

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/27/2017 09:55 PM

Technical Review

Applicant: Educational Service Unit 2 (U351C170051)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	6
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	29
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 7: 84.351C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Educational Service Unit 2 (U351C170051)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

The application offers relevant statistics and demonstrates a need for supporting the target community.

NOTE: This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my personal assessment of this section.

Weaknesses:

The gaps or weaknesses in services section includes statements/assumptions not backed up with statistics and specifics. For example, "fine arts programs and fine arts specialist positions are often cut in an effort to meet the budgetary needs for staffing other necessary services (e22)." A following table shows that students in grades K-6 receive an average of 37 minutes of art per week but does not give this statistic any context. It is unclear whether an average of 37 minutes been a constant over the years, or if it was a result of a reduction of staff/minutes. The proposal states that "the rationale for such actions is that classroom teachers can and should be able to integrate fine arts and/or technology into other content areas"; however, this rationale is not cited or elaborated upon further. It is unclear if this rationale was given following a reduction year, whether it was stated at all, or merely assumed.

While the idea of the survey questions is effective to determine teacher need, the questions themselves are flawed. This grant proposal encompasses all the fine arts, yet the first of two teacher survey questions (p e23) only focus on performance art. Additionally, a teacher's attendance of musical/dance/theatre performances does not strongly correlate with how comfortable a teacher feels integrating art into their general classroom. Likewise, the second question's scope is too narrow, as it only focuses on students' use of technology tools to "draw, paint, or create" in visual arts arenas, therefore excluding music and performance arts. A better focus for educator survey questions would directly address how knowledgeable educators feel in each fine arts curricular area and how comfortable they feel infusing arts integration in their classrooms.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

The “Quality of Project Services” section in the MTA application is comprehensive and strong overall. The proposed program has clearly articulated goals (pp e25-e26), is aligned with national and state standards (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations standards, Nebraska state standards for fine arts, science, math, ELA, and social studies, and ISTE technology standards), and is based upon a wide variety of research and models of best practice, such as Harvard’s Artful Thinking program, the Center for Public Education’s Five Principles of Effective Professional Development, Diane Sweeney’s Student Centered Coaching, and Robert Marzano’s Classroom Instruction That Works, and John Hattie’s Visible Learning.

Under the “Graduate Course Work, Instructional Coaching by a Master Art Teacher, and Formative Assessment” heading on p e32, and the following heading, “Why Graduate Course Work, Instructional Coaching, and Formative Assessment (p e34)”, the application makes a strong argument for the proposed program’s added rigor due to the graduate course requirement of the program. These pages, along with table on page e29, clearly outline the likely impact of the proposed services, such as an increased capacity for using formative assessment strategies to inform instruction, improving teacher appreciation and self-efficacy for implementing art into content lessons, and teacher engagement in collaborative inquiry that fosters analyses of their instructional practices.

Pages e30-e32 provide a comprehensive plan for professional development services. The professional development is organized in two stages (“Introduction to New Teaching Ideas” and Support During Implementation in the Classroom”) to allow for in-depth initial, active, and applicable learning followed by individualized coaching and support. Pages e38-e50 go into even further detail, outlining in great depth the professional development schedule ongoing throughout each year. The fall, winter, and spring colloquia, online course work, on-line technology modules, summer institutes, and field experience components all appear to work together to create a cohesive and rigorous professional development program.

Weaknesses:

Stage two of the professional development model (p e31) is vague. While the information provided is very solid, this section begins with the statement, “Support can take on many forms. Some teachers may need help with technology, teaching best practices, visual/performing arts skills or integration techniques. Sometimes support is best given through a gradual release of responsibility model such as an instructional coaching cycle. Diane Sweeney’s Student Centered Coaching is one such model.” The words “can,” “may,” “some,” “sometimes”, and “one such” make part (3) confusing and nebulous. If the gradual release of responsibility and Student Centered Coaching is one possible approach for the teachers of this proposed program, it is unclear what the professional development plan would be for the remaining teachers.

It is also unclear what the role of fine arts educators at the target schools would be. They are alluded to on page e22, in section A, when outlining the need for the project and gaps in infrastructure. However, they are not part of the professional development plan whatsoever. This seems to be a significant oversight. Fine arts teachers based in the target schools should be integrally involved in arts integration initiatives in their buildings to ensure successful cultural shifts and lasting change, as well as provide support to classroom teachers.

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

The proposed Project Director has extensive experience with large-scale program management; her resume (e 83- e85) denotes 20 years of grant management. The Master Art Teacher seems a proper choice for the position, as she has served as a mentor teacher on two of ESU 2's prior grants and, as a recently retired art teacher, she will have time to properly dedicate herself to her key role, at .75 FTE.

The content experts have impressive resumes and do seem to be experts in their fields. The project evaluators from Redwood Coast Consulting have experience evaluating other federal grant programs.

Weaknesses:

The diversity of the project personnel could be stronger. While the qualifications of the personnel range from adequate to impressive, this section could have been strengthened by staff members representing the same underserved populations of the target schools, namely Native American and Latino.

