

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:17 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives,
(S385A100128)

Reader #1: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 1

1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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Absolute Priority 2

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

Absolute Priority 3

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

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
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Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
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Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
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Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
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Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
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High Quality Professional Development

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

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	10
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Project Design

1.Project Design	60	58
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	25
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	98

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	107
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Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Panel - 15: 84.385A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives, (S385A100128)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

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

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

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

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

General:

The applicant sufficiently describes a model that is comprehensive enough to meet the goal of creating change in the behavior of current and prospective teachers and principals. The PBCS outlined in the application utilizes student achievement data, observation-based assessments of teacher and principal performance at three or more times per year, a training system for evaluators, and incentives for leadership participation. Principal effectiveness is based on school student achievement and leadership performance based on a leadership assessment tool.

The applicant describes differentiated effectiveness incentive payments that are substantial.

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 provides a detailed budget narrative that sufficiently projects costs, matching funds, and a description of increases in non-TIF funding over the course of the project. The applicant provides a clear plan for how it will support the proposed project with \$30,942,720 in matching funds and will provide a 10%, 20%, and 40% match for differentiated compensation in years 3, 4 and 5. The budget narrative describes a sustainable system that is well supported in each area needed to implement the PBCS.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 3

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that - -

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

General:

The applicant describes a thoughtfully planned out PBCS that is designed to strengthen the educator workforce through multiple professional development opportunities, mentoring by Master teachers, and professional feedback on teacher and student performance through mechanisms that allow teachers to understand the evaluation process and participate in it. The amounts of incentives appear to be reasonable and substantial enough to support retention of teachers. The value-added system for identifying effective teachers will provide a valid source of information for making decisions about professional development needs.

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 a clear plan for encouraging educators to take on additional responsibilities. The plan provides \$10,000 in incentives to teachers who become Master teachers. Mentor teachers receive \$5000. These provisions are well designed to increase the number of highly effective teachers and substantial enough to change teacher behaviors, while improving student achievement, professional development and teacher retention.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1:

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

General:

The applicant describes a high quality plan for communicating information about the PBCS that includes hiring a public relations firm, utilizing a website, meeting with teachers and stakeholders, and conducting site visits to schools using the PBCS model. The communication plan appears to be sufficient for effectively disseminating this information.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2:

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

General:

The applicant provides numerous letters of support for the PBCS from teachers, principals, school boards, superintendents, and the state education agency. Survey data on teachers' perceptions of the system were provided and were positive. The project appears to be well supported by stakeholders, including AFT. A letter of support from a local teachers' union or association was not included in the application, however.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3:

Comment on the quality of the applicant's implementation, or plan to implement, a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account student growth (as defined in the Federal Register notice) as a significant factor, as

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

General:

The applicant has over 10 years of experience utilizing the TAP model, which is a comprehensive, researched-based reform model and has a well thought-out plan for implementing it. The plan includes visits with teachers by a TAP representative, presentations, case studies, and a website to promote communication. In partnership with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, the applicant proposes to develop a PBCS in 11 districts using the TAP model, which provides differentiated compensation for teachers and principals based on teachers' performance and the academic performance of their students (page 9). The methodology proposed in this model appears to be valid, using Saunders SAS EVAAS value-added analysis methodology, which is considered a reliable method for analyzing student growth.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4:

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

General:

The applicant has a well described plan for implementing a data management system that links student achievement data using CODE software and Battle for Kids software to evaluation data. The data will be analyzed by the vendor SAS, using a value added model allowing results to be assessable to stakeholders. It is unclear how the system works with payroll and human resource systems.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

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

General:

The applicant describes numerous and effective methods for communicating with teachers and principals about the evaluation measures. These include professional development trainings, TAP presentations, a website with resources regarding the measures, and opportunities to work with mentors. The plan to use value added data reports that are available to teachers is a great advantage, and is likely to enhance their use of data and promote understanding of student growth.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

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

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

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

(3) Provide --

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

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

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

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

General:

The applicant describes a comprehensive professional development plan for teachers that includes cluster group professional growth activities for all teachers on a weekly basis, evaluation trainings, data training presentations are described to provide technical assistance on implementing the model, which includes three observations per year with feedback. Mentors and Master teachers play an important role in supporting staff and improving instruction.

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 describes 11 districts that will be a part of this project as high-need districts with low student achievement, low socioeconomic status, and with an average of 72% classified as economically disadvantaged (page e1).

