assessment system for all grades K-10 and for science and social science in high schools to supplement other measures of teacher effectiveness such as state test scores and achievement growth rates (p. 62).

(4) The applicant failed to describe efforts to establish and ensure a high degree of inter rater reliability using a classroom observation measure.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

The applicant has appropriate plans to use their extant Data Warehouse that houses state and local level education data in an easy to use system that allows for preprogrammed reports and more complex queries (p. 60). The applicant also plans to supplement this system with a new data tool, The Schools Interoperability Framework to facilitate connecting teachers and principals to the students they serve (p. 60). In addition, one district is acquiring the Student Information Management System that will include student data, as well as lesson plans, grades, attendance records, etc. (p. 61). The other district uses the Warehouse to provide a dropout early warning, student growth percentiles, student information, assessment data, special education data, and other data (p. 63). It is unclear if each of these systems will link data to payroll and human resource systems.

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 did not describe specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness at a level of specificity that would provide clear insights into how these tools will be used as quality measures of efficacy and how staff would be enabled to use these measures to improve practice. For example, it is unclear how teachers and principals would be trained in and receive professional development around a specific measure of teacher effectiveness, the Learning Walk Through (p. 31). It is unclear how or which administrators will be trained in using the Vanderbilt University's assessment of leadership in education through onsite coaching by district personnel. (p. 32).

The applicant did appropriately describe using a data consulting group, Focus on Results, to provide ongoing training to help Instructional Leader Teachers to analyze student performance data and identify areas of focus and align interventions to address these areas and implement interventions via professional learning groups. (p. 31).

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:

(1) The applicant has appropriate plans to form instructional leadership teams composed of teachers and administrators to identify their students' needs by using achievement data and teacher, student and parent surveys to develop action plans and lead the school's professional development efforts (p. 29). The applicant also has appropriate plans to survey staff with the OHI to assess school climate and determine needed directions (p. 31).

(2) The applicant has appropriate plans to provide professional development to teachers in several formats, including basing professional development on individual assessments by using teacher leaders to provide onsite assistance and provide model classrooms. (p. 32) and by using professional learning teams to translate goals into interventions and lead professional development (p. 29). Teachers will appropriately visit teacher leaders' classrooms and will have personalized support in their own classrooms from a teacher leader (p. 30). One district will provide appropriate professional development for principals by partnering with the Carnegie Foundation to support principals in their understandings of student assessment data and methods of translating those data into action (p. 31). Appropriate staff development will be offered in the other district by using Focus on Results to provide ongoing training to help analyze student performance data and align interventions to data (p. 31).

(3) The applicant failed to describe the professional development with enough specificity to differentiate plans for providing teachers and principals who do not receive differentiated compensation based on effectiveness and those who are deemed effective with tools they need to continue effective practice and assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles. Only a mention is made of developing seminars for teachers to develop their skills in teacher leadership roles in one district (p. 33) and using induction staff to work with principals to develop leadership roles (p. 33). These efforts are not described with enough detail to provide a clear picture of their impact.

(4) The applicant has appropriate plans to provide support for instructional leadership teams in one district by using Focus on Results, a data consulting group to provide ongoing training in analyzing student performance data, identifying areas of focus and aligning interventions to those areas (p. 31). The applicant has appropriate plans in the

other district to use professional learning teams to translate goals into interventions and to use the Carnegie Foundation to support principals in their understandings of student assessment data and methods of translating data to action (p. 29, 31).

(5) The applicant clearly described a process for assessing the efficacy of the professional development for teachers by planning a teacher survey focused on the school's professional development and delivery that will allow teachers to evaluate the quality of the principal's support and the principal will assess the teacher leaders in terms of changes in teachers' practices (p. 38). The applicant also has extensive plans for conducting two audits of professional development in both districts designed to assess impact on student achievement and inform mid course adjustments (p. 39).

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:

(1) The applicant appropriately defined and identified high needs schools as 22 schools in two urban districts in the state that are making the least academic improvement (p, 2). The applicant appropriately identified areas of need, including need for teachers of mathematics, science, special education, and English language learning (p. 5). The applicant also clearly identified need by narrative reports of many teachers not meeting core standards for highly qualified teachers. This need was appropriately documented by descriptive statistics showing that only about 86% of one district's core teaching staff was highly qualified compared to the state average of 97% (p. 5). Need was appropriately described for the other district by descriptive statistics showing that 22% of teachers in the project's schools are on provisional certificates compared to 14% in other schools and 20% of their teachers are new to teaching (p. 4).

The applicant further appropriately identified need for the project by providing descriptive statistics regarding teacher and principal retention rates for the two districts. For example, in one district, average teacher retention rate was 60% with some schools only retaining 41% of their teachers (p. 5). In the other district, teacher turnover rates average 21% per year (p. 4) and only three of nine principals stayed in their leadership roles over a three year period (p. 4).

(2) The applicant appropriately identified need for the project by providing descriptive statistics characterizing 20 of the schools as restructuring and two in corrective action with 90% of their students from low income families who are qualified for free or reduced lunch which is 50% higher than the state average (p. 6-7). The applicant further

appropriately documented need for the project by identifying similar schools statewide and comparing achievement test score data from the project schools to those schools showing lack of student progress in project schools compared to other schools (p. 7). Need was further clearly supported by aggregated data from the high schools showing that nearly two thirds of the students in the three high schools score below proficiency in language arts and mathematics (p. 8).

(3) The applicant provided an appropriate definition of a comparison school by using schools in the state with similar demographic data, such as size, income level, and the percent of students who are Limited English Proficient or requiring special education services (p. 7).

Weaknesses:

The need for the project could have been enhanced by providing parallel descriptive statistics for both districts, such as reporting the numbers of highly qualified teachers in hard to staff areas in both districts and not just one (p. 5).

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:

(1) The applicant has clearly planned to use student test data from state assessments and student growth scores to determine the effectiveness of a school's teachers and principals.

The applicant has provided appropriate incentives and rewards in salary amounts that appear to be of sufficient size to affect the behaviors of teachers by offering performance awards of \$2000 a year in one district and 10% of base in the other. The applicant has appropriate plans to provide principals with additional annual compensation for meeting all performance goals ranging from 13-18% of their salary (p. 46).

(2) The applicant clearly defined effective by using student growth on state measures as a measure of teacher and principal efficacy.

(2) The applicant clearly provided some indicators of appropriate support for the project by including letters of support from the two districts' superintendents and the local teachers' union presidents. The applicant appropriately involved representatives from unions in both districts in planning the project and polled live audiences of teachers on related issues through Teach Plus (p. 54).

