

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mississippi Department of Education -- MS Department of Education, The Teacher Center (S385A100130)

Reader #1: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 1

1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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Absolute Priority 2

1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluaton Criteria

Absolute Priority 3

1. Absolute Priority 3	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Requirement

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
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Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
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Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
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Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
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Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
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High Quality Professional Development

1. Professional Development	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Selection Criteria

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	10
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Project Design

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

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	2
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Sub Total	10	5
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Total	110	105
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Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - Panel - 14: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Mississippi Department of Education -- MS Department of Education, The Teacher Center (S385A100130)

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 application clearly allows teachers to advance and share their expertise as master teachers. By using a shared set of practices, instructional principles, or teaching strategies, master teachers will improve the capacity of all teachers in a school to advance student learning in high-need schools (p.e11). Goals are clearly set to increase the number of effective teachers and principals in high need schools by 10% each year measured by student growth data components of the PBCS. The system will adequately determine achievement based upon the state's existing assessment process, employing value-added methodology that provides information on student growth in determining teacher performance. The value-added component follows the progress of individual students over time so that it provides trajectories for individual students toward critical academic benchmarks and assesses the influence on student progress at the district, school and classroom or teacher levels (p. e21-22). The evaluation system will adequately use multiple rating tools to assess levels of productivity including measures of teamwork and collaboration, student assessment data including student growth and school and classroom climate. The process includes comprehensive training on evaluation

system components that provide fair, transparent multiple scoring for inter-rater reliability. The effective educator evaluation system also incorporates an appropriate and timely feedback at multiple levels to detect individual and systemic strengths and weaknesses (p. e29). The principal's evaluation examines evidence from formal and informal conversations, scheduled conferences, formal observations and job shadowing plus a principal portfolio based on personal reflection and professional dialogue (p. e37). The Mississippi Department of Education clearly creates a financial rewards system to provide monetary incentives of a sufficient size to staff that is designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the high-need students in high-need schools.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

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

General:

The application has clearly and effectively provided projected costs for the implementation of the PBCS during the five year project period and beyond, and accepts the responsibility to provide performance-based compensations to teachers, principals, and other personnel who earn the award under the system. MDE plans to provide non-TIF funds over the five year plan increasing the share of performance-based compensation paid to teachers and principals by LEAs. In Year 3, the school district will assume 10% of the PBCS; in Year 4, districts will assume 20% and in Year 5, 30% of the PBCS payments (p. e15).

MDE notes in the application the use of the U.S. Department of Education online materials to estimate the projected costs of the PBCS applying the maximum number of eligible participants and maximum possible amount that each individual or group can earn. Detailed budget line items are provided in the attachment materials.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The application strongly provided evidence of a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce in eight different schools across the state of Mississippi. The application documents the five Core Elements with subgroups clearly defining each section to ensure that PBCS is aligned. MDE plans to provide a transparent, unbiased evaluation for teachers and principals based on different types of data that measure student growth on tested and non-tested grades and subjects (p.e18-19). The plan incorporates multiple classroom observations by different evaluators with pre- and post-feedback. The plan sets out to provide on-going embedded professional development driven by data, participation in PLCs, mentoring and coaching, and opportunities for advancement (p. e19). The application clearly states that after the TIF project ends, decisions regarding the retention and rewarding of staff will continue to be based on a multi-faceted evaluation and compensation system (p.e16).

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:

This application presents opportunities for educators to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles when they conduct job-embedded professional development i.e., action research, case discussions, job coaching, critical friends groups, data teams, lesson study, mentoring, portfolios, and study groups. Each format allows for career ladder teachers to assume different roles such as mentoring new teachers, becoming a master teacher, being a peer coach, taking part in school decisions, and helping to make personnel decisions (p.e43). MDE clearly states the crucial priority for teacher leadership for student achievement and growth.

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:

MDE clearly understands the need to communicate to all stakeholders, including the community at-large, the components of the PBCS program and planned in the timeline nine months to address the five core elements. Communication includes building awareness about the importance of the New Direction reform areas, including goals and objectives. The timeline identifies developing the communication plan, including media releases, newsletters, Q & A sessions at school faculty meetings, teacher recruitment fairs and MDE, district, and schools' websites (p. e20 & e47).

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:

Letters of support from school district superintendents and principals are provided in the application attachments. Once the PBCS program begins, teachers and principals will develop rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories taking into account student growth and ensures an inter-rater reliability system (p.e20). The application does not reference any union organizations support for the program yet plans to seek input and support from teachers, principals, unions and other school district personnel (p.e21).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1.Core Element 3:

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

General:

The application clearly identifies the need for a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation to be created during the planning year 1. The intent is to provide teachers and principals with unbiased evaluations that include multiple forms of measurement based on different types of data that measure student growth both in tested and non-tested grades and subjects. Multiple classroom observations will be conducted by different evaluators who will provide pre- and post feedback (p. e19). The plan well defines an objective evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards and MDE's coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the educator workforce (p.e21).

