

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: School District of Pittsburgh -- , (S385A100125)

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	57
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	25
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	4
Sub Total	100	95

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	5
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	4
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Sub Total	10	9
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Total	110	104
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Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Panel - 13: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: School District of Pittsburgh -- , (S385A100125)

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 Pittsburgh Public School District (PPS) has developed an impressive plan to completely restructure the methods of compensation, promotion, and rewards for the entire teacher population of the district. Student growth and classroom observation are an integral part of the evaluation process that will determine the salaries and incentives for the teachers of PPS (p 38, 39). Special consideration will be made to ensure the faculty members at high-need schools are high quality, effective teachers.

An innovative career ladder strategy is proposed (pp 32-35), with a primary goal to provide new and struggling teachers the resources to learn and improve their teaching skills as well as improve student success. The incentive rewards (p 41) for participating on the career ladder are substantial overall, as are all of the incentives connected with the project - although the first step of \$1,000 is questionable as being at a level to encourage inherent change. A detailed reward schedule with monetary rewards and their level of funding is provided.

A TIF award aimed toward developing a principal PBCS was presented to PPS in 2007

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 2

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

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

General:

The applicant has developed a remarkable support system that includes numerous partners such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Fund for Excellence (a consortium of local foundations, School Improvement Grants and other sources of funding (p 88). Collective bargaining with the two relevant Teacher Unions has produced a contract supporting the transformation of the Pittsburgh schools and a continuance of the performance-based compensation program after the grant period. PPS commits to assuming and increasing share of the PBCS each year of the grant and to sustaining the program after the grant (p 91) with a direct allocation from the district's general operating budget. Commitment to a rigorous effort to produce operational savings - closing underutilized facilities, optimizing teacher distribution, improving operating efficiencies and other cost-cutting efforts will produce will partially offset the necessary funding.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluaton Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

PPS has built a strong partnership with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers with leaders that have a common goal to transform urban education so all students can achieve success . A \$40 million grant from the BMGF (pp 3, 6) allows the district to start developing a cohesive plan of reform that is supported by the unions as shown by the bargaining agreement approved on June 14, 2010 (p 22). The plan devised shows a logical progress of strategies to change teacher compensation scale from education and years of service to performance evaluated primarily by student growth and classroom observation. The structure incorporates assistance and training to develop teacher effectiveness with rewards at several levels. That assistance is supported by a career ladder system that rewards superior teachers willing to assume extra responsibilities and leadership roles with substantial compensation. Extensive data management restructuring will permit

evaluation procedures to validate decisions made.

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

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

General:

The applicant describes an innovative plan to encourage educators to assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles. A key strategy is that of the Career Ladder Opportunities (pp 53-57). These positions which include the Promise-Readiness Corps (PRC), Clinical Resident Instructors (CRI), Instructional Leaders 2 (ITL2), Turnaround Teachers and other roles, provide unique opportunities to teachers to continue as teachers, but assume duties that are challenging and rewarding. The "job descriptions" and compensation attached to each are fully explained. The Career Ladder path is basic to the PPS plan for change.

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:

MET.

The applicant states a plan for effectively communicating to teachers, administrators, other school personnel and the community at large, the component of performance-based compensation plan during the first year planning period (p 29). The plan will also solicit feedback from those populations on the program. TIF joins an impressive thrust to change the way PPS does business. That effort was initiated several years ago and has apparently been publicized at length. When TIF is implemented, the communication plan for the program will slip easily into the overall effort to communicate with relevant populations.

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:

MET
PPS is very proud of its relationship with the Teachers Unions. The recent five-year collective bargaining agreement solidifies that the relationship is built on collaboration rather than controversy (pp 1, 3-4, 29). All parties involved; teachers, principals, central administrators, and Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) representatives arrived at recommendations that were reflected in the agreement that supports TIF as a part of the overall compensation restructure. The district has in place many strategies and activities that bring teachers, administrators union leaders and others to design the evaluation procedures, special education needs, pay scales, and other concepts that are integral to the success of the TIF 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:

NOT MET: WILL COMPLETE PLAN IN THE PLANNING YEAR.
The BMGF grant, Measures for Effective Teaching (MET), has provided funds for the initial planning of the evaluation procedures needed to implement the PBCS project. The effort is directed toward investigating multiple measures of teacher effectiveness. In addition, a foundational differentiated system of teacher evaluation, Research-based Inclusive System of evaluation (RISE), was developed (p 25). This is not tied to PBCS, but the program includes four domains and 24 components that will be considered when designing a rubric to conduct classroom-based assessments that will be tied to the PBCS (p 47). Other measures will be explored as the program leaders develop the desired new and enhanced evaluation system. This system will include student growth as a prime measure along with multiple classroom observations. The completed evaluation plan will be in place at the end of the planning year.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

NOT MET: WILL COMPLETE SYSTEM IN THE PLANNING YEAR.

Work on the required data management system to link student achievement data to teacher and principal payroll and human resources systems is underway. Realignment of the IT efforts and a comprehensive data warehouse reforms are the prime targets. PPS has partnered with three leading IT vendors to assist in the task (p 49-52). The IT reform efforts are explained in depth. Privacy and security will be of utmost concern. The system is expected to be completed by the end of the planning year.

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:

NOT MET: WILL COMPLETE THE PLAN IN THE PLANNING YEAR.