(3) The applicant has appropriate plans to develop a new statewide teacher and principal evaluation system and establish validity and reliability (p. 41). The applicant has appropriate plans to use at least three rating categories to differentiate performance of ineffective, effective and highly effective teachers based on student growth (p. 41).

(4) The applicant has relevant plans to use an extant data management system of Data Warehouse that links teacher and student data (p. 60). The applicant has appropriate intentions to link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources (p. 61).

(5) The applicant has appropriate plans to provide professional development on an as needed basis to teachers by using model teachers in model classrooms and the services of Instructional Leadership Specialists and Teacher Leaders (p. 33).

Weaknesses:

(1) The applicant did not clearly describe how classroom observations would be conducted and clearly describe plans for using a valid and reliable instrument for teacher observation to determine teachers' efficacy or principals' efficacy or instructional leadership skills or specify how many times teachers and principals would be observed. The applicant did not clearly describe plans to develop an observation measure of teacher efficacy or its research and standards base or describe how it would be developed in enough detail to provide a clear picture of how teacher effectiveness will be determined by observations in both districts (p. 40). It is unclear what percentage of the evaluation system will be based on student growth or achievement.

(2) Support for the project could have been enhanced by including letters of support from building principals and teachers or documenting teacher support for participation by presenting results from any votes, polls conducted with Teach Plus or staff surveys to document teacher and principal support for the project.

(3) It is unclear how the applicant plans to use a rigorous, transparent and fair evaluation system that differentiates levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories. Only one of the districts appears to be committed to using the Learning Walk

Through that relates to observing characteristics of standards based teaching and learning but this method was not clearly described and it is unclear if this will be used in the future. (Appendix).

(4) It is unclear if the present Data Warehouse system is capable of linking student achievement data to payroll and human resources for one district and why only one district is purchasing new software to accomplish this objective (p. 61) .

(5) The plan for professional development is vague in terms of structure, content, frequency and duration. For example, it is unclear how Critical Friends or Instructional Rounds (p. 34) will function or what professional development the Induction Coaches will provide (p. 24). Although ELL and special education were identified as an area of need no professional development was targeted toward these needs.

Reader's Score: 47

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

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

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

(1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the project effectively;

(3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local financial or in-kind resources; and

(4) The requested grant amount and project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant has appropriate plans to establish a steering committee to oversee the grant and resolve issues and each district will appoint a project manager and a cross-functional central office working group to ensure communication and collaboration (p. 65). The planning year reflects appropriate tasks and activities to meet project goals, including establishing an evaluation system and training teachers and principals with that system, and establishing linkages between data and teacher and principal performance (p. 64). The management plan includes appropriate timelines. (Appendix P).

(2) The project director and project manager are both well qualified for their roles given their past related experiences and their allocations of full time devotion to the project should be adequate to oversee the functions.

(3) The applicant has appropriately provided for financial support for the project by using Title IIa funds, Race to the Top funds, BTR Investing in Innovation funds and School Improvement grants. The applicant also has appropriate plans to solicit funding from private foundations and corporations. (p. 71, 73).

(4) Grant funds requested and projected costs appear to be sufficient to attain project goals.

Weaknesses:

Job descriptions for the project and institute coordinators were not described. All key staff were not identified for the resumes provided in the appendix.

The milestones were actually activities.

The applicant failed to specify a proportional and increasing reduction of grant funds across the 5 years of the project to indicate local fiscal support of the project. Some expenses from the grant actually increase each year, such as salaries of key staff like the project director. The budget narrative lacks sufficient detail to determine if costs are reasonable and appropriate such as 6 million for the Other category.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

(1) The applicant has appropriate plans to conduct both a formative and summative evaluation of the project that will provide evidence of program efficacy and inform future discussions and negotiations regarding alternative compensation systems (p. 74). The evaluation will appropriately use a quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group of schools from other districts (p. 77) to address the performance objective of system changes to impact results in student achievement . (p. 80).

(2) The applicant has appropriate plans to use quantitative data in the form of state test score data as measures of impact of the program. (p. 78). The applicant also appropriately plans to use other quantitative measures, such as annual surveys with district administrators and teachers to understand why the project is more or less successful (p. 80). The applicant has appropriate plans for collecting qualitative data by conducting annual interviews with district administrators, teachers and principals. (p. 80).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not describe appropriate methods for analyzing qualitative data of interviews such as a thematic analysis or constant comparison. It is unclear how the evaluation will be formative in nature to allow for changes in the program and how results of evaluations will be disseminated and used for program improvement.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

Strengths:

(1) The applicant has appropriate plans to use a value added model by using measures of student growth, multiple observations during the year, (p. 16) district pretests and post tests and student work samples to determine teacher efficacy and use student growth scores to determine principals' effectiveness. (p. 19).

(2) The applicant has appropriate plans for one district and some schools in the other district to partner with the Achievement Network to instruct teachers to develop and use formative assessments based on state standards (p. 35, 36). The applicant also appropriately plans for teachers and principals to receive training to implement the new evaluation system to be developed. (p. 37).

Weaknesses:

The narrative did not define what percent of the evaluation would be based on student performance for teachers and principals.

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:

(1) The applicant has appropriate plans to serve high needs students in 22 schools that are underperforming on state measures and have high numbers of low income students. (p. 2, 6,7).

(2) The applicant has clear plans to provide incentives for retaining effective teachers in identified hard to staff subjects and areas of mathematics, science, ESL, and special education (p. 23).

(3) The applicant has specific and rigorous criteria for selecting teachers to fill vacancies to ensure hiring teachers who are likely to be highly effective. (p. 26). The applicant has appropriate plans to communicate the project to teachers and others through a dedicated website. (p. 22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:57 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education --
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Center for
Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development
(S385A100151)

Reader #2: *****

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
------------------	----------	----------

Evaluation 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	10
---------------------	----	----

Project Design		
1. Project Design	60	45
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1. Adequacy of Support	25	19
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1. Quality of Local Eval.	5	3
Sub Total	100	77

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Priority 1	5	3
---------------------------	---	---

Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Priority 2	5	5
---------------------------	---	---

Sub Total	10	8
------------------	----	---

Total	110	85
--------------	-----	----

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Center for Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development (S385A100151)

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 applicant appears to have spent considerable time, effort, and collaborative dialogue with multiple stakeholders in designing the project. The project includes a multitude of components, including but not limited to designing a compensation system that is group-focused and allows for retention bonuses; bonuses for working and staying in turnaround schools; professional development tied to student outcomes primarily based on the state standardized testing in core subject areas; an extensive communications plan with multiple layers of groups involved in carrying out communication activities; rewards for principals based on school outcomes; a project steering committee that involves multiple stakeholders; involvement and support of the teacher unions in both Boston and Springfield; a career ladder with increased responsibilities for teacher leadership positions; collaborative activities with external agencies which have expertise in data analysis and management; and many other activities designed to support the overall project. (p. 15-70).