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 application thoroughly defines all of the available data management systems provided and how they interact with each other. The Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) database is linked to individual schools and districts tracking data for student demographics, attendance, discipline records, personnel demographics, degrees, salaries, and schedules. The system also tracks teacher's particular periods and courses linking to student's schedule data. Student information on grades, pass/fail and promotion/retention are also maintained (p.e39). There is also the Mississippi Achievement and Accountability Recording System (MAARS) assessment information component containing links to all documents relating to the Statewide Assessment System with disaggregated subgroup data and participation statistics. Both data-management systems provide information for local school district human resources/payroll systems to identify teachers and principals eligible to receive compensation under the PBCS. Presently, Mississippi plans to complete this year a longitudinal education and workforce data system. The system is a data collection, analysis, and reporting tool designed to generate information to improve education and workforce development outcomes in the state. The system tracks students as they leave the PK-12 system and enter the workforce or enroll in the higher education system (p.e40). This model reflects a progressive measure and a comprehensive efficient data-management system.

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 application thoroughly defines how teachers and principals will receive professional development in the New Directions program. The program emphasizes the implementation of collaborative teams to help improve teachers' knowledge of their academic subjects and enables them to become highly qualified. Collaborative teams will function as a means of educating school staff on the development and implementation of the PBCS, including the teacher and principal evaluation system (p.e41). This adequately models a rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation system and identifies for everyone the expectations (p.e28). The professional development delivered through collaborative teams is created by teachers and principals ensuring that it is ongoing, school-based, and job-embedded (p.e35). Teachers of high-need schools will identify specific needs for professional development creating a strong sense of ownership and raising the level of professionalism among peers. The application clearly states the professional development plan allowing effective teachers additional responsibilities and leadership roles. Each campus identifies a professional development coordinator who will establish the professional learning communities, implement collaborative instructional teams, and effectively utilize career-ladder teachers for professional development needs. The PLCs will consist of teachers in groups horizontally by grade-levels and vertically across grade levels and the emphasis on learning. The whole professional development process is thorough and well developed for all selected campuses who participate in the New Direction program (p.e34).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

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

- (1) Be based on needs assessed either at the high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) participating in the applicant's proposed PBCS or LEA-wide;
- (2) Be targeted to individual teacher's and principal's needs as identified in the evaluation process;
- (3) Provide --
 - (a) Those teachers and principals in participating TIF schools who do not receive differentiated compensation based on effectiveness under the PBCS with the tools and skills they need to improve their effectiveness in the classroom or school and be able to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and
 - (b) Those teachers and principals who are deemed to be effective and who, therefore, receive differentiated compensation under the PBCS, with the tools and skills they need to
 - (1) continue effective practices in the classroom or school and raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), and
 - (2) successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice);
- (4) Support teachers and principals to better understand and use the measures of effectiveness in the PBCS to improve practice and student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and
- (5) Include a process for regularly assessing the effectiveness of this professional development in improving teacher and leadership practice to increase student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice) and making modifications necessary to improve its effectiveness.

General:

The applicant's strength is the articulated high-quality professional development plan set out to provide need based staff development. Project New Direction intends to increase teacher and administrator effectiveness in high-need schools through substantial incentives based on educator evaluation and professional development support to create a climate of change and high expectations through learning communities, systems of mentoring, embedded professional development and non-instructional planning time. This will close the existing achievement gap by increasing the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students in hard-to-staff subjects (p.e8). Collaborative teams of teachers, principals and administrators from high-need schools will educate school staff on the development and implementation of the PBCS. They will also train their peers on the teacher and principal evaluation ensuring that every staff member clearly understands the process. Training ensures that it is ongoing, school-based, and job embedded involving teachers in high-need schools. Using the professional learning communities process, all teachers and principals in a school will be able to raise student achievement through the use of best practices and data (p. e42). The application states that effective teachers will successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles as professional development coordinators who establish PLC s, collaborative instructional teams, and utilize career-ladder teachers for professional development needs. Schools participating in the project will work closely with the Mississippi Teacher Center (MSTC), which is operated by MDE, to increase effectiveness. The goal of the Center is to recruit and retain quality teachers for MS classrooms through its enhancement programs, promote the importance of the teaching professions, and collaborate with school districts, colleges, universities, businesses, and communities to ensure a quality education for all children (p.e12). Additionally, there are university programs targeting the recruiting and retaining of principals. School leaders seeking dramatic school improvement and school leaders charged with turning around poor performing schools are encouraged to apply. The program is

designed to build capacity at the district and school level and to identify the best potential team of leaders to train as turnaround specialists. Teams attend training seminars over a two-year period of time. Teams build local leadership by providing demonstration lessons and coaching to teachers. They will be a part of the evaluation process for teachers in order to assess and improve the teaching effectiveness of other teachers in the school. The focus is on learning and will truly empower teachers with instructional decisions. The application lacks a process for regularly assessing the effectiveness of their professional development for improving teacher and leadership 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:

MDE selected ten schools in eight school districts that are located in diverse geographical areas from across the state of Mississippi meeting both high-need schools and high-needs students. MDE selected 8 schools on the accountability rating of "Academic Watch". These schools are in critical danger of falling into lower ratings and experience difficulty retaining highly qualified or effective teachers. The Mississippi Teacher Center identified critical teacher shortages in special education, mathematics, science, and foreign languages and identified 48 schools districts as being located in critical shortage geographic areas. There is a strong concern that these shortages will impact recruiting quality teachers. Forty percent of teachers work in education for one to two years then relocates out-of-state. The average turnover rates in Mississippi schools are 45% over the last five years (p.e6). Through comprehensive research information, this application clearly identifies high-need schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 application states a comprehensive plan for the New Direction program and identifies four primary objectives to attain the overall goal of the program. Objective 1 plans to develop and implement a sustainable PBCS for teachers and principals based on multiple measures of effective practices. Objective 2 plans to increase high-need student achievement by at least 10% in each year of the five year grant as measured by the Quality of Distribution Index and Growth Model calculated by the MS Statewide Accountability System. Objective 3 plans to increase the number of effective teachers and principals in high-need schools by 10% in each year of the grant as measured by the evaluation and student growth data components of the PBCS. Objective 4 plans to increase the number of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects by 10% as measured by Mississippi Student Information System data (p.e9).

The application documents that it will seek input and support from teachers, principals, and other school district personnel as well as involvement and support of the unions and

the Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council. (p.e21). It also clarifies the use of multiple rating categories for student growth and classroom observation conducted at least twice a year and states incorporating a value-added measure of student achievement to the existing data-management system that can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems (p e21). The application meets criteria.

The application plans to develop a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories including student growth. Observations will be conducted at least twice during the school year and aligned with an objective evidence-based rubric to standards. Observations will ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability (p. e21). MS also seeks input and support from teachers, principals, and other school and district personnel.

The project design in the application clearly identifies incorporating professional development for the project New Direction and plans to implement collaborative teams to improve teacher knowledge of their academic subjects and enable them to become highly qualified. Teachers will advance their understanding of effective, research-based instructional standards aligned with the Mississippi Department of Education academic content standards, student achievement standards, and student improvement goals (p.e41). The effectiveness evaluation will assess the quality and significance of the program's effects, including important side effects on the participants. MDE will be able to use this data to make a bottom-line assessment of New Direction's success to determine the efficacy of continuing any or all components of the project. The sustainability evaluation will assess the extent to which the program contributes successfully and continued over time. A review of the program effectiveness and costs will allow MDE to determine program successes to sustain and set directions for goal setting and planning purposes (p. e60). The application fully meets this criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 60

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 New Direction management plan lists a comprehensive timeline identifying dates, activities, personnel, milestones, and projected outcomes aligned to the objectives and the priorities (p.e47-50). The project director position has been assigned to a high qualified and experienced individual as reflected in the resume (p.e51 & e4 attachment).

The application notes that the project director will identify a project manager and an independent project evaluator who will both report to the director. Roles and responsibilities for all three positions are clearly written.

Other resources for costs associated with the utilization of the Mississippi Teacher Center will serve as in-kind sources of funds. State funding sources will also be utilized to meet the project's goals and targets (p. e54). Other federal sources of funding include Title funds, Career and Technical, Phase II ARRA, and SLDS Funds along with proposals submitted by MDE. The application clearly states that major budget items, financial incentives and rewards are reasonable and maintain the most direct impact upon student academic achievement and project outcomes. In Years 3, 4, and 5, school districts will assume 10%, 20%, and 30% of the PBCS required outlay (p. e55).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 25

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 project New Direction's four objectives are clearly measurable in quantitative and qualitative terms (p. e57). Objective 4 increases the number of advancement opportunities for teachers over the years of the grant and is a critical factor in the efforts to recruit and retain highly effective teachers (p.e58). The application indicates that the model by its design allows for ongoing evaluation procedures and ensures feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of New Direction through the utilization of committees comprised of local stakeholders (p.e61). The application meets this criteria as noted in this section.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

Strengths:

The application clearly notes that it must employ a value-added measure during the initial nine month study. The value added component will follow the progress of individual students over time to provide trajectories for individual students toward critical academic benchmarks and assess influence on student progress at the district, school, and classroom levels (p.e23).

It is also noted in the application the need to define guiding principles and stakeholder input on the performance pay plan. The application acknowledges that the value-added measure will provide powerful policy, performance, and accountability tools.

Weaknesses:

The application employs a value-added measure, yet omits the specific process regarding how to implement the value-added measure and effectively communicating this new measure to teachers.

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 application clearly addresses the high-need schools retaining effective teachers as noted in Objectives 3 & 4. Increasing the effectiveness of teachers and principals will be accomplished by implementing PBCS that provide incentives, target professional development and coaching in professional practices. The evaluation system will address weaknesses and best practices and will provide the examples of effective teaching (p.e12).

The applicant collaborates with the Mississippi Teacher Center (MSTC) and functions to recruit and retain quality teachers for MS classrooms. The Center's goals are to recruit new and former teachers into the teaching profession, retain quality teachers through its enhancement programs, promote the importance of the teaching professions, and collaborate with school districts, colleges, universities, businesses, and communities to ensure a quality education for all children (p. e12). Effectiveness will be tied to student growth as determined by a change in student achievement and classroom observations conducted to an objective standards-based rubric at multiple points during each school year (p.e9).