A goal of the planning year is to establish a plan that will ensure teachers and principals understand all aspects of the PBCS. A system to communicate with internal and external stakeholders by December 2010. The expertise of proven communication consultants will be utilized to accomplish that goal. The communication system will be aligned with the professional development plan to ensure that teachers and principals understand the teacher effectiveness measures to be used as well as how they can use the data generated.

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 professional development aspect of the proposal is well-developed and thorough. It addresses the PD needs of all PPS teachers and staff (53-57) whether or not they receive PBCS funds. It ranges from concerns about new teacher induction, alternative pathways, and career ladder roles, to name a few. Serious consideration has gone into the various needs of teachers at all levels to assist them in helping students be successful. The RISE rubric will be used to design immersion opportunities in professional development (2012). Enhanced summer induction (2010) and a year-long residency program for novice teachers (2011) will be presented. The Career Ladder program will lend itself to professional development, both in readying the participants for their various roles, and as the several roles fulfill their duties as role models and leaders in PD activities. Those are just a few of the creative PD activities presented by the applicant. An external evaluator will assess the program's effectiveness (p 57).

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 gives extensive documentation that is persuasive of the high need rating of the schools to be included in the proposed TIF program. The overall average results of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) mathematics test by grade level, for the past two years indicates the percentage of students scoring proficient or above is acceptable, but each tested grade level decreases until the percentage of proficient scores is at the 40th percentile. Reading proficiency is at a more even level - but the upper grade levels are only at the 50th percentile. Poverty as defined by free and reduced lunch ranges from 52% to 95% in the fifty targeted schools. The applicant has devised a very interesting table (p 10-12). It looks at eight high risk indicators (GPA

less than 2., low PSSA test scores, 1 or more suspensions, single parent home, etc) and calculates the percentage of students in each school that meet at least 75% of the criteria (rating as high risk students). This information adds to the profile of the PPS targeted schools that is provided.

Equally detailed is the research documenting the difficulty these schools have in:
Recruiting highly qualified or effective teachers,
Recruiting effective teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas,
Retaining highly qualified or effective teachers (p 14).

As the applicant notes the reasons for the recruitment and retaining problems, possible approaches to finding a solution are explored (pp 14, 15). Changes in the staffing process, within district transfers, evaluation measures used, and forced placement were some of the topics discussed. A comprehensive analysis of the educational need of the targeted schools is presented.

PPS was assisted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc to identify appropriate comparable schools whose achievement is higher than the 50 targeted schools (p 19). A concise description of the method used and a table indicating the results are given. It is shown that numerous comparable schools are higher performing than the targeted schools (p 20).

Weaknesses:

In the establishment of comparable schools that are higher performing, it is not clear if the numbers given are all comparable schools or if there are a few or many comparable schools that are lower performing. Percentages of comparable schools of either description would be useful.

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:

PPS has a TIF grant dedicated to principal incentives, thus principals are not included in this application.

The applicant addresses each of the points:

Part of a proposed LEA strategy, p 22;

Support of teachers and other personnel, p 45;

Includes rigorous transparent and fair evaluation systems, p47;

Includes a data management system as required, p 49, and;

Incorporates high-quality professional development activities, p 52.

The applicant describes a complex plan that will change the way a school system educates its students. The innovative strategies and activities proposed are detailed so that the process is easy to grasp. Although there are many partners (p 22), related projects, and administrations involved, a sense of collaboration permeates the discussion.

Although the applicant is requesting \$40 million from TIF, there are bigger players in this project. The TIF request is primarily to fund the PBCS in the entire district - 50 schools, and thousands of teachers. Other aspects of reform will come from other grant sources. There could be some gaps in the full picture of this project; however, the applicant clearly explains everyone's role. The PBCS portion, the positions affected, ranking, levels of rewards and evaluation procedures are what is emphasized here. Those awards for high-performing teachers (career ladder) are detailed - they range from a yearly bonus (\$1,000) to a Clinical Resident Differential (\$13,300). Awards can be combined; i.e., there are awards for teaching enrichment classes and for participation in the Promise Readiness Corps (PRC), which combined would be \$16,300. A chart compares the cost of living in Pittsburgh to that of comparable sized U.S. cities. That chart indicates, since Pittsburgh has a relatively low cost of living, the PBCS awards are more substantial than might be seen at first glance; that they are of sufficient size to affect behavior of teachers who receive them. The method of awards calculations is explained - a well planned equitable process (p 41, budget narrative).

Five goals and their related measurable objectives which are closely allayed to the goals of the TIF program are given (pp 25-27). The five goals are:

Implement a planning period over the first year;

Implement a comprehensive compensation system based on student growth;

Increase the percentage of teachers who have a record of effectiveness;

Increase student achievement;

Implement multiple measures of teacher effectiveness.

Measures for each objective that detail expected outcomes are provided. The data management system that is a work-in-progress will facilitate all aspects of evaluation. The first year of the grant will be used to complete critical components that will allow implementation of the PBCS in 2011-2012 school year. The development of value added measures that will be tied to student growth evaluation; (p 27) a significant factor in the PBCS evaluation; will be completed. The complex structure of compensation for all

levels of schools in the district will be formulated. Mathematica is closely involved in all evaluative aspect of the project, particularly that of the Valued Added Measures (VAM).

Three of many interesting concepts are noted -

To match demonstrably effective educators with the high need schools and actually make it a mark of distinction to be a teacher of the highest-need students (p 32).

To develop a corps of teachers, Promise-Readiness Corp (PRC), to focus on getting 9th and 10th grade students to successfully get to the 11th grade. A team of highly effective teachers would be assigned to a cadre of ninth graders and would stay with that student group for two years, thus enabling the building of a close-knit "family" relationship (pp 32-34)

To provide mentors and instructional coaches to new teachers (p 34-35).