The actual evaluation instruments, however, are to be developed in the planning year. It is also less clear that the system includes a value-added focus based on individual teachers as the compensation is at the school level when it comes to using student data as part of the system. It is not clear that non-core teachers have a role in the compensation process based on student data.

The incentive payments include \$5000-\$6000 for teacher leadership roles, a \$2000 bonus for retention, \$2000 -\$5000 as group rewards based on school performance, and \$3000-\$4100 as additional pay for teaching in a turnaround school. (p. 18) This amount appears to be substantial.

An observation protocol is provided but not differentiated for the various content areas, or for elementary/secondary appropriate teaching. There will be multiple observations during the year.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

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

General:

The applicant has projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the project and beyond, focusing primarily on how the components could be sustained over time. The applicant will provide an increased share of performance-based compensation primarily through redirecting existing and future federal funds (non-TIF), and also through potential future grant funds from foundations and others.

The applicant provided a discussion of how the inefficient use of current funding for professional development activities and other activities that are not aligned with student outcomes would be redirected to more effective uses once the project was operational. These funds would be used for sustainability purposes. (p. 71)

It appears that Boston would be the only partner in the project providing the increasing cost share over time.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The applicant indicated an intent that this project form the basis for retention decisions in both project sites, based on teacher and principal effectiveness. However, effectiveness was defined primarily at the school level rather than at the individual teacher level when it comes to awarding differential compensation based on student outcomes. Individual teachers may earn additional compensation based on staying at the school, and/or becoming a leader. It is less clear that this system is equally effective or operationally applicable to non-core teachers and/ or to secondary teachers. It does not appear that the data and evaluations for professional development are directly linked to 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 proposed a PBCS wherein teachers will have incentives in the form of extra pay to become teacher leaders/instructional leaders. The roles of the teacher leaders/instructional leaders are defined, although there seems to be little distinction between the two roles and one requires only 1 more year of experience than the other role. It is not clear how the two roles would work seamlessly together to help the same target teachers in need of assistance.

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 appears to have spent considerable time, effort, and collaborative dialogue with multiple stakeholders in designing the project. There is an extensive communications plan with multiple layers of groups involved in carrying out communication activities with all stakeholders. The plan includes a website, discussions with the steering committee, newsletters to teachers and other stakeholders, and public information pieces in local media outlets. (p. 64)

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 appears to have spent considerable time, effort, and collaborative dialogue with multiple stakeholders in designing the project, including the teacher unions from both Boston and Springfield. The unions provided letters of support for the grant.

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:

Although the applicant spent considerable space in the narrative describing the philosophical basis and the design specifications for the evaluation system, what the system would actually look like is less clear. The applicant stated that the system would be developed during the planning year. It is not clear that the evaluation system would differentiate between elementary and secondary, or be customized for the different instructional approaches appropriate for specific subject areas. The intended system would be rubric-based and include several observations during the school year. The nature of the specialized training for evaluators is not clear, and especially so for those who would be observing principals. The system for establishing and maintaining inter rater reliability is also not clear.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

The applicant already has extensive data systems, including a data warehouse and other data systems that are operational. These systems are based primarily in the MCAS data. The applicant indicated an intent to expand on these systems and tie them more closely to payroll and other systems during the planning year. It is not clear how or if the data system would include other achievement data from non-core subjects of ELA and math.

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 indicated that training for teachers and principals would be provided by Teach Plus and other outside vendors in addition to assistance provided by teacher leaders/instructional leaders and by grade level teams (p. 58) This plan would appear to be effective since Teach Plus has already been operational in the district.

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:

Although the applicant provided an extensive discussion regarding the professional development component, the discussion was lacking in specifics about the nature of the professional development and how it related to non-core subjects that did not have associated standardized test scores. A most critically overlooked piece, however, within the professional development approach was its omission entirely of professional development to meet the clearly expressed needs for teachers to be effective with ELL students (25% of the population) and with special education students (20% of the population). It is likely that these students are in the classrooms of the regular teachers, especially the ELL students, yet there is no targeted professional development described for either teachers or principals in working effectively with these students or designing academic instruction across the curriculum that is accessible to these students. The entire responsibility for these students seems to be given to ESL teachers, of whom there are stated to not be enough, and special education teachers, of whom there are also stated to not be enough. There is also insufficient discussion of what type(s) of professional development would be provided for principals, and the content of whatever would be provided. Thus, the overall professional development plan does not seem to be of sufficiently high quality to bring about needed changes and improvements in teacher effectiveness with high needs populations. The applicant will survey teachers regarding the quality of the professional development (p. 38) Teacher leaders will evaluate the quality of the principal's support. The CTAC will conduct a professional development audit. (p. 38)

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 provided a clear explanation of the high needs status of the 22 Boston and Springfield schools identified as turnaround schools for this project. (p. 3). These schools have high turnover rates, higher rates of less than fully qualified teachers, and higher populations of English learners and special education students. (p. 4). The applicant states that nearly half of the teachers in these schools are teaching ELLs or

special needs students but are not "dually licensed." (p. 4) 22% of the teachers are on provisional licenses compared to 14% in other schools. There is a 21% annual turnover rate. (p. 4) Only 3 of the 9 Boston principals stayed at their schools over two years. (p. 4) The schools have higher mobility rates at 32.8%, 25% are LEP, and 20% are special education identified. (p. 7). Student achievement averaged only 26% in ELA and 15% in math at the proficient level.(p. 8) Springfield's average teacher retention rate in the turnaround schools is only 60%, and Springfield had only 86.4% HQT in these schools.