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The job descriptions of project personnel are clear and appear to be appropriate and adequate. Though the Project Director, Instructional Coach/Master Art Teacher, Technology Integration Specialist all have separately defined roles, each role mentions collaboration with the other key personnel. For instance, the Instructional Coach/Master Art Teacher will "assist [the Project Director] in the planning and delivery of the MTA professional development and will collaborate with the evaluators to develop the activities evaluations. She will work closely with the project director, yearly consultants and technology integration specialist and coach participating teachers" (e56).

This interdependent teamwork approach to management is also made clear when the application explains how "all of the partners will meet regularly to develop and implement the project based on feedback from staff, students, teachers and

artists...the leadership team (Project Director, Mentor Teacher, Technology Integration Specialist, Site-based Administrators, Evaluator) will meet monthly (weekly at first) and focus on the whole program”(pp e59-e60).

Weaknesses:

The application's management plan timeline (pp e56-e58) could use more details, such as longer descriptors of the activity and explanations of milestones. For example, elaboration on evaluation plans would be helpful in gaining a clearer picture of the timeline.

Time commitments for key project staff are not identified and the evaluator is not mentioned (e55-e56).

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

The types of data to be collected outlined in the table on page e62 are varied, include quantitative and qualitative data, and are neatly organized by student data, school level data, and program level data.

The "Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation" table beginning on page e65 clearly articulates what is being evaluated, what evaluations questions are addressed, and how the feedback will be gathered.

The logic model is made clear on the table on page e29 and then further articulated on page e67. Inputs, outputs, and outcomes are clearly stated.

Weaknesses:

Regarding the control schools, it is unclear what "similar" means. The application states that control schools will have "similar enrollments, demographics, and NeSA scores".

An explanation of what constitutes short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes (p e29) would be helpful in understanding the scope of the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 29

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology

1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

Teachers will be provided with laptops and trained to deliver lessons where students will use a wide variety of fine arts tools, namely software.

Teachers will participate in online courses during their graduate work and will be able to be a part of an online community to engage in learning modules, discussions, and to share files.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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Technical Review

Applicant: Educational Service Unit 2 (U351C170051)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	22
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	29
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 7: 84.351C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Educational Service Unit 2 (U351C170051)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

1) The need for the project was appropriately documented by descriptive statistics indicating that the seven schools to be served are high- poverty as indicated by free and reduced lunch rates ranging from 44%-100%; high concentrations of Hispanic and Native American students; and low percentages of students scoring at proficiency levels in four content areas, all of which are below the state average (p. e20-21). The need was further supported by narrative descriptions of the schools as appearing on the state's Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools for 2015-2016 (p. e21-22).

2) The gaps in services were appropriately described by citing budget cuts resulting in loss of arts services and other mandates taking precedence over fine arts resulting in K-6 students only receiving an average of 37 minutes of art instruction from an art teacher per week (p. e22). The need was further supported by conducting a needs assessment with teachers indicating that they lack personal experience in the performance arts and are not integrating arts lessons into their teaching with 68% responding they do so twice a month or less and 62% indicating they rarely or never have students use technology tools to create in the classroom despite having access to these digital tools (p. e23-24); they lack digital arts training; they infrequently attend performing arts performances and they lack background in the arts.

Weaknesses:

1) No weaknesses were noted.

2) No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

- 1) The applicant appropriately based the proposed project in recommendations from the professional literature and on the national evaluation of the Youth Arts Development Project that found arts education deters delinquency and truancy and increases students' academic performance. The project is also well grounded in meeting the state fine arts Standards that call for additional professional development past preservice education (p. e27). The applicant will include the relevant Harvard's Artful Thinking program to support teachers in understanding how the arts supports creative thinking to meet the state standards (p. e26-28). Findings from a meta-analysis of 62 studies guided the construction of each yearly theme in visual arts, science, math, motion and art and language arts and drama and history and the multi-arts (p e35-36).
- 2) The applicant appropriately demonstrated the likely impact of the project by citing research indicating gains in academic performance for at- risk students by their participation in arts education programs, such as findings from a study that even if students are in the lowest 25% of educational and economic brackets if they are involved in the arts they will do better academically and that the arts keep these students in school (p. e28).
- 3) The applicant appropriately provided for sufficient intensity, duration and quality of professional development by offering 60-75 hours of professional- development training during each of the four project years based on research suggesting the need for about 50 hours of instruction practice and coaching for a new teaching strategy to be effectively learned and implemented. Toward that end, teachers will attend three weekend workshops and a five- day summer institute on technology, artful thinking strategies, and best teaching practices in a variety of arts to teach at their grade levels. Instructional coaches will visit teachers' classrooms and meet to set goals and best practices with coaches modeling lessons with the teachers' students, debriefing with teachers and observing and giving feedback in a gradual release model (p. e31-32). This training will be embedded in a course that teachers will take through a Master's degree program or course work focused on arts instruction and integration through traditional and digital tools (p. e32). Coaches and teachers will use Marzano's Classroom Instruction that Works to develop lesson designs in teacher teams and engage in collaborative inquiry based on action research and formative assessments to diagnose students' understandings and form teaching trajectories and engage in instructional coaching, two strategies that had an average effect size of .40 (p. e34). Professional development will consist of near weekly activities throughout the four project years, including a two -day fall colloquia, a winter and spring colloquia, field experiences, and online course work (p. e38-51). The project model follows the five principals of effective professional development (p. e30).