(i). The applicant describes challenges to recruiting highly qualified, effective and experienced teachers due to the high number of novice teachers in the districts, the number of inexperienced new principals, and low academic achievement (pages 3 and 6).

(ii). The partner districts are described as high minority, with high teacher and principal turnover (some as high as 70%) (page e1 and page 4).

2. The applicant provides a graphic on page 8 that illustrates gaps in student achievement in the partner districts, in relation to comparable districts. Two examples of low achieving schools are also illustrated on page 7.

3. The applicant describes 40 comparable schools that are identified by the state accountability structure (page 6). Schools are compared by the percent of students that are African American, Hispanic, White, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient and mobile. Schools are compared base on type of school (elementary, middle, or high school) and on size of school (page 6).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found in this section.

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 applicant, in partnership with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, proposes to develop a PBCS using the TAP model, which is a comprehensive, researched-based reform model that provides differentiated compensation for teachers and principals based on teachers' performance and the academic performance of their students (page 9).

(i) The methodology proposed in this model includes using the Saunders SAS EVAAS value added analysis methodology, which is considered a valid and reliable method of analyzing student growth. The applicant proposes to partner with Battelle for Kids, to ensure the accuracy of the teacher linkage data for value-added calculations (page 11), as well as a partnership with SAS to conduct the analysis. CODE software will be used to link evaluation data with student achievement data.

(ii) The performance awards to teachers, principals, and other personnel are of sufficient size to impact their decisions as to whether to go to, or remain working in, the high-need school, with \$2000 incentives for teachers and principals (page 22), \$6000 in recruitment incentives (page 23) and \$10,000 to master teachers for additional responsibilities and leadership roles (page 19).

(iii) The applicant provides a clear explanation of how teachers, principals, and other personnel are determined to be "effective" for the purposes of the proposed PBCS on page 22, using a strong evaluation system which includes individual value-added classroom scores; school wide value added classroom scores, and teacher scores on formal evaluations. The proposed principal performance pay system includes a leadership assessment (VAL-ED) and school-added scores (page 22).

(2) The applicant has the support of teachers, principals, and other personnel as evidenced by letters of support from partners such as the New Teacher Project, Teach for America, and the state's education agency, as well as letters from the community, teachers, principals, superintendents, congressional representative, and the state board of education (see appendix). Stakeholder involvement is described on pages 25-26, and includes such activities as site visits to TAP schools, communication with each school, and TAP presentations by a TAP representative.

(3) The applicant describes the TAP model as a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that differentiate levels of effectiveness

using multiple rating categories and utilizes data on student growth as a significant factor (page 27), as well as classroom observations conducted by trained evaluators using the TAP Skills, Knowledge and Responsibilities tool, three or more times per year. Principals are evaluated using VAL-ED.

(4) The applicant describes a data-management system that includes two partners, SAS and Battlle for Kids.

(5) The applicant describes professional development activities related to training evaluators, training teachers in how to understand the evaluation process and evaluation data, and training in effective teaching strategies by Master teachers (pages 34-36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe how the data management system links to payroll and human resources.

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. The management plan for this project includes a partnership with NIET and the state education agency, which manages the TAP system. Additional partners include Teach for America, the New Teacher Project and SAS. The applicant provides a organizational chart on page 55. A description of the qualifications of project director is included on page 54, and an advisory board is described here as well. A timeline for accomplishing goals is included on pages 36-37.

2. The applicant describes the project director as highly qualified to oversee this project, with the support of strong collaborators, partners, and vendors.

3. The applicant will support the proposed project with \$30,942,720 in matching funds and will provide a 10%, 20%, and 40% match for differentiated compensation in years 3,4 and 5.

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 (page 58).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found in this section.

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:

1. The evaluation plan is effectively described by the applicant on page 58 and includes a formal external evaluation of the project based on goals and objectives of the project. Student achievement results and teacher effectiveness measures will be used to evaluate the project, as well as AYP, college readiness, teacher attitudes and perceptions, and teacher recruitment and retention data.

2. The applicant describes using an external evaluator (page 59), who will use a clearly defined set of evaluation standards, measures, and rubrics to analyze progress, and will use both quantitative and qualitative data to assess TIF/TAP implementation.