Weaknesses:

The application identifies local agencies, i.e. Mississippi Teacher Center (MSTC), the Mississippi State University Turnaround Leadership Academy (TLA), and the University of Mississippi Principal Corps who provide programs to increase teacher and principal effectiveness within their own mission and goals; however, the application lacks how these outside agencies plan to coordinate with the New Direction program.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:15 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mississippi Department of Education -- MS Department of Education, The Teacher Center (S385A100130)

Reader #2: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 1

1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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Absolute Priority 2

1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluaton Criteria

Absolute Priority 3

1. Absolute Priority 3	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Requirement

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
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Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
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Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
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Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
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Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
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High Quality Professional Development

1. Professional Development	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Selection Criteria

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	10
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Project Design

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

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	1
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Sub Total	10	4
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Total	110	104
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Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - Panel - 14: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Mississippi Department of Education -- MS Department of Education, The Teacher Center (S385A100130)

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 sufficiently meets absolute priority 1. The applicant presented a thorough explanation of the plan around this priority (page 9-13) to demonstrate the importance of offering incentives (monetary and non-monetary) to attract high quality teachers and principals. The goal of this program is to create a PBCS that is based on school and/or individual accomplishment with heavy emphasis on improvements in student growth, multiple observations of effective practice, and performance of leadership roles and responsibilities (page 9). The applicant states on page 18 that the rewards will be substantial enough so that effective teachers and principals will want to work in a high-need school and /or in a hard-to-staff subject area.

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 sufficiently met this priority. On pages 14-16, the applicant discussed the projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS, during the project period and beyond. The applicant stated that they will provide financial support for the project, from non-TIF funds beginning in years 3, 4, and 5, providing an increasing share of the performance-based compensation paid to teachers and principals. The Mississippi Department of Education is committed to utilizing all fiscal, political, and human capital resources to sustain the successful components of the project after TIF funding ends (page 15).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The applicant has sufficiently provided a strong plan for implementing a system to address this priority (pages 16-18). The plan outline includes: creating a performance based compensation system that will reward staff based on evaluations and student performance and provide rewards at the school, group, and teacher levels; establish teacher and principal evaluation system; establish a data system; establish professional development activities; and create career ladders for teachers. The applicant proposes to implement a collaborative team model in which professional development is created by teachers and principals thereby insuring that it is ongoing, school-based, and job-embedded. Involving teachers and principals in identifying specific needs for professional development and designing activities to address those needs enhances teachers' sense of ownership and professionalism, which increases retention.

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 demonstrated this requirement by making this a part of the proposed career ladder system. The description is discussed on page 12, stating that teachers will be able to voluntarily accept additional duties and responsibilities such serving as a master or mentor teacher; assist in the induction and mentoring of novice teachers; mentor or tutor high-need students; and assume roles in establishing and developing the school's learning communities by serving as a Content Specialist or Instructional Specialist. This is also mentioned in the outline on page 17.

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 committed to utilizing the proposed 9 month planning period to develop this core element. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the need for communicating the information to all stakeholders and the community-at-large (page 20). The communication plan is also discussed in the management plan on page 47, with a plan to include media releases, newsletters, Q&A sessions at faculty meetings, teacher recruitment fairs, MDE, districts, and school websites.

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 committed to utilizing the proposed 9 month planning period to develop this core element. The applicant states that they will seek input and support from teachers, principals, and other school and district personnel as well as the involvement and support of unions (page 20). MDE, under the auspices of the Mississippi Teacher Center (MTC), has created a Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council that includes representatives from all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and representatives from all unions, as well as from MTC. Letters of support are attached from stakeholders including union representatives, superintendents, and principals of high-needs districts (page 27).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

The applicant committed to utilizing the proposed 9 month planning period to develop this core element. The Statewide Teacher Evaluation committee has developed Guiding Principles for the establishment of new statewide teacher and principal evaluations. Some of the Guiding Principles include driving growth in student achievement; focus on effective teaching and learning; use multiple rating tools to assess levels of productivity, including measures of teamwork and collaboration, student assessment data including student growth, school and classroom climate, and leadership; comprehensive training on evaluation system components that provide fair, transparent scoring mechanisms and produce inter-rater reliability; promote and guide individual and collaborative professional learning and growth; provide appropriate data to differentiate compensation in a fair and equitable manner; differentiate the evaluation process based on the educators expertise and student assessment results; and provide appropriate and timely feedback at multiple levels (page 28). The applicant further describes the plan to develop an evaluation system that uses an evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards (pages 31-32). A minimum of two evaluations, both announced and unannounced and by different evaluators, will be held during the year. Every teacher will be evaluated individually based on how much student growth the students in the classroom have achieved. Also, teachers will be evaluated collectively based on the learning growth of all students in the school. With these multiple measures, MDE and the administration of the districts and schools will be able to identify effective teachers (pages 24-25).