The applicant appears to have spent considerable time and effort in identifying the needs and conditions in the turnaround schools, and provides a lengthy discussion of these factors. The high needs staff are in the areas of math, science, English learners and special education. (p. 5)

The comparison schools used were identified as a composite of 93 non-level 4 schools similar in terms of population, percent low income students, and percent LEP and SPED. (p. 7)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Includes rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate levels of effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice)

as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year;

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant appears to have spent considerable time, effort, and collaborative dialogue with multiple stakeholders in designing the project. The project includes a multitude of components, including but not limited to designing a compensation system that is group-focused and allows for retention bonuses; bonuses for working and staying in turnaround schools; professional development tied to student outcomes primarily based on the state standardized testing in core subject areas; an extensive communications plan with multiple layers of groups involved in carrying out communication activities; rewards for principals based on school outcomes; a project steering committee that involves multiple stakeholders; involvement and support of the teacher unions in both Boston and Springfield; a career ladder with increased responsibilities for teacher leadership positions; collaborative activities with external agencies which have expertise in data analysis and management; and many other activities designed to support the overall project. (p. 15-70). The applicant expressed a clear commitment at the state level to this project and intends the project design and outcomes to form the basis for working with other high needs districts in the state.

The project will have a planning year with key focuses on improving the data system and developing the teacher evaluation system instruments. (p. 60)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant states one of its highest priority staffing needs is for teachers capable and effective in working with English learners, there is no targeted staff development indicated for this area, nor does the application reference the need for all classroom teachers to be knowledgeable about how to make their content areas accessible to EL students. This is an evident weakness throughout the entire proposed project design, given that 25% of students are ELL. Training and expertise for principals in the area of ELL student learning and achievement are also not addressed. It is difficult to see how this project could succeed without a strong focus in this critical area for teachers and for administrators. ELL students need not only ESL, as mentioned sparsely in the proposal, but also to be able to access academic content of increasing difficulty in the regular academic classroom, including the specialized academic vocabulary of learning. An ESL teacher alone cannot bring about the needed improvements in EL learning across the curriculum. Simply adding more teachers with ESL endorsements is not an effective or systemic or systematic approach within this project. In addition, principals need to understand the effects on student learning of how they place ELL students across the grade levels and of the need for consistency in approach to teaching and learning for ELL students. The same comments above could also be said about the lack of addressing the needs of special education students. It is difficult to understand why this application so clearly identified these needs but then did not address them in the overall project design and the professional development components.

The applicant indicated that collaboration was a key goal for the professional satisfaction and retention of teachers, and thus the entire compensation system of the PBCS appears to be group-based except for bonuses for those who become teacher leaders. It is not clear that this system is workable for all teachers, especially those in non-core areas. The system is largely built on the MCAS results, but these pertain only to the core areas of ELA and math. Yet the application indicates that the system is for all teachers.

There is no differentiation in the observation protocol for the subject-specific appropriate pedagogy tailored for the different content areas, thus it is difficult to see how this protocol can effectively serve its intended purpose. The level of training required to implement such a protocol and to assure inter-rater reliability are not sufficiently explained. The professional development design seems focused on elementary teachers and schools, with insufficient discussion of the needs and approaches for secondary schools. (p.29) and also insufficient information regarding the component for principals. It is not clear what "changes in teacher practice" are expected, yet these are to form the basis for the teacher evaluation system. (p. 38). The actual evaluation instruments are not yet developed, according to the narrative. (p. 40)

The qualifications for the teacher leader and the instructional leader appear to differ only by 1 year of experience required for one of these positions. It is not clear why the project needs two positions virtually indistinguishable in terms of requirements and responsibilities. (p. 32) The leaders would also be full time teachers and require substitutes to work with other teachers; this seems ineffective as a design and also to meet student needs in these teachers' classes. (p. 32)

The applicant cites other working conditions that teachers also take into consideration that affect a decision to stay in a turnaround school (p. 44) but these not addressed in the project design.

Reader's Score: 45

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided an extensive management chart. (unpaged appendix P) The chart indicates responsibilities, detailed timelines and milestones as required by the criteria. The project director and other key personnel are all current administrative employees of the district and appear capable of carrying out the project. There will be a Steering Committee that includes stakeholder representatives, including teachers, once the grant is operational (p. 55)

The applicant provided a discussion of how the inefficient use of current funding for professional development activities and other activities that are not aligned with student outcomes would be redirected to more effective uses once the project was operational. These funds would be used for sustainability purposes. (p. 71)

Weaknesses:

The time commitments of personnel as indicated in the budget (unpaged) do not appear to be sufficient for Hasselkorn and Bach in particular. These individuals are at the state level. It is not clear what the time commitments from the local personnel in Boston and Springfield responsible for local project management would be, or what their qualifications would be to manage a project of this scale in addition to their other duties and responsibilities.

In this section of the narrative, the applicant stated that as early as 2012, ESE will designate Level 4 schools that fail to achieve ambitious annual benchmarks after two or more years as Level 5 schools, but it is unclear why the applicant would do so when the project would not yet even have been operational since the first year is a planning year. (p. 69). Thus, it is not clear how these schools would have had an opportunity to improve under the new PCBS system.

It was difficult to reconcile the figures provided on the federal budget form with the budget narrative (unpaged) in the appendix. For example, there is over \$6 million for listed for "other" on the federal budget form but not evident in the narrative how this was broken down or allocated.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Quality of Local Evaluation**1.(D) Quality of Local Evaluation (5 points):**

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant will use the services of CTAC to conduct the evaluation. (p. 76) The key purpose will be to provide district and school leaders with formative assessments in the early years of the initiative's implementation to guide policy and implementation adjustments. (p. 76) The evaluation of teacher effectiveness will be measured by improvements in teacher impact on student achievement and principal effectiveness will be measured by improvements impacts [sic] on student achievement for all teachers in the building and retention of effective teachers. The school will be the unit of analysis since that is how the compensation system is built. (p. 76)

The discussion includes a description of the statistical analysis deriving from a matched comparison group of schools from other districts. (p. 77) The MCAS forms the basis for the evaluation analysis.

Qualitative data will include annual surveys and interviews with district administrators, principals and teachers. (p. 80)

The applicant indicates that the results of the surveys and interviews will be communicated to the steering committee. (p. 83)

Weaknesses:

The applicant had indicated in the narrative that for secondary schools, other indicators such as graduation rates would be considered, but this is not mentioned in the evaluation design.

It is not clear that a once-per year survey or interview would be sufficient to capture the qualitative input of participants for formative evaluation use purposes.

The dissemination plan for the evaluation information to only the steering committee does not seem adequate given the extensive scope of the intended evaluation. (p. 84)

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant will use the Massachusetts growth model (p. 19) to evaluate teachers and principals. There will be multiple observations during the year.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear what percentage or ratio of the evaluation of teachers and principals would be based on student performance outcomes. The degree to which the Massachusetts growth model is a value added model is unclear, as sufficient description of this model is not provided (p. 18), although the applicant does indicate that the model will be used to help identify if a teacher's or principal's students are making growth higher or lesser than their academic peers in the state.