3. An annual report will be produced to inform stakeholders of this initiative (page 61). In additions, each team will review feedback reports and documentation to assist schools with developing an action plan (page 60).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found in this section.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

compensation provided to teachers, principals, and other personnel (in those sites in which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools).

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

Strengths:

The TAP model includes a value added model developed by Saunders, using SAS to analyze student growth and teacher evaluation data.

The applicant describes a plan for implementing the proposed value added model, communicating to teachers and stakeholders details needed to understand this model in the context of the TAP evaluation program, and promote this model to other districts.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found in this section.

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:

1. The applicant demonstrates on pages 2-3 that the partner districts are serving high need students, have high teacher turnover, and high principal turnover.
2. The applicant describes the positive impact of TAP on teacher retention in other districts on page 14.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe how it will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective, nor is there a description of how they propose to target hard to staff areas, other than to attract them through the implementation of TAP.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:17 PM

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives,
(S385A100128)

Reader #2: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 1

1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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Absolute Priority 2

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

Absolute Priority 3

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

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
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Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
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Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
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Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
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Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
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High Quality Professional Development

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

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	9
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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	5
Sub Total	100	97

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	5
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Sub Total	10	10
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Total	110	107
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Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Panel - 15: 84.385A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives, (S385A100128)

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:

Priority No. 1

The applicant utilized past successful experience with PBCS at state level to outline expansion proposal that is responsive to the needs of several high need schools and districts. The proposed project describes a data-driven model designed in partnership with the National Institute in Teaching (NIET). TAP as a comprehensive research-based reform will establish a differentiated compensation model for both teachers and principals based on teachers's performance and increased student performance.

A rigorous accountability system with strong support for teachers and principals will allow for career advancement for teachers, with differentiated salary augmentation for expanded responsibilities as leaders within the school and district.

A strength of the proposal is manifested in the applicant's creative approach to meeting the immediate need for high-quality teachers in every classroom by partnering with Teach for America. The proposed well-trained mentor, master teachers, along with

administrators will build capacity for supporting these novice teachers in an optimal manner.

Differentiated incentives for assuming increased responsibilities and for ongoing applied professional development that leads to improved student learning has been outlined in a clear manner. Thoughtful planning is reflected throughout the application.

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 outlined a budget for the duration of the grant and outlined fiscal resources that will support sustainability beyond the duration of the grant that includes significant matching funds as a key indicator of the commitment to the initiative that is making a difference in students' learning and future aspirations.

The use of funds reflects a strategic approach to building the needed infrastructure that will guarantee the continued and successful expansion of the PBCS, with a significant impact on a paradigm shift that influences behavior at the student, classroom, school, district, and state levels.

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:

Priority No. 3

The applicant outlined plans to align proposed PBCS with a coherent and integrated strategy for strengthening the educator workforce. The applicant recognizes that monetary incentives alone will not influence behaviors that directly impact on student learning, it is the ongoing and varied professional growth opportunities for teachers to maximize their effectiveness in the classroom.

A tiered system is at the core of teacher and principal evaluation and compensation. The strategic establishment of partnerships with Teach for America and Dr. Sanders who leads in the value-added field will contribute significantly to the overall credibility and fidelity of a data-driven initiative. The proposed performance-based compensation system is structured to reward teachers and principals who raise student achievement. A comprehensive principal evaluation system provides for self-assessment, assessment by teachers and supervisor, and provides meaningful feedback to guide the reflection process.

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 outlined the components of PBCS and the plan for providing teachers and principals with incentives to take additional responsibilities, Multiple career paths will provide meaningful growth opportunities through the expansion of the role and responsibilities teachers will have in new positions to be created, which carry monetary compensation as they move up the ladder without leaving the classroom. Shared leadership responsibilities abound and are clearly defined in terms of professional development planning and delivery and classroom observations. Master teachers as top-ranking teacher leaders in a new position will serve as an instructional leader to the faculty. Mentor teachers will provide day-to-day coaching.

Anticipated personnel needs will be addressed as schools are equipped with human capital ready to share instructional leadership 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 No. 1 reflects strategic thinking and planning of a comprehensive communication plan. The applicant's past experience with PBCS is being used as it seeks to expand the model into high-needs districts and schools. Effective communication to teachers, administrators, and other personnel, and the community at-large is at the core of the plan to build capacity for an innovative and effective education reform initiative. The extensive communications network in place, regular communication with school personnel and all stakeholders is critical in increasing visibility of the TIF Program at the state and national levels.