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 gives sufficient information on their current data management systems (pages 37-39) to meet this Core Element. The Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) database is linked to individual schools and districts, and data such as student demographics, attendance, and discipline records, as well as, personnel demographics, degrees, salaries, and schedules are tracked. The linking of students to teacher is performed as a basic function of MSIS. Student information on grades, pass/fail, and promotion/retention is also maintained. The Mississippi Achievement and Accountability Reporting System (MAARS) assessment information component contains links to all documents relating to the Statewide Assessment System, including disaggregated subgroup data and

participation statistics. Student information on the MAARS system is also maintained by student ID number, which can be compiled at the teacher level using the interface with MSIS. The combining on the MSIS student and teacher information and MAARS student assessment information provides adequate information for local school district human resources/payroll systems to identify teachers and principals eligible to receive compensation under the PBCS. Mississippi has developed and implemented one of the most integrated longitudinal education and workforce data systems in the country for the purpose of promotion and establishing a culture of performance-based management. The system is a data collection, analysis, and reporting tool designed to generate information to improve education and workforce development outcomes in the state. Another important component of this system is that it can be used to track students as they leave the PK-12 system and enter the workforce or enroll in the higher education system.

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 strongly meets this core element. The applicant states that the measures of teacher and principal effectiveness in New Direction directly link to the professional development standards of ESEA in several ways. The implementation of collaborative teams not only helps to improve and increase teachers's knowledge of their academic subjects and enables them to become highly qualified, but also advances their understanding of effective, research-based instructional strategies. Collaboration teams also function as a means of educating school staff on the development and implementation of the PBCS, including the teacher and principal evaluation system (page 40).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

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

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

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

(3) Provide --

(a) Those teachers and principals in participating TIF schools who do not receive

differentiated compensation based on effectiveness under the PBCS with the tools and skills they need to improve their effectiveness in the classroom or school and be able to raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice); and

(b) Those teachers and principals who are deemed to be effective and who, therefore, receive differentiated compensation under the PBCS, with the tools and skills they need to

(1) continue effective practices in the classroom or school and raise student achievement (as defined in the Federal Register notice), and (2) successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles (as defined in the Federal Register notice);

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

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

General:

The applicant gives a detailed, complete narrative regarding the systems already in place and the additional components that will be added to enhance the existing design (pages 39-44). The plan addresses both teachers and principals and the potential to grow professionally and personally. Through the establishment of collaborative teams, professional development is created and delivered by teachers and principals thereby ensuring that it is ongoing, school-based, and job-embedded. Involving teachers of high-need schools in identifying specific needs for professional development and designing the activities to address these identified needs enhances teachers' sense of ownership and professionalism (page 41). The local evaluation logic model will assess the effectiveness of professional development in improving teacher and principal practice to increase student growth. Through participation in professional learning communities, all teacher and principals in a school will be provided with the needed tools and skills for improvement or for continued effectiveness in the classroom and /or the school (page 40). Effective teachers will successfully assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles in learning communities. The learning communities will consist of teachers within and across grade levels organized in teams that will meet on a regular basis (page 42).

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

This proposal provides strong data to support the need for this project, including data defining high need and low achievement. Schools in Mississippi have an average principal and teacher turnover rate of 45% over the last 5 years. In the 10 schools participating in this proposed project, the staff turnover rate for the last 3 years is 26.3% and the projected 5 year rate is 43.8%. Eight of these ten schools did not meet minimum student growth standards under the State Accountability System (page 5).

The applicant includes documentation regarding comparable schools, defined as schools in which size, grade levels, and poverty levels are quite similar, but student achievement is higher than that of the participating schools. In addition to not meeting performance expectation, the participating schools are labeled "Academic Watch" or "At Risk of Failing".

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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:

Beginning on page 7, the applicant adequately discusses each section of these criteria, providing clear, detailed information to address each of these components. The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of how to implement this plan. During the planning year, MDE will develop and pilot a program of differentiated levels of compensation for effective teachers and principals. Project New Direction will provide significant financial incentives that are weighted heavily on student growth as determined by a change in student achievement and classroom observations conducted according to an objective, standards-based rubric at multiple points (2-4 times) during the school year. Other measures included in the PBCS are improving teaching and leadership abilities through participation in performance-based, data-driven professional development and voluntary acceptance of additional responsibilities and duties as part of a teacher Career Ladder (page 8).

The applicant will seek input and support from teachers, principals, and other school and district personnel as well as the involvement and support of unions through their inclusion on the newly organized Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council. The management plan also includes multiple avenues for all stakeholders to provide input through participation in school and district level committees (page 20).

The applicant plans to develop and implement, during the planning period, a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals that takes into account student growth as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year. The evaluation process will also include: an objective, evidence-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards and MDEs coherent and integrated approach to strengthening the workforce; provide for observations of each teacher or principal at least twice during the school year by individuals, including peer reviewers who will receive specialized training; incorporate the collection and evaluation of additional forms of evidence; and ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability (page 20).

The applicant plans to add a value-added measure of student achievement to the existing data-management system that can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems (page 20).

