

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Round Rock Independent School District -- , (S385A100065)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Evaluation Criteria		
Absolute Priority 1		
1.Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
1.Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluaton Criteria		
Absolute Priority 3		
1.Absolute Priority 3	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Requirement		
Requirement		
1.Requirement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluation Criteria		
Core Element 1		
1.Core Element 1	0	0
Core Element 2		
1.Core Element 2	0	0
Core Element 3		
1.Core Element 3	0	0
Core Element 4		
1.Core Element 4	0	0
Core Element 5		
1.Core Element 5	0	0
High Quality Professional Development		
1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for the Project		
1.Need for Project	10	9
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	54
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	22
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	90

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	0
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	4
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Sub Total	10	4
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Total	110	94
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Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Round Rock Independent School District -- , (S385A100065)

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 met the priority.

The Applicant describes their differentiated model for teacher incentives. Within this model teachers are rewarded for different aspects of teaching as well as participating in activities that help enhance their leadership skills. This is a model which rewards teachers for becoming well rounded instructors because it gives them an incentive to ensure behavior that is linked to standards that to enhancing the profession. According to the Applicant, teachers are rewarded for âgains in standardized test scores using college-readiness standards and classroom evaluations, as well as to teachersâ preparation of a teaching portfolio, their participation in collaborative meetings, their assumption of leadership roles, and in the case of teacher in hard-to staff areas, their willingness to enter into or stay in their positions (p.13).

The differentiated incentive for teachers is illustrated in a chart. Within the chart, three tiers of incentives are listed noting the dollar amount that teachers could potentially earn. Tying into this model, the student growth formula is described (pp.14-

17).

Although student growth is assessed, it addresses that change will need to occur as a result of its state changing the standardized tests which it uses to assess student learning.

Teachers who take on leadership opportunities have the opportunity to earn incentives for doing so. For example, teachers that collaborate need to fully document the time spent and content which is covered(pp.22-23). In this manner, the school district could possibly gain an understanding of which teachers are effective and the content which they covered in their meetings. The potential of having teachers lead professional development amongst themselves is powerful especially because they will feel valued and acknowledged.

Multiple observations of the teachers and principals will take place.

Substantial incentives are offered to teachers and principals (pp.22-26).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

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

General:

Applicant met requirement.

The budget is adequate to cover the PBCS. In addition, the school district increases its share of the budget over time. The district will commit 3.1 million dollars during grant year 1 and increase its share to 3.2 million dollars by the end of grant year 5.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The Applicant has met the priority.

The PBCS is aligned with the districts strategy. The district has used compensations systems for the past two years that were linked to student growth on its state standardized test: TAKS. The grant was funded by a TEAS grant. (p.2) Therefore, the likelihood of the program be successful is high given its past success.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

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

General:

The Applicant does meet.

Educators must meet PD expectations as part of the PBCS to earn an incentive. The portfolio development includes collaborative components which build PLNs which are essential to the sharing of best practices. (pp. 22-23) Furthermore, the Applicant offers PD that is driven by student data. General school data as well as individual classroom data allow principal coaches and master teachers to provide target differentiated PD. (pp. 30-34)

High quality PD is embedded within the culture of the school district. Through the process of teacher and principal evaluations teachers and principals are encouraged to constantly share and explore different facets of education which related to student achievement data.

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 does not present a clear communication plan. The Applicant has a history of implementing an incentive program. As a result, this has given the district experience in communicating to stakeholders about an incentive based program.

It is evident that the Applicant communicated effectively to its stakeholders because it has included letters of support from principals, its senator, and representative in Congress. Furthermore, it is established support for the grant as evidenced by the (93% and above vote for participation for participating schools). (p.28)

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 has met.

It is evident that the Applicant communicated effectively to its stakeholders because it has included letters of support from principals, its senator, and representative in Congress. Furthermore, it is established support for the grant as evidenced by the (93% and above vote for participation for participating schools). (p.28)

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

The Applicant has met requirement.

The Applicant does have a process for a thorough process for evaluating teachers that differentiates effectiveness of teachers and principals using various categories. The Applicant uses the Focused Observation Form based upon research of Danielson, J. Stiggins, R. Stiggins, and Marzano (p.29).

Observations will be conducted by the Master Teacher and a District-Level observer. The District-Level observer would conduct two observations. The District-Level observations will be announced and will last for at least twenty minutes (p.30). However, it is not clear if there are a minimum number of times that the Master Teacher observes. In addition, the Applicant does not indicate if it has a time limit the observations conducted by Master Teachers. The interrater reliability is good (p.30).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

The Applicant has met.

The Applicant describes their data management system. Currently, it has disconnected data systems that make up the entire data management system which it will connect. The data management system includes testing data, information about school vacancies explaining if it is connected to high needs areas, testing tools which can create trend analysis data, a staff development training database, personnel, and payroll information. (pp. 34-37)

The Applicant includes a detailed timeline to implement for the 1st year of the grant. It clearly outlines which people or departments are responsible for carrying out different grant activities. However, it does not include timelines for grant implementation for grant years two through five. (pp.49-50)

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 does meet.

The Applicant has developed a thorough evaluation method of teachers and principals which incorporates numerous observations by evaluators from within and outside the school which lead to the foundation for the teacher portfolio. Within the portfolio, the teacher develops a self guided research to enhance their instruction. The research question must be measurable in terms of student outcomes. Then the educator must include qualitative and quantitative data to answer the question. The teacher then must meet with his/her principal and or a district level PD leader to help focus and refine the question of inquiry. As a result, the teacher will meet with other teachers when researching. Principals are evaluated similarly. They are observed, create portfolio, design research question for inquiry as part of the PBCS. (pp. 30-34)

Differentiated PD is utilized to meet the needs of individual as well as the group. Teacher and principal observations in addition to student testing data drive professional development. To assist in the process of providing quality professional development, principals are guided by principal coaches and teachers are guided by Master Teachers. Professional development examines ways to address school wide learning goals as well as individualized learning goals. Professional development is delivered either face to face or online. The district will contract with outside vendors to develop online PD to add

to what's available. (pp.38-40)

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 does meet.

Educators must meet PD expectations as part of the PBCS to earn an incentive. The portfolio development includes collaborative components which build PLNs which are essential to the sharing of best practices. (pp. 22-23) Furthermore, the Applicant offers PD that is driven by student data. General school data as well as individual classroom data allow principal coaches and master teachers to provide target differentiated PD. (pp. 30-34)

High quality PD is embedded within the culture of the school district. Through the process of teacher and principal evaluations teachers and principals are encouraged to constantly share and explore different facets of education which related to student achievement data.