These, and five other positions of added responsibility and leadership, are part of the career ladder concept (pp 36-37).

Weaknesses:

The term "highly effective teachers" in regard to the initial career ladder positions only, is unclear. The proposal universally states the teachers who are put into these positions and maintained for two - or three - years, are highly effective. Yet there is no indication the first year participants (2011-2012) in these positions have been evaluated according to student growth, multiple classroom observations, or other evaluative measures the applicant requires of the highly qualified rating in the PBCS before being placed on the career ladder.

Reader's Score: 57

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:

Because of the many educational and research organization, foundations, and unions involved in this extraordinary, complex project, the management structure is also complex. "Cross functional" collaboration is a necessity. Since the basic project has been on-going at some level for five years, the primary management structure and key personnel are in place; the administration of the TIF grant will fit in smoothly with the other responsibilities they are charged with (pp 58-60). Since the project funded by the BMGF, "Empowering Effective Teachers" (EET), is so closely allayed with the TIF project, they will share the 21 -member Steering Committee. This combining of administrative structure will facilitate early implementation of the TIF grant funds.

As noted elsewhere in this review, PPS has done considerable planning to facilitate

continuation of the program after grant funding ends.

A detailed implementation chart for the TIF project is provided (pp 69-79). It describes the relationship of the goals to activities, personnel responsible, resources and dates of action.

Four new positions will be funded by TIF to fill in identified gaps (p 80). The Curriculum vita (appendix) provided note the academic and professional credentials of the proposed PBCS project senior personnel.

PPS's executive director of the Office of Teacher Effectiveness, currently in place, will serve as project Director. The Steering Committee membership, primarily that of the leadership of the many programs participating in the comprehensive effort discussed here, is provided(p 87, 88)

The project leaders have accessed considerable other sources of funding; private foundations, state and federal grants, and community supporters (pp 88-91). The applicant notes the commitment of all entities to the project and discusses strategies to sustain the project past the grant funding (p 91).

The applicant provides a coherent rationale for the necessity of the funding request given the scope of the project (p 93). The costs are justified because the effort is direct toward a comprehensive effort to completely change how teachers advance in their profession. The applicant argues that, in order to be fully effective, all aspects of the plan must be implemented - this takes a considerable investment of funds. The budget narrative succinctly details the funding request.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Local Evaluation

1.(D) Quality of Local Evaluation (5 points):

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The evaluation plan is guided by the 5 goals and measurable objective of the proposed project (pp 95-96). The evaluation will be summative and formative, and will utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods, including new sources of data and extant data. A series of questions (p 97-98) following the goals and objectives of the PPS proposal, are provided. Specific data sources are noted and the methods of evaluation are provided. Examples of data to be used are teacher and principal surveys, test scores, personnel budgets, administrative data, interviews, demographic recruitment, and retention data, etc.

A mixed-method approach will be used for data analysis. The results will be used to improve student achievement at all levels (p 99).

Weaknesses:

Additional sources of data to be used in the evaluation process will be developed during the planning year.

Evaluation of effective teacher recruitment is not addressed

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

Strengths:

A major thrust of this project deals with "Value Added Measures" (VAM) (p 13). Mathematica is assisting PPS to develop the VAM strategy that will be a part of the comprehensive PBCS for educators. More tests will be considered for a guide in the development of a rigorous, valid PBCS evaluation (pp 38-40). A VAM Technical Advisory Board that will evaluate new "Value Added" elements.

The comprehensive data warehouse will make all data available to teachers. The system will be fair, objective and transparent. The process will be informed by the expertise of the teachers themselves so that it can be used by them in all aspects of their practice (p 45).

PPS and PFT were funded by the MGBF in 2009 to participate in the MET research project which is designed to identify and support good teaching by improving the quality of information available about teacher effectiveness. PPS will identify MET established measures and apply them as appropriate to the teacher evaluation PBCS process.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

Strengths:

After considerable research, PPS is in the process of changing its methods of staffing in order to retain more teachers. It has been the case that high-need schools' faculty are the last assigned; consequently the least prepared teachers teach in high need schools and transfer requests are notably higher than in other schools. Change of timing, multiple screening measures, differentiated compensation for those accepting a teaching assignment in a high risk school, are a few of the ploys being considered (p 14). Particular emphasis is to be placed on teachers in hard-to-staff areas. PPS uses a screening process that is specific to applicants in those areas - Mathematics, Chemistry, Special Education, etc. - Only between 25% and 50% of the applicants passed it in 2010-2011. A primary initiative to combat the need for effective teachers in these areas is to establish six promotional high impact career ladder roles with substantial differentiated compensation and a three-year commitment during which transfer requests will not be honored.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant describes a communication plan (p 29), it is not specifically designed for the purpose of communicating to teachers which schools are high-need and which areas are hard to staff.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 7/30/10 11:58 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 7/30/10 10:31 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: School District of Pittsburgh -- , (S385A100125)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Evaluation Criteria		
Absolute Priority 1		
1.Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
1.Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluaton Criteria		
Absolute Priority 3		
1.Absolute Priority 3	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Requirement		
Requirement		
1.Requirement	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Evaluation Criteria		
Core Element 1		
1.Core Element 1	0	0
Core Element 2		
1.Core Element 2	0	0
Core Element 3		
1.Core Element 3	0	0
Core Element 4		
1.Core Element 4	0	0
Core Element 5		
1.Core Element 5	0	0
High Quality Professional Development		
1.Professional Development	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
Need for the Project		
1.Need for Project	10	8
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	53
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	25
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	2
Sub Total	100	88

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	5
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	3
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Sub Total	10	8
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Total	110	96
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Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Panel - 13: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: School District of Pittsburgh -- , (S385A100125)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

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

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

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

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

General:

The proposed project is part of a larger initiative to address educator performance-based compensation within the district, as evidenced by the Empowering Effective Teachers plan that was developed in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT), the TIF funded Leadership System of Excellence for principals, and a 2009 locally funded incentive for district administrators (pp. 22-23).