The applicant will develop a plan that ensures that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS, and that they receive professional development that enables them to use data generated by these measures to improve their practice. Among other viable methods to disseminate information, they will design professional development focused on the PBCS and then follow up by conducting focused faculty meeting in participating schools. Ongoing, embedded professional development will guide faculty and administrators in the use of data-driven decision-making to improve classroom and leadership practice(pages 20-21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 60

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 application included a detailed management timeline that ensures the project will be efficiently and effectively managed (pages 46-49). The applicant states that they have carefully plotted the management plan to ensure that the project is conducted on time and within budget as presented in this proposal. The 8 districts involved have committed to one time line to facilitate oversight by the New Direction Steering Committee, comprised of the project director, project manager, project evaluator, superintendents of the participating districts, and representatives from the Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council and the Financial Committee.

The Project Director is identified in the proposal and her resume is included with the proposal and demonstrates that she is qualified for the position. Other positions will be hired upon award of the grant; however the job descriptions are included in the proposal (pages e5-e9).

MDE will use all funding sources to meet and align with the goals and objectives of the Teacher Incentive Fund and this New Direction proposal. Other federal sources of funding include Title funds, Career and Technical, Phase II ARRA, and SLDS Funds. State funding sources will also be utilized to meet the project's goals and targets (pages 52-53). Strong documentation was provided to show that the grant amount and project costs were sufficient, including other funding, to support this proposal (page 53-54).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

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:

Pages 54-60 provide detailed information regarding the evaluation processes. Examples and research documentation was provided to support the proposed system. The four objectives, listed on pages 56-57, are clearly measurable both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Objective 1 is to develop and implement a sustainable performance-based differentiated compensation system based on multiple measures in 10 high need schools by July 2, 2011. Objective 2 is to increase high-need student achievement by at least 10% in each year of the grant as measured by the Quality of Distribution Index and Growth Model calculated by the Mississippi Statewide Accountability System. Objective 3 is to increase the number of effective teachers and principals in high-need schools by 10% in each year of the grant as measured by the evaluation and student growth data component of the PBCS. Objective 4 is to increase the number of effective teachers in hard-to-staff subjects in high-need schools by 10% in each year of the grant as measured by the evaluation component of the PBCS and relevant MSIS data. The logic model allows for on-going evaluation procedures as well as for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of New Direction (page 60).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant is proposing to add a "value-added" component to the system that is already in place which will provide information on student growth and achievement (page 22). A value-added measure will provide powerful policy, performance, and accountability tools: individual student trajectories to allow for more customized, proactive planning for students so that they can reach their goals or the goals established by policymakers; value-added measures that will ascertain whether educational entities are accelerating or impeding student progress. The value-added component will allow school personnel to focus resources to the appropriate and effective interventions that benefit every student

(page 23).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant has a strong vision for implementing the value-added component, they have not sufficiently demonstrated that they have the capacity to meet this priority.

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 briefly identifies the need to recruit and retain effective teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas (Pages 4-5 and page e12).

Weaknesses:

No clear direction was given regarding how the applicant plans to recruit and retain effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas or how they will fill those vacancies with effective, or likely to be effective, teachers. There is no clear demonstration of how the applicant will assess a prospective teacher to be effective.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:15 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mississippi Department of Education -- MS Department of Education, The Teacher Center (S385A100130)

Reader #3: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 1

1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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Absolute Priority 2

1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 3

1. Absolute Priority 3	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Requirement

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
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Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
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Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
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Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
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Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
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High Quality Professional Development

1. Professional Development	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Selection Criteria

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	10
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Project Design

1.Project Design	60	60
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	23
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	3
Sub Total	100	96

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	2
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Sub Total	10	5
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Total	110	101
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Technical Review Form

Panel #14 - Panel - 14: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Mississippi Department of Education -- MS Department of Education, The Teacher Center (S385A100130)

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 describes how it will develop and implement a performance based compensation system that is adequate to help increase teacher and principal effectiveness in high-need schools. Substantial financial incentives based on educator evaluation and professional development support will be incorporated into the system (page 7). In describing this priority, the applicant provides specific information on the methods to be used for determining teacher and principal effectiveness, including the use of observation-based assessments conducted two times per year by evaluators contracted from outside the district (page 7). An evidenced-based rubric aligned with measures of student growth and teaching standards will give significant weight to student growth for performance considerations (page 8). The observation-based assessments will also use evidence of participation in leadership roles and activities (page 8).

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 explains a sufficient plan for fiscal sustainability of the performance-based compensation system. Details are provided on page 14 where it indicates that the state education agency will incrementally absorb percentages of the compensation system. After the planning phase, the applicant will absorb 10% in year 3, 20% in year 4, and 30% in year 5. The utilization of the non-TIF funds currently being proposed for the project will continue after the project period ends. It is clear how existing compensation will be enhanced by the incentive programs. For example, the applicant indicates a program where principals and teachers receive scholarships for tuition, fees, books, living stipends and a signing bonus when teachers and principals accept positions in a high-need Mississippi schools (page 12). The proposed PBCS will be offered to other staff in the district who earn it (page 15).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The applicant is planning a performance based compensation system using data collected from research and best practices (page 16). Throughout the project design, the applicant cites resources to support the framework for its activities. For example, the applicant indicates that it will use the Core Elements of a PBCS framework as a guideline for developing activities. Professional development strategies outlined are adequate to strengthen the educator workforce. Professional development will focus on improving practices based on usage of data, improving instruction based on identification of best practices, implementing collaborative instructional teams. The applicant also plans on developing an application process for master and mentor teachers, and developing job descriptions and duties that focus on teaching and learning to help strengthen the workforce (page 16). Through much of the narrative, however, the applicant restates the five elements, but the applicant does not define specific methodology for each of

activities outlined to accomplished the elements. Additionally, it is unclear which of the five core elements are either missing or incomplete in current endeavors (page 16) or how the applicant will remedy such omissions. The applicant partially meets this Priority.