Reader's Score: 3

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 will communicate regarding the project and available high needs openings via a dedicated website. (p. 22) The high needs areas for both Boston and Springfield were clearly identified in the narrative and included English learners and special education, among others. There would be a retention bonus of \$2000 in both Boston and Springfield. (p. 18)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:57 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education --
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Center for
Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development
(S385A100151)

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
------------------	----------	----------

Evaluation 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	10
---------------------	----	----

Project Design		
1. Project Design	60	40
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1. Adequacy of Support	25	10
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1. Quality of Local Eval.	5	2
Sub Total	100	62

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Priority 1	5	3
---------------------------	---	---

Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Priority 2	5	5
---------------------------	---	---

Sub Total	10	8
------------------	----	---

Total	110	70
--------------	-----	----

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Center for Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership Development (S385A100151)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

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

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

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

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

General:

Reviewer Comment Priority 1:

Strengths:

In order to ensure all teachers have the opportunity to be evaluated using student achievement measures, (and not just teachers who teach in tested areas), the PBCS evaluation will include other measures of student growth to demonstrate learning in all grade levels and subjects (i.e. pre- and post-tests, student work samples, etc.) (p. 19) and teachers will be trained how to gather this information to yield informative student results. "Learning Walkthroughs" will also be employed as a measure in the evaluation process, accompanied by standardized protocols.

Districts will be allowed to develop their own evaluation frameworks in alignment with state regulations or adopt/adapt the state model for full implementation in fall of 2011.

(Approval of the state evaluation framework does not occur until February 2011) (p. 40). The state calls for the evaluation to have at least 3 rating categories. All other required elements are in direct alignment with TIF priorities (p. 43 is a list of requirements).

The applicant will use the first year of the grant as the planning year. Priorities for the planning period are outlined on page 64.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear exactly what percentage of the overall evaluation framework is based on effectiveness in student learning within the school and classroom. This requirement of the TIF is missing in the narrative.

In addition, no guidelines for determining what constitutes effectiveness, or how it will be determined through the framework and other methods that were provided in the narrative was found. The applicant states that the districts will determine effectiveness scales.

How often teachers and principals would be observed was not found in the narrative.

Teacher compensation for effectiveness for student performance is in the form of a school-wide bonus where all staff earns the bonus. In addition, individuals can only increase their pay beyond the school wide bonus if they take on additional leadership roles. The career ladder is flat. Teachers whose students scored well may not be compensated if the whole school does not meet its goals and teachers who may not have performed well still get compensation pay if their peers do well. A progressive multi-tiered system that takes into account the continuous development of the teaching craft and gradual assumption of various leadership roles would compensate teachers more fairly all along the career continuum, with the greatest compensation given to teachers who demonstrate highest levels of teaching effectiveness, leadership, and the highest levels of student achievement. .

Incentive amounts that were provided are substantial but the applicant did not provide justification for the level of incentive amounts chosen.

The narrative fails to provide information on the evaluation and compensation of principals within the Boston and Springfield school districts.

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:

Reviewer Comment Priority 2:

Strengths:

Boston has demonstrated a serious commitment to an increasing share of the funds necessary to run the PBCS that represents approximately 52% over the 5-year grant period. (Total request of 27, 057,618 minus DESE costs, divided by 22 schools, multiplied by 12- the # of schools in Boston, divided into the total request amount). With this commitment, Boston is highly likely to continue the project beyond the funding period.

Weaknesses:

The commitment to the PBCS is evident in the amount of preparation and interaction with stakeholder groups to design the PBCS. However, within the narrative, the applicant did not describe projected costs in the narrative and how it will assume an increasing share of the financial costs of the PBCS. In addition, it is not clear how the project will be sustained after the funding period ends. This is especially important since the project relies on the budgets of the two school districts to assume this responsibility and these entities must also demonstrate their increasing fiscal commitment since they are ultimately responsible for sustaining it.

Within the actual budget narrative Springfield and DESE did not provide any financial data as to how they, as partners, would contribute an increasing amount of funds to scale and sustain the effort, both during and after the funding period. The burden was placed directly on Boston to meet this requirement. This is a serious deficiency. The financial commitment that Boston is assuming are funds that should be shared by all three partners so that as much funding as possible go toward meeting the goals of the project, providing compensation pay, within the schools themselves. It is unclear if DESE intends to modify the cost structure for this requirement during the planning period.

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:

Reviewer Comment Priority 3:

Strengths:

Systematic approach is part of a larger state strategy to turnaround the most persistent underperforming schools. The 22 TIF schools targeted in the project comprise the majority of identified schools in this category, with 13 remaining schools to be targeted for intervention when the project expands. The project specifically builds on legislation that provides extraordinary authority and flexibility to districts and school administrators to make the necessary personnel decisions that will build effective instructional teams built upon standards that use student achievement growth data as a significant measure (p. 11). The evaluation system proposed by the applicant builds on this statewide initiative and will utilize the components of the draft evaluation framework (Appendix D) designed by the state to provide opportunities for effective staff to be compensated and have opportunities for career advancement while in the classroom. Principals are included in this draft framework. The state intends for evaluations to be used to determine effectiveness, make tenure, dismissal, or demotion decisions, and provide for compensation for assumption of additional leadership roles (Appendix D).

Data and evaluations will be used to identify professional development needs (pp. 29-30).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

Reviewer Comment:

Strengths:

Boston has created an initiative called "Teacher Turnaround Teams" (T3) to attract experienced teachers into Turnaround schools. T3 teachers are hired as a cohort team and comprise 25% of the school faculty at each school and will receive training and time for collaboration as a cohort. They are expected to serve in a variety of leadership roles to assist colleagues in the school with instructional improvements that will lead to increased student achievement and will receive a stipend of \$6000 for being a T3 teacher leader.

Springfield has a two-tiered system of teacher leadership. Instructional Leadership Specialists and Teacher Leaders will become part of a teacher leadership institute in partnership with NSDC. They are selected through a rigorous selection process (pp. 49-50) and are provided incentive pay for taking on these additional roles.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

Reviewer Comment Core Element 1:

Strengths:

Teachers and administrators will be trained in the new evaluation system and effectiveness measures (p. 29).

Various communication strategies were outlined on pages 58 to 59.

Training and communication about the new PBCS is an identified priority for the planning year.