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The Applicant demonstrates that eligible schools are high needs schools. Within PBCS eligible schools, the Applicant explicitly states that the fields of math, science, and bilingual education are high needs for its district. Furthermore, the Applicant uses statistics to illustrate that it has a difficult time retaining teachers in high needs schools.(p.12) Within schools eligible for participation in the PBCS, "students at these schools are served by more beginning (that is, teachers in their first year and novice (that is, teachers in their first, second, or third year in the profession) teachers than at other schools" within its district, "and by fewer teachers from selective schools" (p. 12). Additionally, the PBCS eligible schools have fewer certified teachers. "Nearly 8% lack full certification" (p.13)

The Applicant uses data illustrated within charts and diagrams to show that its students score lower than comparable schools. The Applicant shows the scores categorized by ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The data shown indicates that lowest rate of passing on all TAKS is 48% of African Americans at Anderson Mill. Overall the lower passing rates range from 48-62%(pp.5-11).

The Applicant clearly defines comparable schools. Diagrams provided detail the ethnic as well as social economic status of the student population within schools compared to eligible PBCS schools. In all the school and comparison schools over 60% of the students are classified economically disadvantaged. (pp. 5-11)

Given this information the Applicant demonstrates that eligible schools are high needs schools.

Weaknesses:

The Applicant points out that it has "no campuses falling below "Academically Acceptable" (p.2). If that is the case then it is not clear why the Applicant would need funding for the PBSC since it is assumed that all students are performing at an academically acceptable rate. By including the criteria for being deemed an "academically acceptable" school would help clarify the rate at which students are

performing at the different levels of classification that the Applicant's state has bestowed upon them.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

If chosen as a grant recipient, the Applicant will be carrying on the districts strategy. For the past two years, the Applicant implemented a PBCS which was funded by the TEA called the District Award for Teacher Excellence (DATE). (p. 2)

The Applicant explicitly describes the program which was developed so that participation within the TIF grant would have a positive direct impact on the program to aid in student academic growth. The Applicant has differentiated reward potential which could be \$3000 or more for teachers, administrators, and staff. This has been substantiated as a sufficient monetary reward to raise student achievement.(p. 25) These differentiated incentives will be based on standardized assessments as well as classroom observations that will take place at least 3 times a year.(pp. 30-31)

Tied into the PBCS are evaluation methods that are transparent. The evaluation examines multiple categories that have a direct impact on students through teachers's practices and leadership practices of principals. The Applicant has a thorough process of evaluation which includes observation from evaluators within the school as well as outside to ensure fairness. In addition, the Applicant includes as part of the evaluation process a reflective conversation which is to take place within two days of the observation. (pp.30-31)

In support of the PBCS, the Applicant provides evidence to show large support from teachers, administrators, and staff. That data provided showed that the PBCS had a 93% and above positive vote for participation within the grant. (p.28)

Weaknesses:

The Applicant does not currently have rubrics to aid in the evaluation of portfolios. Currently, the Applicant's data management is not linked to human resources and payroll. However, it does explain that it plans to link the the systems together so that the PBCS can be streamlined and efficiently implemented.(p.37)

PBCS incentives are not clear. Although an exhaustive explanation is included about the process of deriving the measure of student growth. It is not evident how the incentive award is tied to growth. Question remain. How much is each percentage of student growth worth for the PBCS? Does student growth have to reach a certain percentage before incentives are rewarded? Furthermore, the Applicant describes that teachers can earn different tiers of rewards but has not included how much each tier is worth. (pp.15-18)

The Applicant is in the process of creating a wider array of PD by looking to contract with various PD companies.

The Applicant does not make clear whether or not they utilize the described process to guide PD currently. Given the complexity of the process if not used currently the time it might for teachers and principals to understand as well as process the requirements might take a while.

Reader's Score: 54

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's management clearly defines responsibilities and timelines are given for the first year of the grant. (p.49-51) This demonstrates that the Applicant has thought through the requirements for successful implementation of the grant within its inception year. This would allow for the Applicant to focus on the implementation of the grant rather than the planning so that it could concentrate on the PBCS being executed on all campuses in the same manner so that there is not confusion.

The project director has the educational background, professional experiences, and skills to successfully manage the implementation of the grant. The project director has 5 years of experience as a classroom teacher, 25 years as an assistant principal or principal, and 3 years as an administrator in the Applicant's central office. This experience will lend to the understanding of teacher practices, teacher workload, teacher professional development, principal work and responsibilities so that the director can successfully craft implementation of the PBCS.(Appendices)

The Applicant explains how it will increase its share of the grant expenses. Beginning in year 2 the Applicant contributes \$300,000 to budget with a gradual increase every year to \$450,000 in the year 5 budget. The Applicant's financial contributions are towards personnel expenses. (Budget)

The Applicant's requested grant amount and projected costs seem reasonable to obtain successful results. Within the Appendices, the Applicant attached a detailed budget covering all years of the grant. Every line budget item is explained along with its purpose.(Appendices)

The Applicant explains outside funds that it will pursue in order to support the PBCS.

Weaknesses:

The Applicant does not provide a timeline for grant years beyond the first.

Reader's Score: 22

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 includes strong measurable objectives for raising student achievement. The Applicant's teacher and principal evaluation method for the PBCS include numerous opportunities for them to use student data to drive the personal professional development which will directly impact students. (pp.26-40)

The Applicant does not currently have evaluation system in place to examine the implementation of the grant. If awarded the grant, the Applicant will hire an outside evaluator to develop evaluation protocols. The RFP defines the responsibilities of the contractual evaluators. (pp.54-57).

Weaknesses:

No weakness are 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:

There were no strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

There is no mention of a value added model. Furthermore, the Applicant does not mention how it will explain the value-added model to teachers. In addition, the Applicant does not explain how teachers will be enabled to use the value-added model to improve classroom practices.

The Applicant will develop a robust system for data collection if it is chosen for the grant.