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 states its intent to create a financial rewards system to provide monetary incentives of a sufficient size to staff that is designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the high-need students in high-need schools (page 21), including opportunities to grow into or take on additional responsibilities geared toward increasing student growth. The applicant also states that there will be opportunities on the school level directed toward effective teachers and principals already employed by the district for additional responsibilities and leadership roles that will help effective teachers and principals move up the Career Ladder. Teachers may voluntarily accept leadership roles as master or mentor teachers to help develop and guide effective instruction. Candidates are chosen through a performance-based selection process (page 12).

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:

Core element 1 has been met. The applicant clearly states its intent to develop materials that will effectively communicate to all stakeholders, including the community at-large, the components of the PBCS. A communication plan will be created that is specific to the PBCS to ensure that all stakeholders are knowledgeable about the process and the potential it holds for the future of all Mississippi students (page 19). Initial communication will include building awareness about the importance of the project's reform areas, its goals, and objectives. According to the management plan presented for the project, communication will occur via media releases, newsletters, Q & A sessions at school faculty meetings, teacher recruitment fairs, district, state DOE, and school websites (page 47). Methods of communication are adequate.

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:

Core Element 2 has been met. The applicant presents clear intent to seek input and support from teachers, principals, and other school and district personnel as well as the involvement and support of unions through their inclusion on a newly organized Statewide Teacher Evaluation Council. The management plan includes multiple avenues for stakeholders to provide input thorough participation in school and district level committees (pages 20 and 46). Letters of support are provided in the Appendix from principals, superintendents, and the Mississippi Professional Educators Association (Appendix). Union support is not demonstrated.

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:

Core Element 3 is partially met. The applicant states its intent to develop a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account student growth as a significant factor, as well as classroom observations conducted at least twice during the school year. The evaluation system will include an objective, evidenced-based rubric aligned with professional teaching or leadership standards and coherent and integrated approach to strengthening educator workforce (page 20). No detailed information is presented on the development process for the evaluation, including a specific framework, evaluation rubric, or a system of inter-rater reliability. The core elements of the PBCS will be finalized during a nine-month planning period.

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:

Core Element 4 is met. The applicant presents a description of sufficient data management systems on pages 37 through 39. The existing data-management systems capture student achievement data. Specifically, the system is linked to individual schools and districts, and data such as student demographics, attendance, and discipline records, and student achievement data. This data is disaggregated based on a number of different elements and can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resource systems. Information is not presented on how the data will correlated to teacher performance (page 39).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

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

General:

The applicant meets Core Element 5. On pages 39 through 44 the applicant provides information on how it will sufficiently align the measures of teacher and principal effectiveness with the professional development standards of ESEA and the National Staff Development Council's definition of professional development. Underscoring this information, the applicant will use collaborative teams as a means of educating school staff on the development and implementation of the PBCS, including teachers and principal evaluation systems (page 40). The applicant proceeds to describe how the collaborative teams will promote teacher and principal effectiveness. Sustained professional development in which teams of educators engage in a continuous cycle of improvement that evaluates student, teacher, and school learning needs through review of data on teacher and student performance (page 41). It is unclear how the use of collaborative teams will be measured.

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:

On pages 39 through 41, the applicant describes how it will incorporate professional development into the project. Professional development will be aligned with the National Staff Development Council's (NSDC) definition of professional development as a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teacher and principal effectiveness in raising student achievement (page 39). The measures of teacher and principal effectiveness will directly link to the professional development (PD) standards in several ways, including the implementation of collaborative teams to help improve and increase teachers' knowledge of their academic subjects and enable them to become highly-qualified. It will also advance their understanding of effective, research-based instructional strategies aligned with district academic content standards and student achievement standards as well as district and school improvement goals. Collaborative teams will also function as a means of educating school staff on the development and implementation of the PBCS, including the teacher and principal evaluation system (page 40). The professional development delivered through collaborative teams will be created by teachers and principals thereby ensuring that it is ongoing, school-based, and job embedded. The local evaluation logic model will also assess the effectiveness of professional development in improving teacher and principal practices to increase student growth. The model will foster necessary modifications to improve the PD process that will be based primarily on student achievement data and input from stakeholders. Participation in professional learning communities, all teachers and principals in a school will be provided with the needed tools and skills for improvement or for continued effectiveness in the classroom and/or the school (page 41).