The proposal describes a complex system of teacher compensation which includes 4 grant-funded components. Three components include incentives based on student achievement growth: an AYP bonus to all teachers at the top step of salary schedules if the district meets AYP, STAR (Students and Teachers Achieving Results) bonuses of up to \$6,000 for teachers and other identified school staff for improvement scores, and a cohort bonus for teachers who are part of the Promise-Readiness Corps. The AYP bonus of \$1,000 does not seem significant enough to motivate change in instructional behavior (pp. 30-36).

NOTE: A 2007 TIF grant is providing principal incentives in the identified schools; therefore, principal incentives are not included in this proposal (p. 12).

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 costs of implementation during the grant period are clearly outlined in the budget narrative; however, costs of implementation beyond the grant period are not provided. The applicant describes a commitment to sustaining the PBCS and indicates that its share of the costs will increase during the project, from 10 percent in year 2 to 75 percent in year 5 (p. 91), but this is not evident in the budget narrative which reflects TIF funding for the PBCS at level or increasing amounts.

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 professional management system will link teacher and administrator evaluation results to corresponding professional development opportunities (p. 54). Immersion opportunities for veteran teachers will consist of 6-week modules aligned to evaluations and self-selection (pp. 53-54).

The application states that tenure decisions will be more data-driven and "will consider the ability to grow student learning to an acceptable standard." The teacher rating process will be the primary factor in teacher retention decisions (p. 37).

Reader's Score: 0

Requirement - Requirement

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

General:

Teachers will have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles through career ladder opportunities such as Promise-Readiness Corps, Clinical Resident Instructors, Instructional Teacher Leaders, Turnaround Teachers, and Learning Environment Specialists (pp. 32-36). These positions afford educators with numerous additional responsibilities and leadership roles, including closely tracking individual students for 2 years and tailoring their instruction accordingly, mentoring and coaching new and veteran teachers, serving as content experts, evaluating peers, and providing professional development relative to strident behavior management.

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 application does not meet Core Element 1. The project will incorporate a communications team consisting of a communications coordinator within the Office of Teacher Effectiveness, the district communications office, key PFT leaders, and consulting services from a public relations firm. The communications system has not yet been fully developed. The application includes the development of this core element as an objective for the planning year (p. 25).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

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

General:

The application does not meet Core Element 2. The proposed project is reflective of a bargaining agreement recently approved by the PFT, establishing a framework for designing a performance-based compensation program with the involvement of all stakeholders (p. 46). Considering the scope of the project (implementation in 50 schools), PFT vote of 1,169 to 537 in favor of the collective bargaining agreement is not adequate demonstration of school-level teacher support. The application includes the development of this core element as an objective for the planning year, by gathering input from teachers and principals (p. 25). Forty four volunteers, including 5 principals and 32 teachers, have signed up for the VAM Student Learning Subcommittee (p. 40).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

The application does not meet Core Element 3. The evaluation system will be based on the one that has recently been adopted - RISE. Project staff will select from the 24 components contained in the rubric and will develop a fifth domain concerning career ladders (pp. 48-49). The application includes the development of this core element as an objective for the planning year (p. 25).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

The application does not meet Core Element 4. The district has begun work necessary to develop a data-management system that links student achievement data with payroll and human resources systems. The application outlines the systems in place and the measures that will be undertaken to link these systems and ensure FERPA compliance. Three IT contractors are already in place to continue these efforts (pp. 51-53). The application includes the development of this core element as an objective for the planning year (p. 25).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

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

General:

The application meets Core Element 5. The project will include training to ensure that teachers and principals understand each of the measures of teacher effectiveness and how to use data to improve instruction. (p. 56). The application includes the development of this core element as an objective for the planning year (p. 25).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

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

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

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

(3) Provide --

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

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

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

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

General:

The Teacher Academy will serve both new and veteran teachers. New/novice teachers will receive 3 weeks of summer training, replacing a 3-day orientation, and an additional 10 days of training throughout the year (p. 53). Immersion opportunities for veteran teachers will consist of 6-week modules aligned to evaluations and self-selection (pp. 53-54). The professional management system will link teacher and administrator evaluation results to corresponding professional development opportunities (p. 54). The evaluation plan includes teacher impacts such as impact of professional development on teachers' skill, knowledge, and data tools necessary to enhance student performance (p. 96).

These components comprise a professional development program that will comprehensively address the needs of new and veteran teachers and will link interventions and enrichment with evaluations.

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:

Three schools are identified as having large percentages of teachers who are on staff as a result of "forced placement" - King (32 percent), Peabody (26 percent), and Westinghouse (22 percent). These schools also had the highest number of requests to transfer out (p. 15). This evidence strongly identifies need in these 3 schools based on teacher retention. The application identifies 6 hard-to-staff areas with percentages of applicants who applied for openings in these areas. Those that passed the screening criteria for effectiveness ranged from 22 percent to 45 percent (p. 16). The data indicate the subject areas that are hard-to-fill.