Reader's Score: 0

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's proposed PBCS will serve high needs students. The Applicant provides data to support that the PBCS will serve high needs students. The eligible schools have 60% or above student populations. (pp.6-11)

The Applicant proposed PBCS will be used as an incentive to retain teachers in hard to staff subjects and schools. Math, Science, and Bilingual education are the high need subject areas within PBCS eligible schools. (p.13)

The Applicant has imbedded with the PBCS eligible schools an evaluation process that determines the effectiveness of teachers and principals.(pp. 13-25)

Weaknesses:

The Applicant does not address the process of increasing teacher recruitment. In addition, the Applicant does not explain how it will ensure how a teacher hired to the PBCS eligible school will be evaluated prior to being hired to predict likelihood of effectiveness.

Furthermore, the Applicant does not include communication plan to connect with teachers in high needs schools and teachers within hard-to-staff specialty areas and subjects.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:51 PM

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Round Rock Independent School District -- , (S385A100065)

Reader #2: *****

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Questions		
Evaluation Criteria		
Absolute Priority 1		
1.Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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1.Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluaton Criteria		
Absolute Priority 3		
1.Absolute Priority 3	0	0
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1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
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1.Need for Project	10	9
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	55
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	22
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	91

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	0
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	4
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Sub Total	10	4
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Total	110	95
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Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Round Rock Independent School District -- , (S385A100065)

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 fully meets the requirements of Absolute Priority 1.

The applicant convincingly demonstrates a fully-developed plan to develop and implement a PBCS that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness by improving student achievement.

The PBCS includes an innovative combination of criteria to determine incentive eligibility, including student growth, evaluations of teachers and principals, teaching portfolios, participation in collaborative planning sessions, fulfilling leadership roles, and continuing assignments in hard-to-staff areas (p. 13). In describing the rationale for each of the criteria to be used to calculate the differentiated compensation levels, the applicant refers to lessons learned from their previous experience with providing performance-based incentives and how those lessons have been included in the plan being proposed. The applicant includes detailed discussion of the district's plan to calculate growth values for individual student learning as well as overall student learning aggregated to the school level (pp. 14-17), including a clear

explanation of how the district intends to handle the change in state test that will take place during their second year of funding. In explaining the plan for calculating growth, the applicant provides the specific regression equations that will be used to calculate growth from year to year on the state assessment and the magnitude of growth that will be required to qualify for different tiers of incentives. The approach described, which involves using a change in standardized score from one year to the next adjusted to reflect the standard deviation of the residuals so as to provide an estimate of the student's growth and then aggregating individual students' growth estimates to the school level to decrease the error associated with the growth estimate, is a psychometrically-sound methodology for determining growth given the data to which the applicant will have access. The applicant's description of the criteria on which awards will be based (p. 16) indicates a logical way to allocate differential incentive payments based on the magnitude of growth for students at a school. To qualify for the highest levels of incentive, school gain will have to be at least two standard errors above the reference gain. Schools where students gain between greater than one yet less than two standard errors above the reference gain will qualify for a tier 2 award. Schools where school gain is greater than .5 standard error but less than one standard error above the reference gain will qualify for a tier 1 award. Schools that experience no gain or gain less than .5 standard errors above the reference gain will not be eligible for financial awards. The level of detail the applicant provides in this section of the proposal indicates that the applicant has not only considered the need for differentiating compensation based significantly on student growth based on objective data on student performance, but that they have also taken the time to ensure that they have the capacity to assign meaningful weights to differentiate this performance. The applicant provides a clear and convincing rationale for the size of the compensation packages available to teachers and principals (pp. 25-26), and the amount available is large enough to promote anticipated changes in teacher quality and student achievement. Based on all the above, the applicant exceeds the minimum requirement to meet this absolute priority.

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 fully meets the requirements of Absolute Priority 2.

The applicant provides a comprehensive and detailed description of projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS, with separate budget worksheets for each year of the grant (Budget Narrative). Inclusion of the estimate of the amount of money to be budgeted for teachers, principals, and other personnel at each of the different tiers as separate line items in the budget narrative further underscores the applicant's commitment to provide truly differentiated levels of incentive. The way in which the incentive payments are divided into different tiers, with an estimate of the number of awards anticipated being made at each of the tiers and clearly designated award amounts linked to different components of the PBCS incentive model, should facilitate

accurate budgeting, accounting, and reporting. The applicant includes a plan to increase its non-TIF-based financial commitment to expanding its PBCS system from the current level of \$2.9 million to a total of \$3,350,000 in the fifth and final year of the grant (abstract). Based on the above evidence, the applicant clearly meets all requirements of this absolute priority.

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 fully meets the requirements of Absolute Priority 3.

The applicant convincingly demonstrates that their proposed PBCS is well-aligned with their state and district initiatives for strengthening the educator workforce. The information they provide includes a comprehensive plan for using student growth data and classroom / administrator evaluations to identify professional development needs, structure professional development activities, and make retention and tenure decisions (Abstract), supported by a well-funded incentive program to encourage educators' buy-in.

In addition to using data about teaching effectiveness based on student growth, the proposed PBCS uses a structured observation protocol (example provided in the Appendix) to evaluate teacher effectiveness using criteria supported by recognized experts in the field of teacher quality and formative assessment (Danielson, Stiggins, Stiggins, and Marzano). This structured observation protocol provides a standardized instrument to evaluate teachers' ability to "solicit meta-cognition in students, develop depth and complexity of learning, generate student ownership of learning, and give quality feedback to students" (p. 29). These teacher evaluations will be used to identify professional development needs and create individual plans to address these needs (pp. 30-31).

Through a year-long process termed by the applicant "Appraisal By Collaboration", teachers develop questions to guide action research projects "related to a district goal and to the school's Campus Improvement Plan and measurable in terms of student learning outcomes" (p. 32). This ongoing emphasis on student learning outcomes and on ensuring that individual teachers' goals are aligned with school- and district-identified needs helps ensure coherence of the strategy for strengthening the educator workforce across the district.

The specificity of the requirements that need to be met for educators to qualify for each level of incentive (see line items related to each level of incentive funding in the Budget Narrative), as well as the fact that the applicant has identified non-TIF funds sufficient to ensure that educators at district schools that do not meet the eligibility requirements of the TIF program are eligible for performance based incentive payments (Abstract), add to the coherence of the district's PBCS through providing specific and uniform targets toward which each educator is working, district-wide.

The applicant indicates a plan to use the five years during which the district receives TIF funding to develop evaluation methodologies, professional development courses, and the technological and human-resource infrastructure to support improvements in teacher effectiveness.

In addition to being used as part of hiring and tenure decisions, such resources can be used in district schools that are ineligible for TIF funding because fewer than 50% of their students come from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds as soon as they are developed and will remain of use to the district after the TIF funding has ended, thereby increasing the likelihood that the district will continue the PDCS program even when the grant ends.