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 No. 2 recognizes the critical role all stakeholders play in the successful implementation of this education reform initiative. As the district forges ahead with this initiative, engagement and support from teachers, principals, and the unions in participating districts will be sought out. NIET, as a partner, will be critical in working with teachers' and administrators' associations as they have been found to be advocates for the reform model. The practical experience with PBCS has allowed the applicant to engage the support of teachers as stakeholders with the implementation of a rigorous performance-based compensation system.

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 No. 3 - Teachers are evaluated by members of the TAP Leadership team and classroom observations are conducted by Master and Mentor Teachers. Members of the leadership team participate in an extensive and comprehensive training and certification program. The focus of the training will be on the use of a rigorous classroom evaluation standards-based system with a research-based and content-neutral rubric of effective teaching, spanning the sub-categories of instruction, instructional planning and design, and the learning environment. Inter-reliability is built-into the model that lead to aggregated scores.

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 No. 4

The applicant will replicate the successful application of a data-management system that can link student achievement to teachers and principal payroll and human resources systems. Demonstrable impact on student learning is being captured via an integrated third-party web-based application known as Comprehensive Online Data Entry system (CODE), authorized personnel can generate a number of analytical reports summarizing student performance.

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 No. 5

The applicabt is addressed via a comprehensive plan that outlines professional development activities to be led by NIET. The professional development plan is comprehensive and it takes into account the needs of all stakeholders. Principals, teachers, mentors, and master teachers are key players in this reform effort as members of the TAP Team that participates in training throughout the school year.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - High Quality Professional Development

1. High Quality Professional Development:

Comment on the applicant's demonstration that ---

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

(1) Be based on needs assessed either at the high-need schools (as defined in the Federal

Register notice) participating in the applicant's proposed PBCS or LEA-wide;

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

(3) Provide --

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

General:

The applicant will replicate the existing TAP model that has generated positive student outcomes. A structure is in place and key leaders within the TAP Initiative will forge ahead a plan that guarantees the successful implementation of a comprehensive and data-driven professional development plan.

Professional development opportunities are job embedded and create opportunities for mentors, master teachers and administrators to become actively involved in a collaborative inquiry-based process that will contribute to the institutionalization of research-based practices as daily practices in every classroom and in every school.

NIET requires all members of the TAP Team to participate in training that is organized in modules that are addressed throughout the year. Effectiveness of the professional development plan will be monitored via the ongoing and the focused interaction between mentors and master teachers and administrators to debrief on formal and informal assessment of teacher effectiveness.

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:

Applicant utilized demographic data to convey a sense of urgency in the need to improve the learning of all students across high-need districts and schools. The applicant described teacher and principal retention as a serious challenge for the schools involved in the project. Nearly 1/3 of the teachers in 34 of the 36 schools have five or fewer years of teaching experience, and more than half of the teachers at 19 of those schools have five or fewer years of experience.

The schools included in the project have experienced a high-rate turnover of principals and other administrators at the school. For example one of the high schools has had five principals in the past ten years.

Academic achievement as measured by high-stakes testing revealed that of 36 schools included in this project, 26 were rated academically acceptable or Academically Unacceptable last year.

An incentive program will provide funds to support recruitment initiatives for hard-to-staff subject areas and positions in each of the eligible schools. Teach for America will play a key role in this initiative.

Comparability in applicant's state is defined by the SEA through the identification of a cluster of comparable schools for each school in the state.

Weaknesses:

Student achievement data is reported to be lower than in schools the applicant selected as comparable schools in the district; however, academic achievement data were not provided to illustrate the low levels of performance in each of the schools. The applicant relied on poverty levels to establish an equitable comparability.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

(ii) The participating LEA would use the proposed PBCS to provide performance awards

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant utilized past successful experience with PBCS at state level to outline expansion proposal that is responsive to the needs of several high need schools and districts. The proposed project describes a data-driven model designed in partnership with the National Institute in Teaching (NIET). TAP as a comprehensive research-based reform will establish a differentiated compensation model for both teachers and principals based on teachers' performance and increased student performance. Demonstrable impact on student achievement in current TIF schools is reported by the applicant.