Even though the applicant will be creating a comprehensive plan during the planning year, it provides adequate detail on major components to be included in the communication plan.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

Reviewer Comment Core Element 2:

Strengths:

On page 13 of the narrative, the applicant states that there is commitment from both Superintendents from each of the school districts as well as union support. Letters of support were included from the superintendents and teacher unions in both districts.

The competencies developed to be used in selecting teaching candidates for recruitment into available teaching positions was a collaboration of teachers, principals, district leaders and leading teacher recruitment organizations (e.g. Teach for America, New Teacher Project, ad BTR) (p. 25).

The state engaged all stakeholder groups, including businesses and non-profits in the development of the new evaluation framework (p. 41, pp. 53-55).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

Reviewer Comment Core Element 3:

Strengths:

In order to include all teachers have the opportunity to be evaluated using student achievement measures, (and not just teachers who teach in tested areas), the PBCS evaluation will include other measures of student growth to demonstrate learning in all grade levels and subjects (i.e. pre- and post-tests, student work samples, etc.) (p. 19) and teachers will be trained how to gather this information to yield informative student results. "Learning Walkthroughs" will also be employed as a measure in the evaluation process, accompanied by standardized protocols.

The narrative outlines five project objectives accompanied by measurable outcomes that are both challenging yet realistic and have a timeline for determining achievement (p. 20).

Districts will be allowed to develop their own evaluation frameworks in alignment with state regulations or adopt/adapt the state model, complete with forms, procedures, and guidelines for full implementation in fall of 2011. (Approval of the state evaluation framework does not occur until February 2011) (p. 40). The state calls for the evaluation to have at least 3 rating categories. All other required elements are in direct alignment with TIF priorities (p. 43 is a list of requirements).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear exactly what percentage of the overall evaluation framework is based on effectiveness in student learning within the school and classroom. This requirement of the TIF is missing in the narrative. If the applicant is leaving this component for districts to determine, the districts' plan for determining the degree of significance of this factor as a component of the evaluation framework they will be designing must be vetted through DESE, the applicant agency, for approval.

In addition, no guidelines for determining what constitutes effectiveness, or how it will be determined through the framework and other methods that were provided in the narrative was found. The applicant states that the districts will determine effectiveness scales. If the applicant is leaving this component for districts to determine, the districts' plan for determining effectiveness must be vetted through DESE, the applicant agency, for approval.

How often teachers and principals would be observed was not found in the narrative.

There was no discussion found in the narrative indicating how inter-rater reliability would be ensured when scoring on the new evaluation tools.

Teacher compensation for effectiveness for student performance is in the form of a school-wide bonus where all staff earns the bonus. In addition, individuals can only increase their pay beyond the school wide bonus if they take on additional leadership roles. The career ladder is flat. A teacher would either earn the bonus or not earn the bonus based on the performance of the school as a whole. Teachers whose students scored well may not be compensated if the whole school does not meet its goals and teachers who may not have performed well still get compensation pay if their peers do well. A progressive multi-tiered system that takes into account the continuous development of the teaching craft and gradual assumption of various leadership roles would compensate teachers more fairly all along the career continuum, with the greatest compensation given to teachers who demonstrate higher levels of teaching effectiveness, leadership, and the

highest levels of student achievement.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

Reviewer Comment Core Element 4:

Strengths:

The applicant will be using its robust data management systems (i.e. Data Warehouse) to assist both districts in linking their current HR and payroll systems (p. 60). The evaluations of teachers and principals would be also be housed and linked to HR and payroll, in conjunction with student achievement data to determine eligibility for compensation pay or opportunities for leadership (p. 61). The applicant and partner districts will be using the planning year to further refine and integrate their data management systems.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

Reviewer Comment Core Element 5:

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

Its proposed PBCS will include a high-quality professional development component for

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

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

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

(3) Provide --

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

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

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

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

General:

Reviewer Comment High Quality Professional Development:

Strengths:

The project will assess the efficacy and impact of all professional development through the use of PD audits, evaluation, and statewide institutes as well as the effectiveness of PD in every school (pp. 28-29. 39).

Four components comprise the PD plan and are outlined on page 29. Teachers and administrators will be trained in the new evaluation system and effectiveness measures (p. 29). It will make use of teacher expertise in building each school's instructional capacity and embed the learning in teachers' everyday practice. The PD in each school will also be regularly assessed for effectiveness in creating the instructional environments that are sought (p. 38).

The PD model differentiates planning for PD into several tiers to identify and implement PD relative to specific goals based on student data. Implementation of Instructional Leadership Teams, comprised of teacher leaders and administrators, serves to collaboratively review student data and prioritize needs in the development of a strategic school-wide PD plan designed to specifically address these greatest needs. ILT members will be trained in the data review process and how to align appropriate PD resources (p. 31). Springfield will use Learning Walkthroughs and school climate surveys to inform the process (p. 31).

Another level of designing PD is distilled within smaller teacher teams facilitated by effective teacher leaders (i.e. professional learning teams) who translate school level goals into action plans within their own individual classrooms. This approach incorporates collaboration between stakeholders on mutual goals for student achievement while empowering teachers as experts to design instruction specifically to meet both school and classroom needs.

The PD plan is part of a comprehensive school improvement plan.

Both Boston and Springfield teacher leaders will receive training to develop their skills in working with adult learners (p. 33) during professional development.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how professional learning teams "will be the hub for professional development in data analysis" (p. 29) when the primary responsibility of the instructional leadership teams was data analysis, need identification, and development of a school-wide PD plan. More information is needed to clear up this possible contradiction.

Springfield will be reviewing data, conducting Learning Walkthroughs, completing the OHI, I addition to taking KEYS survey and MA TELLS all survey. Depending on when these are conducted the time constraints could become a challenge.

More information is needed on how the information gleaned from both teacher and principal evaluations will be used to help improve practice.

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:

All 22 schools targeted by the project all exceed the federal definition of high-need. The average of all TIF schools is 85.9% (53% ABOVE the state average)(p. 7, Appendix).

The narrative provided convincing evidence of difficulty to recruit and retain high quality teachers within the two targets school districts in which the 22 schools are located (pp. 4-6). Boston experiences teacher turnover rates that hover around 20%, and half of these schools have turnover rates of 50% or higher (p. 4) and have a higher percentage of new and inexperienced teachers (p. 21). Springfield has an increasing turnaroun rate, which has grown from 40-59%.