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 effectively describes how its proposed PBCS will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles.

In the criteria for determining how much incentive funding an educator will receive, the applicant has included collaboration with other teachers, engaging in reflective practice (as evidenced by an annual teaching portfolio presented to others), and self-directed professional development activities designed to address individual needs (pp. 22-23). These activities are intended to help foster leadership roles among participating educators. More specifically, "teachers who show evidence of career leadership -- who mentor new teachers; serve as department chairs, team leaders, or tutors in afterschool programs such as that funded by the Twenty-first Century Community Learning Center Grant on all campuses; or take on other leadership roles -- will receive a \$1,500 reward" (p. 22). The size of this incentive is substantial enough to promote participation in leadership activities.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

- 1. Core Element 1:**

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

General:

The proposal does not specifically include a plan for effectively communicating to teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and the community at-large the components of its performance based compensation system.

Despite the lack of a specific communication plan, however, the applicant's recent history with developing and piloting a simpler PBCS should facilitate the communication with stakeholders about the components of its performance based compensation system (p. 28). Inclusion of presentations to other educators in the incentive program could potentially provide an avenue for communicating aspects of the plan to stakeholders in the district.

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 includes letters of support from 7 principals, a United States Senator, a United States Representative, the President of the school board, and a grant-writer who collaborated with the district in responding to the recent i3 grant call for proposals (appendix). Because Texas does not use collective bargaining, no involvement from the union is needed or provided; however, the applicant does provide evidence of teacher support in the form of the vote count from each of the schools eligible for participation (p. 28). Results of this vote, in which teachers over-whelmingly supported the plan for a PBCS, in conjunction with the teachers' involvement in developing the model (p. 28), demonstrates convincingly that the applicant has appropriately involved stakeholder groups in the development and design of the project.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

The applicant met all components of core Element 3 fully and well.

Their proposal contains an innovative combination of criteria to be used in determining incentive eligibility. Those criteria include "gains in standardized test scores using college-readiness standards and classroom evaluations, as well as of teachers' preparation of a teaching portfolio, their participation in collaborative meetings, their assumption of leadership roles, and in the case of teachers in hard-to-staff areas, their willingness to enter into or stay in their positions" (p. 13). Based on cited-research and their own experience piloting a similar program, the district proposes including some flat-rate incentive payments and some tiered rates, depending on individual differentiated performance (p. 14). A similar approach is taken with principal awards. The applicant includes very detailed discussion of how the district will calculate growth values related to individual student learning as well as overall student learning at a school (pp. 14-17), including an explanation of how they intend to handle the change in

state test that will take place during their second year of funding. The applicant provides a clear and convincing rationale for the size of the compensation packages available to teachers and principals (pp. 25-26), and the amount available is large enough that it should help promote the anticipated changes in teacher quality and student achievement. The proposed plan, where paid district-level observers conduct all the teacher observations / evaluations and district-level mentor teachers are hired to provide coaching at the sites addresses a potential threat to the validity of evaluations tied to performance incentives when the person conducting the evaluation stands to gain personally if the evaluations of the staff as a whole are positive (p. 29). Use of a research-based observation tool to evaluate teachers during classroom observations is a strength of the proposed design (pp. 29-30), in that using the same tool across sites and years should help make it easier to evaluate the change in teacher practices and skills over time. In addition, these design elements increase the district's ability to ensure a high degree of inter-rater reliability on both teacher and principal observations and evaluations and on determining the amount of incentive-based compensation for which a teacher or principal is eligible (p. 30).

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's plan to implement a data-management system that can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems meets every aspect of this core element.

The applicant devotes considerable space to describe the existing data-management system, its current capabilities, and areas where the system needs enhancements (pp. 34-37). According to the applicant, at the time of application the system already had the capability to accommodate "student achievement measurements based on multiple testing and benchmarks for specific grade levels and specific subject matters; trend and statistical analysis using designated testing measures by grade level to better identify professional development areas; classification of teachers and principals as participants along with their roles and responsibilities on RRISE campuses including certifications for additional focus on high-need areas; management of vacancies on RRISE campuses in an effort to recruit teachers and principals with specialties that track to high-needs areas and student achievement measurements; statistically measurable evaluation component using rubrics that can record multiple levels for numerous evaluation events for both teachers and principals based on roles and responsibilities; directory of RRISE award profiles and specific business rules for each profile; and ability to generate multiple payments to teachers and administrators on TIF campuses using detailed formulas and a defined payment schedule" (p. 34).

In addition, the applicant states that the district can link the existing student database to the existing staff development training database and financial and human resources database (p. 35) to meet the requirements of this competition. Once these databases are linked, the district will be able to generate and record incentive payments based on the criteria established. Because these payments will be based on editable-functions built into the computer system, the district will be able to make modifications to the incentive amounts and criteria for payment should changes be needed. By linking these databases together, the district will be able to include training and incentive data in analyses and reports of outcome data (student growth, teacher portfolio score, teacher retention, etc.).

Given the significant capabilities of their current system, the proposed plans for enhancing the system, including the timeline for identifying and implementing those enhancements (pp. 49-50) and the budget amount allocated to this purpose (budget narrative) seem appropriate to allow for successful implementation.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

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

General:

The applicant's management plan includes specific activities to ensure that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS (pp. 30-34), with supplemental information provided by the instructional coaches and mentors assigned to work with each school and reinforced by professional development. This comprehensive and well-articulated plan, with specific tasks and timelines already delineated, should help ensure the success of the program.

The plan specifically includes steps to ensure that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of effectiveness included in the PBCS, with large-group, small committee, and one-on-one meetings designed to provide information about how to use the data generated by these measures to improve their practice. Key components of the PBCS (teacher collaboration within school; close work between teachers, campus master teachers, and principals; public presentations related to the results of the Assessment by Collaboration and individualized professional portfolios) are reinforced through the provision of specific incentive funds earmarked for each component (Budget Narrative).

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 fully demonstrates that its proposed PBCS will include a high-quality professional development component for teachers and principals that addresses each of the five requirements outlined in the Evaluation Area on Professional Development in their entirety.