Eleven percent of the district's teachers requested to transfer to a different school in 2010-11 (p. 16). The 3-year study found that the district's most vulnerable (highest need in terms of poverty, discipline issues, and lagging student achievement) had more teacher transfer requests (p. 17). Two of the characteristics of the most vulnerable schools - high poverty and low student achievement - are factors central to TIF.

The application includes data relative to the participating schools and schools identified as comparable. The average number of comparable schools scoring higher than participating schools ranges from 3.25 for high school mathematics to 28.39 for elementary reading (pp. 19-20).

Comparable schools are Pennsylvania schools identified on the basis of size, grade level, and poverty level (p. 19). Schools are matched on an individual basis to comparable schools based on their unique characteristics (pp. 20-21).

NOTE: Principal retention is not addressed; however, this proposal focuses on a PBCS for teachers, to complement the one funded through TIF for principals in 2007 (p. 12).

Weaknesses:

Information concerning the number of vacancies as compared to the number of applicants who passed the initial screening measures is needed to clearly demonstrate the degree to which the identified areas are difficult to staff (p. 16).

Providing the number of comparable schools identified for each participating school would further demonstrate the degree to which student achievement is an issue. Appendix 6 indicates for each participating schools how many comparable schools scored higher in math and reading. These numbers vary significantly from one school (Banksville

Elementary) which is outscored by 65 and 89 schools respectively, to South Hills Middle School which is outscored by 1 and 0 schools. (pp. 53-54).

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The proposed project is part of a larger initiative to address educator performance-based compensation within the district, as evidenced by the Empowering Effective Teachers plan that was developed in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, the TIF

funded Leadership System of Excellence for principals, and a 2009 locally funded incentive for district administrators (pp. 22-23).

The proposal describes a complex system of teacher compensation which includes six components, 4 of which would be grant funded. The 2 that are not budgeted in the grant further indicate a larger district-wide initiative (pp. 30-36).

The application describes extensive work to be completed in the planning year that will establish value-added measures that will be valid and reliable. The plan includes (1) contracting with Mathematica to identify tests in addition to the state standardized test and to run simulations and (2) convening a well-qualified Technical Advisory Board for the purpose of quality control (pp. 38-39).

Three incentives include components based on student achievement growth: an AYP bonus to all teachers at the top step of salary schedules if the district meets AYP, STAR (Students and Teachers Achieving Results) bonuses for teachers and other identified school staff for improvement scores, and differential pay and a cohort bonus for teachers who are part of the Promise-Readiness Corps. The bonuses for STAR (\$6,000 for full time professionals) and the Promise-Readiness Corp (\$9,300 pay differential plus cohort effectiveness bonus) are sufficient to affect behavior.

The proposed project is reflective of a bargaining agreement recently approved by the PFT (p. 46).

Forty four volunteers, including 5 principals and 32 teachers, have signed up for the VAM Student Learning Subcommittee (p. 40).

The application presents a plan to develop a new and enhanced evaluation system that will be based on the current system - RISE. The new system will include multiple measures and ensure inter-rater reliability (pp. 47-48).

The district has begun work necessary to develop a data-management system that links student achievement data with payroll and human resources systems. The application outlines the systems in place and the measures that will be undertaken to link these systems and ensure FERPA compliance. Three IT contractors are already in place to continue these efforts (pp. 51-53).

The Teacher Academy will serve both new and veteran teachers. New/novice teachers will receive 3 weeks of summer training, replacing a 3-day orientation, and an additional 10 days of training throughout the year (p. 53). Immersion opportunities for veteran teachers will consist of 6-week modules aligned to evaluations and self-selection (pp. 53-54).

The professional management system will link teacher and administrator evaluation results to corresponding professional development opportunities (p. 54).

These components comprise a professional development program that will comprehensively address the needs of new and veteran teachers and will link interventions and enrichment with evaluations.

Weaknesses:

The AYP bonus of \$1,000 does not seem significant enough to motivate change in instructional behavior (p. 30).

The incentives provided to clinical resident instructors, instructional teacher leaders, turnaround teachers, learning environment specialists, and enrichment period teachers are pay differential that do not take into account subsequent student growth. The enrichment period component would compensate for teaching additional classes beyond the basic teacher work day, which does not clearly serve as an incentive reward (pp. 34-35). The proposed project does not use subsequent student growth as a factor in compensating for these positions. Doing so could impact instructional behavior, thereby impacting student outcomes.

Considering the scope of the project (implementation in 50 schools), PFT vote of 1,169 to 537 in favor of the collective bargaining agreement is not adequate demonstration of school-level teacher support. More evidence is needed concerning the degree to which teachers and other affected personnel support the proposal and have been involved in its development (p. 46).

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

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

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

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

Strengths:

The application describes the current staffing and organizational structures that are in place for the Empowering Effective Teachers initiative, which will be a strong foundation for the implementation of the proposed project (pp. 59-63).

The application includes a detailed management plan that includes personnel responsible, additional resources required and completion dates for specific yearly action steps/milestones aligned to project objectives (pp. 69-79).

The narrative describes the qualifications of key personnel and explains how grant activities will fit into current responsibilities (pp. 80-84).

Resumes included for key personnel demonstrate a strong capacity for project implementation (Appendix 1).

Position descriptions for positions to be filled outline major responsibilities and required appropriate qualifications (Appendix 9).