A rigorous accountability system with strong support for teachers and principals will allow for career advancement for teachers, with differentiated salary augmentation for expanded responsibilities as leaders within the school and district. A comprehensive teacher and principal evaluation system supports the implementation of a collaborative and data-driven differentiated compensation system.

In addition to academic achievement data that are being captured by TAP, teacher recruitment and retention are credited with more effective teachers remaining in hard-to-staff positions.

The applicant will replicate the successful application of a data-management system that can link student achievement to teachers and principal payroll and human resources systems. Demonstrable impact on student learning is being captured via an integrated third-party web-based application known as Comprehensive Online Data Entry system (CODE), authorized personnel can generate a number of analytical reports summarizing student performance.

Weaknesses:

The external evaluation system is a key component of the grant will support the successful implementation of the proposed plan that did not reflect ongoing reporting to the members of the school and community at-large.

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:

The applicant demonstrated successful experience with PBCS as a school reform initiative and management of grants that have at their core the improvement of student learning, impacting the instructional delivery process, and in promoting sustainability of research-based practices as daily common practices.

The TAP system is currently managed in partnership with NIET in an effort to assist the participating districts with the successful implementation of this data-driven system.

Project management is being addressed strategically by a team of educators and experts who support the implementation of the PBCS initiative.

The management plan is a carefully crafted documents that highlights goals to achieve, with the financial and technical support from multiple internal and external sources. Personnel responsible for the implementation of the project possess the needed academic background and practical experience to collaborate with stakeholders and external experts throughout the grant period.

The budget allocation requested for this purpose reflects estimations based on past experience with the implementation of a PBCS model. As a state agency, the applicant has demonstrated flexibility and targeted allocations and reallocation of other state and federal fiscal resources to support this initiative beyond the duration of the grant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified. The applicant is commended for the work in supporting this area.

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 applicant designed an evaluation plan designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program goals and objectives, and to use formative data to improve the implementation of a data-driven and focused PBCS that integrates a value-added analysis model to analyze student achievement and teacher and principal effectiveness. Ongoing formative and summative student achievement data, teacher and principal retention data, teacher and principal survey data, classroom observation data, and other projects will facilitate the continuous support for the project and the needy adjustments to guarantee its sustained success.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified. A comprehensive plan was included.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

which the grantee wishes to expand the PBCS to additional staff in its schools).

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

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrated a deep understanding and solid commitment to a student growth compensation model that has led to academic success of the students across high-need schools and districts. Replicating the existing TAP model. The school-wide value added component will provide with the incentive for teamwork that will forge ahead schools and districts to think the teaching and learning process through a new lense of knowledge, collaboration, inquiry, shared responsibility and accountability, commitment to lifelong learning, and compensation for contributing to sustained student achievement. Half of performance bonuses for teachers and principals will be linked to value-added data utilizing the Sander's methodology.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified. A comprehensive plan was included.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Preference - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant addresses the challenging recruiting and retaining challenges via a research-based approach that recognizes teachers and principals as key contributors to student success. A monetary incentive pool at each school will be established to serve as recruitment incentives for hard-to-staff subject areas and positions. Career ladder opportunities that carry monetary compensation will be expanded to include a master teacher who will become the instructional leader for all faculty.

The partnership with Teach for America will support the establishment of the needed infrastructure that includes a high-quality teacher in every classroom and consistent

leadership in the classroom, school, and district.

A comprehensive and ongoing communication system will support the planning, implementation, reflection, and celebration phases of the proposed expansion grant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified. PBCS plan is promising in addressing this critical need.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:17 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 8/6/10 4:17 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives,
(S385A100128)

Reader #3: *****

Points Possible Points Scored

Questions

Evaluation Criteria

Absolute Priority 1

1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
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Absolute Priority 2

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

Absolute Priority 3

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

Requirement

1. Requirement	0	0
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Sub Total	0	0
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Evaluation Criteria

Core Element 1

1. Core Element 1	0	0
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Core Element 2

1. Core Element 2	0	0
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Core Element 3

1. Core Element 3	0	0
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Core Element 4

1. Core Element 4	0	0
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Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5	0	0
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High Quality Professional Development

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

Need for the Project

1. Need for Project	10	10
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Project Design

1.Project Design	60	58
Adequacy of Support for the Proposed Project		
1.Adequacy of Support	25	25
Quality of Local Evaluation		
1.Quality of Local Eval.	5	5
Sub Total	100	98