Based on cited-research about making professional development effective, the applicant has linked incentives to behaviors that the research supports as leading to improved professional development outcomes. In particular, the applicant has included in the criteria for incentive funding collaboration with other teachers, engaging in reflective practice (as evidenced by an annual teaching portfolio presented to others), and self-directed professional development activities designed to address individual needs (pp. 22-23). The proposed professional development plan will initially be based on needs identified at least in part through a previous performance-based incentive program and is linked closely to both the management plan (where identification of additional needs is included as a specific activity) and the evaluation plan (as data collected by the evaluator can serve a formative purpose, assisting the district in the identification of needs and to effectiveness of program components as they are implemented).

Professional development will be targeted to individual teacher's and principal's needs as identified in the observation / evaluations, self-assessments, analysis of student achievement data, and discussions with the Observers for Professional Growth, master teachers, and site principal (for teachers) or Principal Coach (for principals).

The data-management system, in conjunction with individual educators' professional development plans, will enable the district to provide professional development targeted to individual educator needs, with those 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, and those who are deemed effective with the tools and skills they need to continue their effective practices while they assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles. The reports generated both by the data-management system and by the outside evaluator will continue to support educators in gaining a better understanding of how to use measures of effectiveness to improve their practice and student achievement while also stream-lining the process for regularly assessing the effectiveness of this professional development in improving teacher and leadership practice to increase student achievement.

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 provides data related to the rapid change in demographics, resulting in an increasing number of economically-disadvantaged students enrolling in district schools (pp. 3-4). In addition, the applicant provides evidence that the district's identified high-needs schools have a higher percentage of beginning and novice teachers and greater need for staff with full certification (p. 13) than their schools that do not meet the eligibility requirements for TIF funds, indicating difficulty in recruiting and retaining highly-qualified teachers and principals, particularly in hard-to-staff subjects or specialty areas.

The proposal includes the criteria used to identify comparison schools and establishes that student performance at some grade levels and for some student groups at district schools is worse than at comparison schools (pp. 4-12). In establishing the need for the project, the applicant includes charts to allow easy comparison of schools selected as comparable the key variables of student demographics and achievement (pp. 4-10) and the percentage of teachers at the schools classified as beginning teachers, novice teachers, and teachers from selective undergraduate schools (p. 12).

Weaknesses:

With no schools falling below "Academically Acceptable" in 2008-2009 (p. 2), it may be difficult to establish a convincing argument related to the needs of this district for additional funding to improve educational outcomes.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

(i) The methodology the LEA or SEA proposes to use in its PBCS to determine the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant uses its recent prior positive experience with performance-based incentive programs to inform their design. The proposal takes into account lessons learned from piloting an incentive program, to ensure that the current proposal is practical, comprehensive, and likely to result in positive teacher, principal, and student outcomes (p. 14). Their proposal contains an innovative combination of criteria to be used in determining incentive eligibility. Those criteria include "gains in standardized test scores using college-readiness standards and classroom evaluations, as well as to teachers' preparation of a teaching portfolio, their participation in collaborative meetings, their assumption of leadership roles, and in the case of teachers in hard-to-staff areas, their willingness to enter into or stay in their positions" (p. 13). Based on cited-research and their own experience piloting a similar program, the district proposes including a combination of flat-rate incentive payments and tiered rates, depending on individual differentiated performance (p. 14). A similar approach is taken with principal awards. This approach indicates a fairly sophisticated understanding of the psychological factors involved in using incentives to motivate changes in behavior, in that if the change appears to be too challenging, many people will not attempt it; while if the change is not substantial enough, it is likely not to result in true changes in teacher or principal behavior and student learning outcomes. As is detailed in the review commentary related to Absolute Priority 1, the applicant includes detailed discussion of how they will determine differentiated incentives based on calculated growth values for individual student learning as well as overall student learning aggregated to the school level (pp. 14-17). Based on cited-research about making professional development effective, the applicant has linked incentives to behaviors that the research supports as leading to improved professional development outcomes. In particular, the applicant has included in the criteria for incentive funding collaboration with other teachers, engaging in reflective practice (as evidenced by an annual teaching portfolio presented to others), and self-directed professional

development activities designed to address individual needs (pp. 22-23). The applicant provides a clear and convincing rationale for the size of the compensation packages available to teachers and principals (pp. 25-26), and the amount available is large enough that it should help promote the anticipated changes in teacher quality and student achievement. The proposed plan, where paid district-level observers conduct all the teacher observations / evaluations and district-level mentor teachers are hired to provide coaching at the sites addresses a potential threat to the validity of evaluations tied to performance incentives when the person conducting the evaluation stands to gain personally if the evaluations of the staff as a whole are positive (p. 29). Use of a research-based observation tool to evaluate teachers during classroom observations is a strength of the proposed design (pp. 29-30), in that using the same tool across sites and years should help make it easier to evaluate the change in teacher practices and skills over time.

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates that teachers in the early elementary grades (where no state test exists) will use the DRA-2 to evaluate the growth their students make during the year. This design element has at least two significant flaws. First, having the teachers administer the DRA-2 (a measure that requires subjective teacher judgment to score), when they stand to gain financially if their students show significant progress on the measure, introduces an opportunity for bias in favor of higher scores in the spring. In addition, the applicant's choice of the DRA-2 as a measure to monitor student growth across the year needs additional discussion, related to the technical adequacy of this particular measure for that particular purpose. It is unclear from the information provided how the applicant has accounted for natural attrition based on retirement or unexpected death (as opposed to career change or attrition based on moving to a different school) in the criteria for principal incentives (p. 25). Because the incentive amount for which principals are eligible if at least 85% of their teaching staff returns the following year is significant (\$1500), this detail may need to be worked out prior to implementing the program.