Several major grants and private funding sources are in place that will further support implementation of the proposal. These include an effective teaching program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Fund for Excellence funded by a consortium of local foundations (pp. 89-90).

In-kind personnel costs are outlined and include the equivalent of 1.9 FTEs (p. 66).

The budget narrative details costs that are consistent with the proposal and sufficient to attain project goals. Mathematica consultant fees, incentives and differential pay for teachers and principals, travel to required TIF meetings, and project evaluation are included

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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 application includes evaluation questions linked to each of the project's 5 goals, which focus on educator compensation and effectiveness, student achievement, and value-added measures (pp. 95-96).

The evaluation plan includes both qualitative (surveys and interviews) and quantitative (test scores and budgets) data.

The methods of data analysis are described (pp. 100-101).

The management plan describes a 21-member Steering Committee that will meet 3 times per month to monitor progress and advise on overall implementation strategies (p. 87).

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan does not provide detail concerning the data sources and timeframe for each project objective (pp. 95-101).

The project's goals and objectives do not address the retention and recruitment of effective teachers and other personnel (pp. 25-27; 95-96).

Teacher recruitment is not included in the evaluation plan, and teacher retention is addressed in only general terms (pp. 99-100).

The project's performance objectives are not consistently strong. For example, the performance objectives for goal 4 offer very minimal improvement in student academic achievement. Relatively low expectations are also evident in objectives for other goals (pp. 26-27).

The evaluation plan does not clearly indicate what data and analyses will be available at what intervals and what procedures will be implemented to ensure feedback and continuous improvement. More information is needed concerning how the evaluation plan will provide timely data and feedback to the Steering Committee (pp. 100-101).

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

Under this priority, the applicant must also demonstrate that it has a plan to ensure

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

Strengths:

The application describes extensive work to be completed in the planning year that will establish value-added measures that will be valid and reliable. The plan includes (1) contracting with Mathematica to identify tests in addition to the state standardized test and to run simulations and (2) convening a well-qualified Technical Advisory Board for the purpose of quality control (pp. 38-39). The IT capacities in place, along with the work currently being done and outlined to take place during the planning year, indicate that the applicant will be well equipped to collect and explain the model to teachers. Teachers' understanding of the value-added methodology and their ability to use it to shape instruction are addressed in the objectives pertaining to Goal 2 (p. 25).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

Strengths:

The project focuses on high-need students by disaggregating data based on free/reduced lunch status and race. Objectives relative to Goal 4 call for a narrowing of the achievement gap for high-need students (p. 26). Clinical Resident Instructors will be assigned classes of high-need students. These students will benefit from teachers who have proven their instructional effectiveness and from mentees that will be present in their classes (p. 34). Turnaround Teachers will be placed in low-performing elementary and middle schools; Promise-Readiness Corps will be placed in 8 high schools (pp. 32-33). These teachers must make 3- and 2- year commitments, respectively, ensuring their retention and the program components' stability.

Weaknesses:

The application does not specifically address how it will assist schools in recruiting and retaining effective teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas. No project objectives were included to offer expectations for retention and recruitment (p. 25). The applicant does not clearly address how teachers will be determined to be effective in the recruitment process.

The application does not include information concerning how the district will communicate hard-to-staff areas to teachers.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 7/30/10 10:31 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 7/30/10 11:54 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: School District of Pittsburgh -- , (S385A100125)

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	10
Project Design		

1.Project Design	60	58
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	25
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	3
Sub Total	100	96

Priority Questions

Priority Preference

Competitive Preference Priority 1

1.Competitive Priority 1	5	4
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Competitive Preference Priority 2

1.Competitive Priority 2	5	5
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Sub Total	10	9
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Total	110	105
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Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - Panel - 13: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: School District of Pittsburgh -- , (S385A100125)

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 district has in place a salary schedule that already differentiates pay based on evaluation and student growth. Since a differentiated compensation system is already in place, this TIF PBCS application addresses additional student achievement awards/incentives (pg. 32-32).

- (a) To measure teacher contribution to student growth, the district developed a performance pay system that rewards teachers. Over the planning period this compensation system will be advanced by incorporating a Value-Added Model (VAM) to be used as one of the measures (pg. 38.) on the teacher rating rubric. The RISE system incorporates 24 descriptors teachers to determine teacher effectiveness. During the planning year the Differentiating Compensation in Pittsburgh's PBCS will review these descriptors to determine which would fit in this plan. Student achievement is a significant factor in the awarding of these incentives. (b) Observations will be conducted at least twice per year (pg. 28) by teacher and principal evaluators. The evaluators will receive intensive

training to establish inter-rater reliability (pg. 48). Appropriate components from the 24 components of the rubric currently being used in RISE (Research-Based Inclusive System of Evaluation) will be selected to develop a process for conducting classroom-based observation that tie to the PBCS (pg. 48). (c) An extensive list of additional responsibilities has been incorporated into the PBCS (pg. 32 - 37). According to research conducted by the district, awards are appropriate for the role. The district already has a TIF grant to address principal differentiated compensation. Thus, this application only addresses teachers.

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 submitted a detailed budget of costs associated with the project (see budget narrative). The applicant has identified some funding sources to help with financial cost of the project:

- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- The Funding Excellence (FFE)
- School Improvement Grants
- Race to The Top - these grants have not be awarded yet

Sustained support appears to be in place. The district will pick up more and more of the costs through year 5. After year 5 the district will cover 100% of the costs.