Administrator turnaroun has exacerbated this problem and has provided additional inconsistency to the educational environment (p. 6). Springfield has identified critical needs in the areas of Math, Science, SPED, and ELL with many of the teachers in these areas below state averages in being highly qualified, thus requiring Springfield to

allocate resources to providing tiered remedial supports to build pedagogical knowledge. Boston has a significant population of ELL students and has critical need of teachers who have the training and knowledge to work with this population.

The project is part of a statewide effort to turnaround the lowest performing schools in the state. 22 of the 35 lowest performing schools in the state are located in the two largest urban districts of Boston and Springfield who are partnering with the state to lead the transformation. The narrative provided significant data on all 22 schools that includes both performance and growth data.

DESE developed the method to compare schools within the state. As a result, thorough detail on how comparable schools were derived was included in Appendix B and was compared with student achievement data from all 22 schools on the same performance and growth indicators. Despite similarities in demographic data and enrollment, the targeted 22 schools score considerably below their low-performing counterparts. For example, target schools averaged 73.6% below grade level in ELA and 85% below grade level in Math, while comparable schools scored 57.8% below grade level in ELA and 69.5% below grade level in Math. Boston only graduates 51% of its students (p. 8).

The project dedicates significant attention to the importance of effective recruitment that will place the best teachers in their neediest schools. The narrative (pp. 25-28) and Appendix H provided a detailed method for recruiting high quality teachers through development of a recruitment kit that is used to train turnaround principals on research-based strategies to attract and hire high quality teachers that can demonstrate effectiveness in raising student achievement and other characteristics that would increase the likelihood they will be successful in challenging turnaround school environments. Both districts are compensating new hires for working in their districts high-need schools and Springfield is also offering compensation for accepting teaching positions in identified critical need areas.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

(iii) The applicant provides a clear explanation of how teachers, principals, and

other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) are determined to be "effective" for the purposes of the proposed PBCS.

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The project specifically builds on legislation that provides extraordinary authority and flexibility to districts and school administrators (p. 11). The evaluation system proposed by the applicant builds on this statewide initiative and will utilize the components of the draft evaluation framework (Appendix D). Principals are included in this draft evaluation framework.

All teachers have the opportunity to be evaluated using student achievement measures, (and not just teachers who teach in tested areas), the PBCS evaluation will include other measures of student growth to demonstrate learning in all grade levels and subjects (i.e. pre- and post-tests, student work samples, etc.) (p. 19) and teachers will be trained how to gather this information to yield informative student results.

The narrative outlines five project objectives accompanied by measurable outcomes that are both challenging yet realistic and have a timeline for determining achievement (p. 20).

Districts will be allowed to develop their own evaluation frameworks in alignment with state regulations for full implementation in fall of 2011. (Approval of the state framework occurs February 2011) (p. 40). The state calls for the evaluation to have at least 3 rating categories. All other required elements are in direct alignment with TIF priorities (p. 43 is a list of requirements).

Student performance will be measured using both standardized and non-standardized assessments and data. The state MCAS as well as graduation rate, attendance, and suspension rates will also be collected and measure to determine growth within turnaround schools.

The applicant states that there is commitment from both Superintendents from each of the school districts as well as union support (p. 13). Letters of support were included from the superintendents and teacher unions in both districts. The competencies developed to be used in selecting teaching candidates for recruitment was a collaboration of teachers, principals, district leaders and leading teacher recruitment organizations (e.g. Teach for America, New Teacher Project, and BTR) (p. 25).

Boston has created an initiative called "Teacher Turnaround Teams" (T3) to attract experienced teachers and comprise 25% of the school faculty at each school. They will

receive training and time for collaboration as a cohort and are expected to serve in a variety of leadership roles to assist colleagues in the school with instructional improvements that will lead to increased student achievement. They will receive a stipend of \$6000. Boston will also continue to incorporate teacher leaders and principals that arise from the BTR (pp. 23-24). Teacher leaders can apply to become Instructional Leaders (job description Appendix H), many of who will be graduates of the BTR Program (p. 33).

Springfield has a two-tiered system of teacher leadership. Instructional Leadership Specialists and Teacher Leaders will become part of a teacher leadership institute in partnership with NSDC. They are selected through a rigorous selection process (pp. 49-50).

Effective teachers who remain in their positions for two years are eligible for a retention bonus provided they agree to have their classrooms be model classrooms for novice teachers. (p. 50). New principals will receive a signing bonus as well as back-end performance bonuses (p. 27) dependent upon student growth measures on the MCAS (17-18% of base salary) (p. 52).

The applicant will be using its robust data management systems to assist both districts in linking their current HR and payroll systems (p. 60). The evaluations of teachers and principals would be also be housed and linked to HR and payroll, in conjunction with student achievement data to determine eligibility for compensation pay or opportunities for leadership (p. 61). The applicant and partner districts will be using the planning year to further refine and integrate their data management systems.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear exactly what percentage of the overall evaluation framework is based on effectiveness in student learning within the school and classroom. This requirement of the TIF is missing in the narrative.

In addition, no guidelines for determining what constitutes effectiveness, or how it will be determined through the framework and other methods that were provided in the narrative was found. The applicant states that the districts will determine effectiveness scales.

The number of times teachers and principals would be observed was not found in the narrative.

There was no discussion found in the narrative indicating how inter-rater reliability would be ensured when scoring on the new evaluation tools.

Effective teachers would either earn the bonus or not earn the bonus based on the performance of the school as a whole. In addition, individuals can only increase their pay beyond the school wide bonus if they take on additional leadership roles. Teachers whose students scored well may not be compensated if the whole school does not meet its goals and teachers who may not have performed well still get compensation pay if their peers do well. A progressive multi-tiered system that takes into account the continuous development of the teaching craft and gradual assumption of various leadership roles would compensate teachers more fairly all along the career continuum, with the greatest compensation given to teachers who demonstrate the highest levels of teaching effectiveness, leadership, and student achievement.

Incentive amounts that were provided are substantial but the applicant did not provide justification for the level of incentive amounts chosen.

It is unclear how professional learning teams "will be the hub for professional development in data analysis" (p. 29) when the primary responsibility of the instructional leadership teams was data analysis, need identification, and development of a school-wide PD plan. More information is needed to clear up this confusion.

There is limited explanation of how the professional learning team facilitators are identified as effective. There was previous mention of T3 cohort teams. Additionally, another leadership structure will be created called Instructional Leaders. More clarity

is needed to understand how these three structures are integrated into the comprehensive plan for leadership. There was no mention of Instructional Leaders or professional learning team facilitators being compensated and criteria for selection was not provided (i.e. especially no mention of student achievement within their classrooms).