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	106
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Technical Review Form

Panel #15 - Panel - 15: 84.385A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Educator and Student Policy Initiatives, (S385A100128)

Questions

Evaluation Criteria - Absolute Priority 1

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

Comment on how well the applicant demonstrates that --

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

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

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

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

General:

The proposed PBCS by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is structured to reward both teachers and principals who raise student achievement. The comprehensive plan is based on a value-added model, rewarding success on an incremental basis. Over 50% of the award is based on classroom performance for teachers, and school wide performance for principals. The plan has an extensive observation model which requires multiple evaluations throughout the year. The incentive amounts are substantial, providing up to an average 5% increase in salary for performance, not including incentive pay for initial recruitment to the school. The amount of pay incentives were clearly justified in the proposal. Feedback from current teachers in the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) schools indicates their desire to stay at the incentive school for a variety of reasons including pay increases.

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:

As this is a state initiative, each partnering district must commit to sustaining the project after the five year grant period ends in order to be included. Significant to the proposal, the districts are also required to increase their contributions to the program incrementally, increasing their financial responsibilities by 10% or more each year. Multiple sources for providing these additional funds are evidenced in the proposal.

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 plan provides for thorough support and professional growth opportunities for teachers to maximize their effectiveness in the classroom. Data is effectively used and reviewed regularly throughout the school year to adjust teaching methods and improve student achievement. The TAP model has already been tested in various schools across the state with documented success. All of the Texas TAP state strategies must be incorporated into the LEAs' framework as a requirement for inclusion into the project.

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:

Innovative additional leadership roles are available to all teachers in TAP schools on a competitive basis. Teachers have multiple options for career advancement including taking on roles as mentor and master teachers. Each of these positions provide for increased responsibilities tied to increased pay.

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:

A comprehensive Strategic Communication Plan has been developed. The state has significantly increased the development of the program through media outlets. Consistent lines of communication have been established with districts, schools, principals and teachers. Communicative leaders have been identified in each district to help support this effort. In addition, the project proposes hiring a public relations firm to better augment the communication of the plan.

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:

There is a thorough plan provided for insuring all stakeholders are involved and support the PBCS project. The process begins with communicating the plan to every faculty member at each participating school. Adequate on-site information sessions are planned as an initial process to start with information sharing and consensus building. All members of the school community are included. Substantial support is required prior to moving forward. The TAP partners recommend LEAs have a 75% approval rating of teachers and staff prior to implementation of the program. Stakeholders are also invited to visit existing TAP school sites to review the process. These campuses also provide letters of support as evidence of effectiveness.

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:

Key to the proposal is that teachers are evaluated by members of the annually certified TAP Leadership Team. These team members are required to be certified in evaluation techniques annually. The rigorous evaluation process consists of a minimum of three observations a year based on a rubric including 19 performance indicators linked to student achievement using Sanders' value-added model. All teachers in TAP schools are trained on the rating system at the beginning of each school year. Notably, principals are evaluated using a 360 degree model as well as a VAL-ED instrument which measures core components of their leadership abilities.

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:

An extensive data management plan is already in place at the state level. All teachers are evaluated using the CODE system, which electronically tracks and maintains the evaluation data. Critical to the program success is that this data can be downloaded and then linked to student performance standards and achievements. The long term relationship the state has with its data management partners helps insure accuracy and safety of the data. The proposal does not directly indicate how this data links to HR/payroll systems at the LEA.

Reader's Score: 0

Evaluation Criteria - Core Element 5

1. Core Element 5:

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

General:

The proposal clearly meets Core Element 5. Regularly scheduled in-service time is used by each school's TAP Leadership Team in order to explain the evaluation system and rubric. Teachers and principals must participate in practice evaluation sessions in order to better acquaint themselves with the system. The first 8-10 weeks of school each site is required to continually provide focused professional development on the

evaluation system as well. Teachers are also expected to participate in individual reflection using IGPs to increase their knowledge of the system. This information can then be used by the teachers in order to improve their craft under the expectations of the PBCS.