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 district's Excellence for All reform outlines a plan to provide effective professional development. Data is collected through a Professional Development Management System (PSMS). Through a new IT System, PDMS will link teachers and administrators to professional development opportunities based on needs identified in their evaluations (pg. 54).

The applicant provides an appropriate plan to address the issues of retention and tenure. Under the new plan, new teachers will receive tenure after four years instead of three years, and the tenure decisions will be a chance to celebrate a teachers accomplished instructional practices and demonstrated ability to drive student achievement over time (pg. 37). Under the Career Ladder plan, teachers have specific requirements they have to reach. They have to reach these requirements before tenure.

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:

A highly quality list of additional roles and responsibilities has been incorporated in to the PBCS (pg. 32-37). The PBCS outlines the responsibilities of each role and the differentiated compensation awarded. Career Ladder and Instructional Leader are examples of other responsibilities.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

- 1. Core Element 1:**

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

General:

Core Element 1 has been met.

An appropriate method to effectively communicate to teachers, administrators, and other school personnel, and the community at-large has been presented beginning with the development of a communications team. The team has numerous representatives from key stakeholders. The team includes: a communications coordinator in the Office of Teacher Effectiveness, an experienced and well staffed Communications department, the expertise of key AFT (union) leaders" (pg. 57). Other forms of communication identified: district-wide school based-training, hosting a two-day Cooperative Convening with teachers and administrators to tackle core components of the plan requiring collective bargaining, producing bi-weekly eNews Update, developing a direct mailing list, dedicating a full issue of The Pittsburgh Educator newsletter to explain the plan, and posting daily FAQs to the website. The components of the plan are to be communicate by December 2010 (pg. 58).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

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

General:

Core Element 2 has been met.

Throughout the application, the applicant has adequately provided numerous examples about the involvement of other stakeholders (union, parents, office staff, principals) in the development of the application, and if awarded a grant, the involvement in the development of the plan.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

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

General:

Core Element 3 has been met.

An evaluation system (rubric) is being developed to fulfill requirements of another initiative. The VAM, developed for the PBCS, will be added to the evaluation rubric as another form of measure. Currently research is being conducted to determine value-added components, so the applicant not could provide specific details at this time.

An appropriate evaluation system is addressed. The evaluation rubric is based on The Danielson Group: The Framework for Teaching: Components of Professional Practice. The Framework for Teaching.

Observations will be conducted at least twice per year (pg. 28) by teacher and principal evaluators. The evaluators will receive intensive training to establish inter-rater reliability (pg. 48). The applicant does not address the specifics of this training. Appropriate components from the 24 components of the rubric currently being used in RISE (Research-Based Inclusive System of Evaluation) will be selected to develop a process for conducting classroom-based observation that ties to the PBCS (pg. 48). These components

have not been identified.

In 2009-10 the district received a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Grant to address other measures of effectiveness: supplemental student assessments, student feedback, videotaped classroom observations, teacher feedback on the learning environment and teacher,s ability to recognize and diagnose student misperceptions. Over the planning year these measures of effectiveness will be examined to see if they are appropriate for the PBCS. During the planning year other measures will explored. The applicant does not identify the other measures to be explored.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1.Core Element 4:

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

General:

Core Element 4 has not been met.

The district is currently working on a data management system that will have the capacity to integrate student achievement and human resource systems. The system is to be completed by the end of the 2010-11 school year (pg. 49). Using the existing online data management system, RTI (Real Time Information), work is underway to move student data into a secure data warehouse where it can be integrated with other data types, assessment results, and teacher compensation information (pg. 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:

Core Element 5 has been met.

The applicant has identified many specific communication tools it will use to provide information about the PBCS. Over the course of the planning year the district will develop a communication plan aligned to the professional development plan to ensure that teachers and principals understand the specific measures of teacher and principal effectiveness included in the PBCS (pg. 55). The district refers to this plan as the engagement plan. Specific components of the engagement plan are identified in the application (pg. 58).

RISE and VAM will be used by teachers and principals to identify professional development needs. The Professional Development Management System (PDMS) will help teachers identify PD opportunities. PDMS will link teachers and administrators to professional development opportunities aligned to their evaluation profile through the new IT Systems. By

cataloging training opportunities for teachers, this system will help evaluate the quality of the opportunities (pg. 54).

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

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

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

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

(3) Provide --

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

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

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

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

General:

(1, 2 & 3) A comprehensive plan has been developed to address the professional development needs of the teachers and administrators. Needs are identified through the RISE evaluation process. Professional development activities are designed based on the needs identified. The Empowering Effective Teachers (EET) plan, funded through a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Grant, includes a high-quality professional development component (pg. 53) addressing not only professional development opportunities to enhance student achievement, but additional responsibilities and leadership roles teachers and principals can apply for to further enhance their practice and the teaching effectiveness of others (Career Ladders Roles) (pg. 54). Career Ladder Roles are tied to supplemental compensation. The compensation amounts are adequate and appropriate. Some additional components of EET:

- The Teacher Academy
- Professional Development Management System (Will link teachers and principals to professional development opportunities tailored to their individual needs)

as identified through the evaluation process. The system will also help to evaluate the

quality of the professional development opportunities.

- Career Ladder Roles
- RISE
- Supported Growth Models
- Training on Using PBCS Measures of Teacher Effectiveness
- Assess the Effectiveness of Professional Development
- Capacity to Implement the Professional Development System (pg. 53 -57)

(4) An adequate plan (engagement) will be developed in the planning year to support teachers and principals to better understand and use the measures of effectiveness. The plan will also address how teachers and principals can use the data generated to improve instructional practices (pg. 56).