Reader's Score: 55

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 proposed plan has the support of district teachers (see Table 15, p. 28) and key leaders (appendix), and the prior year's positive experience should add to the chances for success in this endeavor. Both the first year's management plan (pp. 48-51) the budget narrative (Budget Narrative, pp. 1-41) provide evidence of the applicant's sharp

attention to detail and the capacity to support the project with appropriate internal staffing, contractual relations with outside resources, and a cohesive, well-planned approach to professional development to guide efforts over the five years of funding. The data-management system described in the proposal appears more than sufficient to meet the needs outlined in the grant (pp. 34-37). A particular strength is the ability to link information about the staff development needs, activities, and outcomes for each participating educator (p. 36) which will facilitate meaningful evaluation of the effectiveness of the PBCS at improving teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. The applicant includes a clear overview of management responsibilities, utilizing the expertise of existing staff when possible (p. 43), and including ready-to-post job offerings for those positions where new-hires will need to be recruited. The first year timeline, tasks to be accomplished, and who will be responsible for them are clearly described (pp. 48-51). The requested grant amount and project costs appear to be sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable, given the objectives and design of the project. The applicant provides a comprehensive and detailed description of projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS, with separate budget worksheets for each year of the grant (Budget Narrative). Inclusion of the estimate of the amount of money to be budgeted for teachers, principals, and other personnel at each of the different tiers as separate line items in the budget narrative further underscores the applicant's commitment to provide truly differentiated levels of incentive. The way in which the incentive payments are divided into different tiers, with an estimate of the number of awards anticipated being made at each of the tiers and clearly designated award amounts linked to different components of the PBCS incentive model, should facilitate accurate budgeting, accounting, and reporting.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a detailed management plan to address years 2 through 5 (although the details in the Budget Narrative for these years give an indication of the type of activities planned for these years). This lack of a specific management plan past the initial year of the grant is a weakness in that there is no evidence provided by which to determine the degree to which the applicant has identified the key milestones needed to accomplish project objectives and determined staffing, training, and other resource needs accordingly.

Reader's Score: 22

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 RFP the district intends to use to solicit an outside evaluator (included in the Appendix), indicates the intention of hiring an evaluator with clearly-defined expertise in the relevant evaluation methodologies outlined in the Federal Register notice. The RFP

specifies the contracted deliverables to meet the project need for formative as well as summative evaluation data. The RFP includes a plan to collect quantitative and qualitative data to be used in determining the effectiveness of the proposed plan in raising student achievement, increasing the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel, and retaining and recruiting effective teachers, principals, and other personnel. The evaluation plan includes specific timelines for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project (pp. 55-57), with regular written reports on all key outcome variables targeted to meet the needs of different project staff as well as other key stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this area.

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:

No strengths were found in this section.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address the use of value-added measures of student achievement in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate in its application that its proposed PBCS is designed to assist high-need schools (as defined in the Federal Register notice) to (1) serve high-need students (as defined in the Federal Register notice), (2) retain effective teachers in teaching positions in hard-to-staff

subjects and specialty areas, such as mathematics, science, special education, and English language acquisition, and (3) fill vacancies with teachers of those subjects or specialty areas who are effective or likely to be effective. The applicant must provide an explanation for how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. In addition, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications, the extent to which the subjects or specialty areas they propose to target are hard-to-staff. Lastly, applicants must demonstrate, in their applications that they will implement a process for effectively communicating to teachers which of the LEA's schools are high-need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff.

Strengths:

The applicant provides data related to the rapid change in demographics, resulting in an increasing number of economically-disadvantaged students enrolling in district schools (pp. 3-4). The proposal includes the criteria used to identify comparison schools and establishes that student performance at district schools is worse than at comparison schools, at least in some categories (pp. 4-12). In addition, the applicant provides evidence that the district's identified high-needs schools have a higher percentage of beginning and novice teachers and greater need for staff with full certification than other schools in the district with a smaller percentage of students from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds (pp. 12-13). The applicant identifies secondary math and science and elementary bilingual education positions at schools serving a significant proportion of students from low-income backgrounds as assignments for which it is particularly hard to staff and retain teachers (p. 13). Throughout the proposal, the applicant provides detailed information about the criteria they will use to determine teacher effectiveness, with specific fields in their data-management system to facilitate the identification of effective teachers and positions with greatest need for staffing.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include information about how the district will communicate to teachers which schools are high-need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff. Although the applicant indicates that the district's data-management system will enable the district to generate reports that will specify these need areas, it is unclear how teachers will learn about the positions with the greatest staffing needs.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:51 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 3:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Round Rock Independent School District -- , (S385A100065)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Evaluation Criteria		
Absolute Priority 1		
1.Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
1.Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluaton Criteria		
Absolute Priority 3		
1.Absolute Priority 3	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Requirement		
Requirement		
1.Requirement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluation Criteria		
Core Element 1		
1.Core Element 1	0	0
Core Element 2		
1.Core Element 2	0	0
Core Element 3		
1.Core Element 3	0	0
Core Element 4		
1.Core Element 4	0	0
Core Element 5		
1.Core Element 5	0	0
High Quality Professional Development		
1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for the Project		
1.Need for Project	10	9
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	54
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	22
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	90

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	0
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	4
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Sub Total	10	4
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Total	110	94
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Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Round Rock Independent School District -- , (S385A100065)

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 has exceeded the requirement by providing a complete plan for differentiated levels of compensation for effective teachers and principals.

There is documentation on page 13 of the application that Round Rock will use a differentiated model of pay for teachers that supports the applicant's plan to develop and implement a PBCS that rewards, at differentiated levels, teachers and principals who demonstrate their effectiveness at improving student achievement.

The applicant provides substantial information throughout the narrative regarding how the incentive plan will be based on a formula in which there is significant weight given to student growth. The applicant has included (on pages 14 -17) the formulas that will be used to calculate the growth model. The applicant specifically addresses how the incentives will be based on substantiated evidence of student growth. The applicant also addresses how they will be using a new state assessment system and has included a detailed plan of action regarding how they will transition and support teachers' use of that assessment system. The applicant will also help teachers learn to use the data

management system as it integrates with the new assessment measures.

The RRISD proposal includes a model for creating effective principals and teachers through needs-based professional development. There is significant detail on pages 22-23 about how teachers will collaborate and engage in reflective practice with one another to support effective instructional strategies and targeted student-centered instruction. The applicant further states (pages 22-23) that there will be multiple opportunities for the faculty to be involved in leadership roles.

The applicant also describes that there will be multiple observations for teachers to receive feedback from administrators to guide their instruction. These observations also serve to provide on-going professional development.

It is clearly stated (and sourced on pages 22-26) the basis for the incentive amounts that teachers will be eligible for and receive. The amounts will be based on increased student performance data, classroom observations, and leadership roles.

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 fully meets the priority for maintaining fiscal sustainability for PBCS. The abstract clearly supports information contained in the narrative, which states that the district will sustain the program goals with additional non-TIF funds. The applicant has projected costs associated with the development and implementation of the PBCS. The applicant provides a clear plan for expanding funding for the incentive fund program in the future. The abstract states that the district will increase funding from \$2,900,000 million to \$3,350,000 million. This is clear evidence that the applicant intends to sustain and support the effectiveness and full implementation of this project.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

The proposed PBCS is aligned with a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the

educator workforce, including in the use of data and evaluations for professional development and retention and tenure decisions in the LEA or LEAs participating in the project during and after the end of the TIF project period.