It is not easily understood why some TIF turnaround schools are using different tools (and even numerous leadership structures) within the same school district. Boston is using a variety of instructional leadership roles to build capacity and, as stated above, is difficult to ascertain if all structures exist in all Boston TIF schools or if the structures are "spread out" among Boston TIF Schools. Springfield states on page 36 that some TIF turnaround schools will use ANet to learn data driven strategies. It is unclear what the remaining TIF schools are using. Boston is also using ANet, however the narrative states that some Boston TIF schools are using BPE as well (p. 35). It is not easily understood why the applicant is not taking a more active role in determining at least minimally what tool(s) will be used to accomplish particular tasks. In addition it would be difficult for the state and district to support numerous approaches and platforms to achieve the same objectives. While some degree of local flexibility should be encouraged and allowed where appropriate, other methods of implementation and should be standardized. A comprehensive justification for the varied approaches to all the different components of the project is needed.

Reader's Score: 40

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 Project Director and Project Manager are highly qualified to oversee and implement the project adequately and effectively. The Director has extensive experience in policy and the Manager is a career educator in both the public and private sector with 15 years as a superintendent in urban settings.

There will also be Project Managers within each of the school districts with parallel responsibilities in the oversight and implementation of the project within their locations. They will report to the Project Coordinator who will be responsible for day-to-day implementation under the guidance of the Project Director and Project Manager.

Each district will create a cross-functional Work Group to coordinate academic, IT, data management, and HR and payroll functions as needed for the project in each of the respective school districts.

An Educator Steering Committee will guide the project (p. 57) and is chaired by the Project Manager (p. 66). It is comprised of stakeholders at the state and district level and will be responsible for the design, oversight of implementation, and ongoing communication to/from its representative groups (p. 56). District level work groups will also be engaged (p. 57).

There will also be an Evaluation Task Force comprised of several members of the steering committee to provide coherence.

The management plan provided in Appendix P contains objectives that address project goals, with accompanying tasks and responsible parties along the 5-year continuum. The management plan will be further refined during the planning year (p.69).

Boston has demonstrated a serious commitment to an increasing share of the funds necessary to run the PBCS that represents approximately 52% over the 5-year grant period. (Total request of 27, 057,618 minus DESE costs, divided by 22 schools, multiplied by 12- the # of schools in Boston, divided into the total request amount). With this commitment, Boston is highly likely to continue the project beyond the funding period.

Weaknesses:

Job descriptions for the Project Coordinator and Institute Coordinator to be hired were not included in the Appendices.

The narrative mentions other key personnel from other DESE offices and district personnel will be involved with the project but does not identify who these key personnel are.

Numerous other resumes were included in the Appendices. However, what positions or responsibilities they would be performing within the project were not explained. It is therefore difficult to match qualifications to job responsibilities to determine if they are appropriate and adequate.

More information is needed to provide clarity on exactly what the Evaluation Task Force responsibilities will be.

It is unclear who will have direct oversight and facilitation of the district cross-functional working groups (p. 68).

A "project management team" will oversee management of the project (p. 69). However, it is unclear if the project management team is the state level team or the district level teams or cross-functional work groups.

The Objectives in the Management Plan in Appendix P do not directly align with the objectives stated on pages 20-21. This is confusing.

The "milestones" in the Management Plan are in actuality tasks to be done. Milestones are evidence that the task has been accomplished. Milestones were not really provided.

Both Springfield and DESE did not provide any information as to how they, as partners, would contribute an increasing amount of funds to scale and sustain the effort, both during and after the funding period. The burden was placed directly on Boston to meet this requirement. This is a serious deficiency. The financial commitment that Boston is assuming are funds that should be shared by all three partners so that as much funding as possible go toward meeting the goals of the project, providing compensation pay, within the schools themselves. It is unclear if DESE intends to modify the cost structure for this requirement during the planning period.

The budget narrative lacked sufficient detail to determine total costs (including sub cost totals for DESE, Springfield and Boston) as requested in the RFP page 35.

More information is needed to determine if retention bonuses are a one-time offering or a recurring cost incentive for which educators can be eligible during the funding period

(up to 4 years).

Reader's Score: 10

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 grant proposes to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and mentions how the data will be used in a general sense to improve program delivery.

Weaknesses:

The plan describes activities it will undertake in the narrative. However, no specific evaluation plan was included that is directly aligned with program objectives was included. The activities described should fit into a comprehensive plan, complete with timelines and responsible parties and reports collected and to whom would the reports be sent.

The evaluation will not use teachers as the unit of analysis (p. 76), and instead chooses to use schools as the unit of analysis. This approach avoids the intent of the PBCS, which is to provide individual teachers with compensation pay when their own students do well. Not specifically determining how effective individual teachers are with increasing student achievement and growth misses the intent of the grant. On page 79 it also specifically states, "this analysis will not establish a causal link between educators and differential teacher outcomes".

More specific information on how information from evaluations, especially those on teachers and principals, will be used to inform program services and educator practices in needed.

Reader's Score: 2

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 project will use the value-added model developed by the SEA known as the Massachusetts Growth Model (p. 19) to evaluate both teachers and principals based on state assessment scores in ELA and Math.

Weaknesses:

The narrative did not define "significant" (i.e. what percentage of a teacher or principals evaluation would be based on MCAS measures).

Reader's Score: 3

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 narrative provided convincing evidence of difficulty to recruit and retain high quality teachers within the two targets school districts in which the 22 schools are located (pp. 4-6). Boston experiences teacher turnover rates that hover around 20%, and half of these schools have turnover rates of 50% or higher (p. 4) and have a higher percentage of new and inexperienced teachers. Springfield has an increasing turnaround rate, which has grown from 40-59%.

Administrator turnaround has exacerbated this problem and has provided additional inconsistency to the educational environment (p. 6). Springfield has identified critical needs in the areas of Math, Science, SPED, and ELL with many of the teachers in these areas below state averages in being highly qualified, thus requiring Springfield to allocate resources to providing tiered remedial supports to build pedagogical knowledge. Boston has a significant population of ELL students and has critical need of teachers who have the training and knowledge to work with this population.

The appendices included a recruitment kit specifically designed to help administrators recruit and hire only candidates who can demonstrate effectiveness in student performance and other characteristics that predict they will be successful in challenging low performing schools.

A process for effectively communicating to teachers in the district, which are high-need schools and hard-to-staff areas, was included in the narrative (pp. 2-8).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:57 PM