(5) The district will hire an external evaluator to regularly assess the effectiveness of the professional development (pg. 56); however, depth and scope of the evaluation are not identified. Inquiry questions have been developed to help guide evaluation of the PBCS. Inquiry 10 addresses professional development effectiveness (pg. 94).

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Need for the Project

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

(1) The applicant provides significant data and evidence on issues relating to recruiting and retaining high quality staff in hard-to-staff subject areas and schools. Based on the data gathered one of the district's initiatives is to launch six high impact career ladders roles that will be linked to substantial differentiate compensation. The teachers and principals who apply for these roles have to have proven effectiveness at increasing student achievement and working with colleagues. In many of these career ladder roles, teachers and principals have to serve a three year term before a request for transfer will be granted (pg. 18). (2) According to the applicant research was conducted at the state education department to find comparable schools in regards to school size, type, student population and achievement. Findings indicate that there was at least one comparable school for each targeted school (pg. 20). (3) A statistical calculation was used to define a "comparable school." This calculation also calculated for school type, poverty and size (pg. 21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

(1) The "Differentiating Compensation in Pittsburgh" plan is designed to enhance various other initiatives in the district - RISE (Research-Based Inclusive System of Evaluation)

and EET (Empowering Effective Teachers). A comprehensive compensation system linked to student growth has already been drafted. The TIF funds will enhance the already existing compensation system by providing additional awards/incentives to teachers who are proven to effect student achievement. (2) The applicant presents numerous ways various stakeholders have been involved in the process. The union has been involved in many aspects of the PBCS. (3) The use of the researched based RISE system will help in the evaluation of teach effectiveness with the significant factor of effectiveness based on student growth. The evaluation rubric is based on the Danielson framework. Value-added measures are being researched and will be included in this instrument as another means to evaluate effectiveness. Career Ladder Roles are tied to additional and adequate compensation and teacher effectiveness. The compensation amounts are sufficient for the PBCS. (4) A strong data management system is in the process of development. The school district currently utilizes the RTI online data management system, but will be transferring student data into a secure data warehouse where it can be integrated with other data, assessment results, and teacher compensation information (50). (5) High quality professional development is addressed through the district's comprehensive EET plan. PBCS components, such as Training on Using PBCS Measure of Teacher Effectiveness will be integrated into this plan.

Weaknesses:

RISE is the evaluation system developed in another initiative. The applicant often refers to this evaluation system but the components of RISE are never fully described in this application so it is difficult to determine the measures of performance.

Reader's Score: 58

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project

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

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

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

Strengths:

(1 & 4) A comprehensive chart of measureable goals and objectives are identified (pg. 25-27). The applicant presents a detailed budget (Budget Narrative) that is sufficient to meet goals and objectives. A thorough description of the implementation process is developed: Management staff and their in-kind support - management chart beginning on pg. 66 and implementation chart beginning on page 69. (2) The project director and other key personnel are identified, and evidence is provided to support their qualifications. (3) The applicant identifies extensive support for the proposed project - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Funding Excellence, etc.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Local Evaluation

1.(D) Quality of Local Evaluation (5 points):

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

Comprehensive measurable goals and performance objectives addressing teacher and principal effectiveness and retainment and recruitment are identified in the application (pg. 25-27). (2 & 3) An external evaluator will be hired to conduct regular evaluations of the program and professional development effectiveness. The applicant has identified evaluation questions to assist in gather feedback (pg. 96). Evaluation data also will be collected by other sources: surveys of teachers, interviews with teachers, principals, district-level officials, and other stakeholders, analysis of extant data such as test scores, review of documents, and reviews of administrative data. A mix-method approach will be used for data analysis (pg. 100). A steering committee will be developed to help direct the project.

Weaknesses:

A communication plan is in place, but it doesn't specifically address communication to teachers and principals about which schools are high-need and which subjects and specialty areas are considered hard-to-staff. The applicant doesn't address how they will fill vacancies in hard-to-staff schools with effective or likely to be effective teachers. The applicant addresses hard to fill subject areas, but doesn't address a plan to recruit effective teachers into these hard-to-fill areas.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

To meet this competitive preference priority, the applicant must demonstrate, in its application, that the proposed PBCS for teachers, principals, and other personnel (in

those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools) will use a value-added measure of the impact on student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor in calculating differentiated levels of compensation provided to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools).

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

Strengths:

A large component of this TIF application is the use of value-added measure. These measures will be incorporated into RISE as another measure of teacher effectiveness.

A large component of this TIF application is the use of value-added measure. These measures will be incorporated into RISE as another measure of teacher effectiveness. PPS and the PFT, has partnered with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. to develop multiple valid and reliable measures of effective teaching, including Value-Added Measures (VAMs). This worked will be developed more over the planning year.

Weaknesses:

The applicant could not provide a description of these measures at this time because they are in the process of researching appropriate value-added measures.

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

Strengths:

The district has done extensive research on causes of retention and recruitment issues within the district. To address the issue of transitioning from high need schools and hard to fill subject areas, the district will launch six promotional, high impact career ladder roles. These roles will be tied to a differentiated compensation (recruitment) for teachers who have proven their effectiveness by increasing student achievement and working with colleagues to help them increase their teacher effectiveness. Teachers who apply and are accepted into these roles will serve a three term before any transfer requests will be approved (pg. 19) (retention).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 7/30/10 11:54 AM