General:

The applicant fully meets the priority for creating a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce. This priority will be addressed with the use of data and evaluations for professional development and retention and tenure decisions in the Round Rock district. In the abstract, the applicant has included evidence that supports the district plan for professional development. It is research-based and proven to improve teaching strategies and increased collaboration.

As was noted in the comments for Priority 1, the RRISD proposal includes a model for creating effective principals and teachers through needs-based professional development. There is significant detail on pages 22-23 regarding how teachers will collaborate and engage in reflective practice with one another to enhance effective instructional strategies and targeted student-centered instruction. The applicant further states (pages 22-23) that there will be multiple opportunities for the teaching faculty to be involved in leadership roles.

The applicant also clearly describes processes for multiple observations of teachers and opportunities for them to receive feedback from administrators that can guide their instruction. These observations will also serve to provide on-going professional development.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

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

General:

There is clear evidence in the application that the RRISE PBCS meets the requirement and will provide educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles.

The applicant proposes (on page 11) to create an incentive program for RRISE schools that will provide monetary awards to teachers. Awards will be based on: student gains on standardized test scores; using college-readiness standards; classroom evaluations; the preparation of a teaching portfolio; and participation in collaborative meetings.

In addition, teachers will receive a substantial monetary award for volunteering in a leadership role at the school site or district. The applicant states (on page 22) that teachers will receive a \$1500 stipend to take on a specific leadership role, promote effective instructional practices, and increase teachers' communication and collaboration in student-centered instruction. As noted in the comments under Priority 1, the RRISD proposal includes a model for creating effective principals and teachers through needs-based professional development. There is significant detail provided (pages 22-23) about how teachers will collaborate and engage in reflective practice with one another to support effective instructional strategies and targeted student-centered instruction. The applicant further states (also on pages 22-23) that there will be multiple opportunities for the faculty to be involved in leadership roles.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1:

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

General:

In the application, RRISE mentions the strategies that will be used to communicate the applicant's plan to teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and the community at-large the components of its performance based compensation system. The evidence on page 28 of the application indicates that RRISE has a history of communicating with all stakeholders at every campus with memos, PowerPoint presentations, and via individual teacher meetings to provide question and answer sessions. It is suggested that from the evidence of previous communication in the pilot, that the applicant has the potential mechanism for providing on-going communication with all stakeholders. This element has been met, however it would have been stronger if the applicant has provide a more fully detailed plan for communicating with all stakeholders regarding the implementation of the RRISE PBCS.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

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

General:

This element has been met. There is evidence of the endorsement, communication, and letters of support from various stakeholders and collaboration and key partnerships to enhance the sustainability of this program. The appendix contains multiple letters of support from district principals and state/local leaders that endorse the implementation of RRISE PBCS. The letters of support provide significant evidence that there is buy-in from district principals to promote and fully implement the program. The letters of support from local and state leaders provide political support from the community to effectively promote the implementation and sustainability of this program. There is evidence of teacher support on page 28 of the application in which the table indicates that between 96%-100% of the teachers are in support of participating in the TIF grant.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation, or plan to implement, a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that

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

General:

This element has been partially met. On page 29, the applicant describes an evaluation system that they developed that is based on the principles and research of Danielson, Stiggins & Stiggins, Marzano, and others. The applicant mentions how teachers and principals will have a Focused Observation Form that includes rubrics to provide effective feedback on the depth and complexity of effective instruction.

There are weaknesses in this element in that there is not sufficient amount of time within the classroom observations to provide thorough evidence and feedback to educators. On page 29 of the application it is written that teachers will have 20 minute classroom observations. This is not enough time to conduct a thorough, meaningful observation.

There are clear compensation award structures on page 14 of the application, which describes the Tiered Teacher Incentive Awards in terms of Student Growth/Performance and Classroom Observation Evaluation.

The applicant provides a plan on pages 29-31 that indicates how RRISE will use a multiple stage and measured evaluation system for principals and teachers.

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:

This element was fully met. The applicant fully addresses how RRISE will continue to use and enhance a data-management system that can link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems. The applicant addresses the current data system's capabilities and also plans for significant enhanced measures (pages 34 -37). The applicant includes a clear time line with a plan to enhance and improve the current data management system. The appendix also includes the costs for enhancing the data system in the project budget. The applicant has described how administrators and teachers will be trained to use the data-collection systems.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

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

General:

This element was fully met. The applicant provides documentation and thorough evidence that ensures that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness. There is evidence on pages 38 and 39, which list and explain the different professional development methods that will support teachers and principals. These pages also provided clear performance measures of principles and teacher evaluation systems.

Administrators and teachers will be directly involved in improving the evaluation system and the data-collection systems. Higher-level leadership responsibilities will be offered to teachers. Teachers will be provided with enhanced feedback designed to improve instructional strategies and, in turn, improve both student achievement and principal effectiveness.

Pages 30-34 of the application clearly explains how teacher evaluations will drive the professional development for the staff. The applicant has included full details (pages 30-34) about how teachers and principals will use the scores from their evaluations. The applicant also included a detailed plan regarding the specific measures to teachers and principals' effectiveness that will be provided to staff.

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 RRISD proposal meets this requirement by including a model for creating effective principals and teachers through needs-based professional development. There is significant detail on pages 22-23 about how teachers will collaborate and engage in reflective practice with one another to support effective instructional strategies and targeted student-centered instruction. The applicant clearly describes (pages 22-23) the multiple opportunities for the faculty to be involved in leadership roles. Administrators and teachers will be trained on how the data-collection systems can be used to provide enhanced feedback to teachers and will help teachers improve their instructional strategies. The applicant also explains that there will be multiple observations for teachers to receive feedback from administrators to guide their instruction. These observations will also serve to provide on-going professional development.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

On page 4 of the applicant provides evidence that eight schools in the Round Rock Independent School District meet the definition of "high-needs" schools, where more than 50% of the school enrollments were from low-income families.

On page 5 of application there is evidence that shows the students' achievement in each of the schools proposed for RRISE, is significantly lower than the average of all the schools in the district.

On pages 4-11, the TAKS assessment data shows that seven of the RRISE schools' scores ranged from 4% to 22% lower than other similar schools' average.

On page 12 of the application, the applicant addresses how the staff of the RRISE schools have fewer teachers from selective schools in comparison to other schools in the district. There is evidence that there more inexperienced teachers at Title 1 schools within the district.