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:

All Leadership Team members are required to receive extensive TAP's CORE trainings at the beginning of the school year. The training is broken down into four specific areas: research and practice; evaluation and professional growth; professional development; and certified, qualified evaluators. The school day is appropriately restructured to allow regular meetings with teacher mentors and master teachers who provide ongoing professional development to the staff. Teachers are divided into unique cluster groups based on their grade level or subject areas. Data provided in these meetings can be used by individual teachers to make adjustments to their instruction based on student achievement levels. This also allows individual teachers to improve under the PBCS mandates. The professional development provided to teachers is regularly reviewed throughout the year by the Leadership team to make adjustments and improvements.

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:

Schools identified in the project have been deemed high need by the state. They consist of 36 schools in 11 districts. On average, 72% of the students in these schools are identified economically disadvantaged. Most schools are high minority, with 32 of the 36 schools identified as minority majority. The schools have a history of high teacher turnover; some schools demonstrated a rate as high as 70% in a given year (p. 1). Nearly 1/3 of the teachers in 34 of the 36 schools have less than 5 years experience (p. 3). Incentives are provided for recruiting teachers in high need subject areas. Student achievement in these schools is significantly lower than those in the comparative schools. The comparative schools are clearly defined; each school is compared against 40 similar schools in the state.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The Texas TIF project was designed around the Texas TAP program, which is an established PBCS for high risk schools. In the TAP schools included in this TIF grant proposal, teachers are provided career advancement opportunities including the ability to achieve mentor or master teacher status (p. 18). The program includes justified pay incentives based on teacher, principal, student and school individual and collective achievement. The amount of incentive pay is adequate, having been determined through extensive national research related to this area. The evaluation system places a high focus on student achievement, both at the state level on standardized tests as well as at the district and school level. The evaluation of both principals and teachers is comprehensive. Principals and teachers are both evaluated multiple times a year in a variety of categories, with the greatest emphasis being placed on student achievement. Evaluators must be extensively trained and certified annually (p. 21, 27). All evaluations and student achievement data is maintained in a comprehensive data management system. The monetary incentives include bonuses for teachers in high need subjects, as well as a comprehensive plan for individual and shared incentives based on student achievement (p. 22). Professional development has been planned throughout the year based on the disaggregation of data from student achievement and teacher observations (p. 19-20).

Weaknesses:

Greater evidence of the support of teacher unions from the 11 identified school districts is needed to receive full credit in this area. Though there is an extensive plan for garnering support, it appears to be more of a top down model.

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:

The state agency and its supporting partners have specific experience in implementing similar plans (p. 11, 53-54). The objectives have been clearly defined and are measurable (p. 36-37) with a comprehensive timetable provided. Key personnel involved have extensive experience in implementing PBCS in the past (p. 54). The responsibilities and timetable to carry out these duties is well documented and attainable. The requested funds coupled with the LEA contributions will adequately support and fund the project. The existence of a planning year in the proposal will help resolve outstanding issues.

Weaknesses:

None noted

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 performance objectives for the plan are clearly defined (p. 36-37). The goals are focused on raising student achievement. All incentives provided to teachers and principals are also linked to student achievement (p. 42). The data produced by the project is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The evaluation procedures are ongoing throughout the year, providing regular feedback and opportunities to improve (p. 60).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

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

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

Strengths:

The project includes the extensive use of value-added measures of performance (p. 30). Over half of the performance bonuses are based on value-added measures (p. 47). Factors such as an estimated population growth average are used in determining student and teacher achievement. Incentives are distributed based on statistically significant achievements by both individual classes and schools. The details in the incentive system will be clearly explained to all staff in TIF schools during the first 8 weeks of school. Extensive data gained through ongoing professional development will allow teachers to improve their classroom practices. A robust data management system is in place to assure the accuracy of calculations for the bonuses.

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:

An annual pool of \$6000 will be provided per school site to provide incentives for new recruits to teacher and administration at the schools (p. 23). This is in addition to the bonuses that may be earned for individual and school achievement. Longitudinal data on existing TAP schools indicates a 80% or greater retention rate of teachers (p. 14), which is significantly higher than prior to the schools moving to TAP. The significant value-added incentives provided for both teachers and principals are designed to entice staff to remain in hard to staff subjects and schools. A thorough plan is in place to communicate which areas are hard to staff, and the incentives that are available to teach in these areas.

Weaknesses:

No data was provided indicating the successful retention rate of principals in existing TAP schools. Also, the proposal does not provide an explanation for how the project will determine that a teacher filling a vacancy is effective or likely to be effective. More detail is also needed to demonstrate the level to which specialty areas are "hard to staff" subject areas.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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