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 describes the need for services on pages 1 through 7. It describes the overall status of local education agencies within the state and its methodology for determining academic progress. Using its existing method, the applicant chose 10 schools in high need LEAs to target its project activities. The applicant identifies 10 schools that have difficulty recruiting highly qualified or effective teachers, and retaining highly-qualified or effective teachers and principals. The performance measures support that achievement scores are lowest in the state, including the fact that eight of the schools did not meet growth under the accountability system, while the state as a whole met growth (page 5). The applicant provides sufficient information for comparable schools. A comparable school is one in which size, grade levels, and poverty levels are quite similar, but student achievement is higher than that of the participating schools (page 6).

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:

From pages 7 through 49, the applicant provides a clear description of its intent to create and develop a performance-based compensation system. The applicant will incorporate existing data and student achievement system to design a performance based compensation system targeting its most high need schools. It is the intent of the applicant to fiscally sustain the PBCS (pages 1-20). It is the intent to link key components of the design to a sufficient methodology for determining principal and teacher effectiveness that is linked with measure of student achievement, while also ensuring rigor, fairness, and transparency, a value added model tied to significant student growth that is based on the norm-referenced state assessment that will serve an appropriate measure of a school's impact on students (pages 8-30). Data Management systems are clearly specified that link professionals with compensation systems. Additionally, a communication plan will be developed for the project includes strategies that will communicate the plan to all involved, while also building capacity, and providing a continuous avenue for the project to gain support of key stakeholders, including teachers, principals, project partners, and educational related associations (pages 20-21). Collaborative work groups will be used as a cornerstone for professional development and ensure teachers and staff are adequately trained and under the proposed PBCS (pages 39-41).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 60

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 provides a reasonable management plan for the five years of the grant on pages 46 through 54. Within the chart on pages 46 through 49, dates, activities, personnel, milestones, and projected outcomes are provided and aligned with goals and objectives. The project director information is provided on pages 50 through 51. The project director identified for the project is qualified and experienced as evidenced by the information provided and the Resume provided in the Appendix. Her roles and responsibilities are adequately defined. Additionally, a full time project manager will be identified for the project and an independent evaluator will be contracted to conduct a local evaluation of the project (page 51). Additionally, the applicant intends to utilize the state supported Mississippi Teacher Center to leverage support for the project. State funding sources will also be leveraged from other grant proposals that are under consideration (page 53). The applicant will use federal funding sources from Title I, Career and Technical Education, Phase II ARRA, and SLD funds to support the project. Grant funds requested are sufficient to develop and implement the project.

Weaknesses:

At 25%, it is unclear if this is an adequate time commitment for the project management. No other personnel are indicated for the project. While a project manager will be hired, it is unclear what qualifications will be required for this key personnel.

Reader's Score: 23

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 provides its evaluation plan on pages 55 through 60 to measure the success of the project. Clearly specifies performance measures will measure teacher and principal effectiveness in raising student achievement and efforts to recruit and retain effective teachers and principals. The evaluation plan includes the production of quantitative and qualitative data via surveys, on-site observations, student test scores, and a variety of other methods (page 57). It is the intent of the applicant to include adequate evaluation procedures and a logic model to ensure feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the project (page 60).

Weaknesses:

Objectives with stated performance targets do not have benchmarks that would demonstrate success of project activities (pages 56 and 57). The plan for placing information on the website (page 60) does not appear to ensure feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project, nor does the applicant present a description of the evaluation procedures or logic model it intends to use to allow for ongoing evaluation and ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the project.

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 describes its intent to develop a value-added measures of student achievement to provide policy, performance, and accountability (pages 20-24). The value-added measure will include individual student trajectories that allow for customized proactive planning for students to help them reach academic goals, and ascertain whether educational entities are accelerating or impeding student progress. Additionally, the value-added measure will be a significant factor in calculating differentiated levels of compensation provided to teachers and principals (page 23). The the nine-month planning period will be used to develop the measure and a plan to explain the model to teachers to enable them to use the data generated.

Weaknesses:

The plan appears to be pending, and therefore it is unclear what value-added measure of the impact of student achievement will be used to determine compensation (pages 22 and 24).

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 presents its intent in Objectives 3 to 4 to increase the number of teachers and principals in high-need-schools and in hard-to-staff subjects in high-need schools (pages 10-13). The applicant states that increasing teacher effectiveness of teachers and principals will be determined by student growth and will be accomplished through the implementation of the PBCS in the form of incentives that will change behavior (page 10). Participating schools will work with the Mississippi Teacher Center with the goal to recruit new and former teachers, and retain quality teacher through its enhancement programs. Additionally, the development of a new evaluation that utilizes student growth data will help identify effective teachers and allow the administrations to identify pools of teachers for schools in hard-to-staff subjects (page 13).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant presents a vision for the recruitment and retention of effective teachers and principals in high-need schools and hard-to-staff subjects, the details of how this will actually occur is lacking. Information is not presented on the Teacher Center programs and no details is provided on how the PBCS is adequate to help recruit and retain teachers. Additionally, the applicant fails to adequately link the Career Ladder component to teacher recruitment and retention.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:15 PM