All of the above are strengths as they directly address the need for the project in the

local district.

The applicant proposes (on page 11) to create an incentive program for RRISE schools that will provide monetary awards to teachers based on gains in standardized test scores using college-readiness standards and classroom evaluations, as well as to teachers' preparation of a teaching portfolio, their participation in collaborative meetings, their assumption of leadership roles, and willingness to enter into or stay in their positions.

Weaknesses:

The bullet points on page 2 indicate that there are no schools falling below academically acceptable according to state standards. This is considered a weakness as it is counter to the applicant's argument that they should be considered a high need school.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

principal payroll and human resources systems; and

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes (page 11) to create an incentive program for RRISE schools that will provide monetary awards to teachers based on gains to standardized test scores using college-readiness standards and classroom evaluations. The applicant further provides adequate evidence on page 11 that the incentive program will enhance teachers' professional development with the implementation of a teaching portfolio, participation in collaborative meetings, increased leadership roles, and willingness to enter into or stay in their positions.

There are clear compensation award structures on page 14 of the application, which describes the Tiered Teacher Incentive Awards in terms of Student Growth/Performance and Classroom Observation Evaluation.

The applicant provides clear descriptions of how educators will receive an incentive based on the performance of students.

There is clear and convincing evidence of the applicant's effective methodology for assessing teacher performance in terms of increased student achievement and improved instructional practices.

There is evidence on page 22 of teacher incentive awards provided to faculty that meet expectations of Assessment By Collaboration, Oral Presentation and Portfolio, Evidence of Career Leadership, Participation in Collaborative Meetings, and Recruitment/Retention Stipend to Hard-to Staff Positions. This is a significant strength in the application. The evidence indicated that the applicant fully understands the intent of TIF and has the capacity to implement such awards.

The applicant has fully developed a model to create effective principals and teachers through need-based professional development

There is a clearly documented plan for administrators and teachers to be involved in improving the evaluation and data-collection systems.

There is convincing evidence (on page 22) of incentive awards to be given to principals for meeting expectations of Assessment by Collaboration Oral Presentation and Portfolio, Participation in Collaborative Meetings with Faculty, Participation in Collaborative Meetings with Fellow TIF Principals, and Retention of 85 Percent or More of Teaching Staff.

Weaknesses:

It is difficult to understand the formula for teacher incentives on pages 15-17. The applicant does not clearly explain how the incentive program requirements will be communicated to teachers and administrators so that they fully understand how all the monetary incentives will be paid out.

Reader's Score: 54

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:

There is a timeline for the first year of the program that is linked to all of the outcomes. It includes clear data and procedures that will take place to effectively implement the TIF program in RRISD. The applicant has developed a model to create effective principals and teachers through need-based professional development. The timeline includes an action plan for implementation of collaboration teams and professional development for teachers and principals designed to improve instructional practices.

The application includes a clear management plan, which outlines by month and year the proposed design of the system and plan to build capacity. The timeline for implementation and monitoring of the TIF program in RRISD contains clear performance indicators and key individuals who will be monitoring and leading the proposal.

The key personnel's professional development background in relation to this proposed project and their training, which will foster and guide the implementation of this project is adequate.

The application names key personnel that will be involved in the implementation of the proposal and includes bios that indicate the qualified educational experience of key leaders involved in monitoring RRISD TIF program.

The requested grant amount and project costs are sufficient to attain the project goals.

There is evidence of the endorsement and support from various stakeholders and collaboration and key partnerships that will enhance the sustainability of this program. There is evidence in the appendix of the application that the district will match all in-kind funding for this project, and provides additional documentation of increased sustainability.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a time line for years 2 to 5 of the project. There is no evidence of how the applicant will implement and evaluate the program in a time line that is linked to all of the outcomes. Outcomes do not state clear data and procedures that will take place to effectively sustain the TIF program in RRIS over the long-term.

Reader's Score: 22

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 includes strong and measurable performance objectives for raising student achievement and increasing the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other personnel. The objectives are clearly written and linked to the goal of the proposed program to increase teacher and principal effectiveness through pay incentives.

Administrators and teachers will be involved in improving the evaluation system and data-collection systems for teachers. These systems are designed to provide enhanced feedback to teachers to improve the instructional strategies for teachers and to improve student achievement and principal effectiveness. The evaluation data will be qualitative and quantitative to provide specific feedback to professionals to improve their practice and improve student achievement.

There is evidence on page 29 that RRISE has developed an evaluation system that is based on the principles and research of Danielson, Stiggins & Stiggins, Marzano, and others. The applicant mentions how teachers and principals will have a Focused Observation Form that includes rubrics to provide effective feedback on the depth and complexity of effective instruction.

The application includes adequate evaluation procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. There are clear compensation award structures on page 14 of the application, which describes the Tiered Teacher Incentive Awards in terms of Student Growth/Performance and Classroom Observation Evaluation.

Weaknesses:

There are 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:

No strengths were found in this section.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address how the project will address the use of value-added measures of student achievement. This was a requirement of the RFP and such a significant weakness, that no points could be awarded.

Reader's Score: 0

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 states in the application that the objectives of the proposal are to provide incentives for highly qualified teachers to work at an economically disadvantaged campus and promote the retention of highly effective teachers. The applicant suggests that the incentive will convince and entice highly qualified teachers to apply and join their district staff.

The applicant proposes on page 11 to create an incentive program for RRISE schools that will provide monetary awards to teachers based on: gains on standardized test scores, college-readiness standards, classroom evaluations, teachers' preparation of a teaching portfolio, their participation in collaborative meetings, their assumption of leadership roles, and their willingness to enter into or stay in their positions.

There is evidence that administrators and teachers will be involved in improving the evaluation system and data-collection systems. Teachers will be offered higher-level leadership responsibilities and the opportunity to provide enhanced feedback to teachers.

Page 22 described the incentive awards for principals who meet expectations of Assessment

by Collaboration, Oral Presentation and Portfolio, Participation in Collaborative Meetings with Faculty, Participation in Collaborative Meetings with Fellow TIF Principals, and Retention of 85 Percent or More of Teaching Staff.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provided only minimal information on how the district will effectively and continuously communicate with teachers and staff to promote increased teacher retention and teacher effectiveness. There was not a clear plan of action in the application to support how Round Rock will promote the recruitment or retention of highly qualified teachers.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

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