Weaknesses:

- 1) No weaknesses were noted.
- 2) No weaknesses were noted.
- 3) It is unclear how many days or clock hours the full- time master art instructors/ instructional coaches will spend with teachers in demonstration, co-teaching, debriefing/goal setting, feedback, and coaching (p. e31-32).

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**
- (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

Strengths:

- 1) Key personnel have related experience and education. The Project Director has relevant administrative experience and education, including serving as Director of Special Projects and managing four federal grants and she holds a Master's degree in technology integration and leadership (p. e52).
- 2) Supporting personnel each have some relevant qualifications. The Instructional Coach/Master art teacher has 30 years of experience teaching art and has won awards for integrating technology into art methods. The Technology Integration specialist has an advanced degree and prior experience integrating technology and tools into instruction (p. e53). The Content Experts each have relevant prior experiences, such as teaching, librarianship or consulting in their fields (p. e45-48).

Weaknesses:

- 1) The applicant referred to the Project Director as two different individuals, as a male and as a female, making it unclear if there would be two different Project Directors (p. e55).
- 2) None of the evaluators have degrees in research and evaluation methods. It is unclear what expertise they each have in qualitative and quantitative methods

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

- 1) The management plan included a clear timeline with identified milestones and project activities for each year of the project with identified personnel responsible for accomplishing those tasks. The timeline allocated for relevant project tasks in a logical order beginning with planning and including yearly reports as well as a year- end report (p e57-58).
- 2) The applicant has appropriate plans for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement by allocating several progress reports at appropriate points in the project and by allocating for program review in year one (p. e57-58). The leadership team will meet weekly at first and then monthly to review data and progress (p. e60).
- 3) The applicant has appropriate plans for the Project Director to allocate half time to the project which is a typical time allocation for grant project directors (p. e53). The Instructional Coach/ Master Art Teacher will devote 75% time to the project which should be adequate for accomplishing related role responsibilities (p. e53).

Weaknesses:

- 1) No weaknesses were noted.
- 2) No weaknesses were noted.
- 3) The time allocations were not identified for all the supporting project staff, including the History and Multi- Arts Teacher, the Music Teacher, The Technology Integration Specialist, and the project evaluators

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

1) The applicant clearly identified objective performance measures related to the GPRA measure 1 and tallies of the percentage of teachers participating in the program; students' standardized test scores on the state measure; and students' attendance figures (p. e 61-62). The evaluation includes an appropriate balance of qualitative data and quantitative data, including interviews with teachers, principals, and program staff and site observations as qualitative data and survey measures, attendance rates, and test scores as quantitative data (p. e62-63).

2) The applicant has appropriate plans to provide for formative evaluation for ongoing assessment to identify implantation issues and to adjust the program. (p. e63). These data will be disseminated to three decision making groups, including the leadership team, the content specialists and the teachers. (p. e63).

3) The applicant bases the project on an appropriate theory that arts based education will improve student achievement, participation and attendance in school. (p. e22). A clear logic model showed the relationship between the inputs, activities/outputs, and short term, medium term and long- term outcomes, such as inputs of content experts providing professional development in 7 schools resulting in improved student achievement in science and math and increase in teacher appreciation for the arts and creation and self- efficacy in implementing art into content lessons (p. e29).

Weaknesses:

1) How the GPRA measure 2 will be addressed is unclear. It is not possible to measure the percentage of projects from teachers who show a statistically significant increase in content knowledge in the arts as the teacher would not be the unit of analysis (p. e.61).

2) No weaknesses were noted.

3) No weaknesses were noted.

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology

1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes,

traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

There are relevant plans to provide teachers with laptop computers and instruction in a range of media arts, tools, and online resources. There are appropriate plans for students to use digital cameras and video production software and apps, like iMovie and Photo shop and art software and apps, such as iDraw to create art and learn music software to learn about song structure and learn publishing tools for writing (p. e71).

b) The applicant has relevant plans to conduct professional development using high speed Internet access and devices, such as Canvas and the Intel Online Technology Modules. Teachers will be instructed by the Technology Specialist on how to access supplemental resources and materials and technology tools and equipment for that year's content (p. e39). There are relevant plans for teachers to participate in 30 hours of online discussions and assignments and participate in technology tools modules, leading to professional development credit or graduate course credit in a Master's degree program (p. e39). The Canvas online system will be appropriately used to provide discussion questions and forums and weekly live chat or videoconferencing with other participants to address pedagogy issues, grade level assessments, and build professional relationships with peers across the region involved in the project. Online support will be offered through Intel Online Technology modules with supplemental activities to assist in integrating technology skills in classrooms and develop curriculum for immediate use designed around the state standards in conjunction with graduate course work (p. e40).

Weaknesses:

- a) No weaknesses were noted.
- b) No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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Technical Review

Applicant: Educational Service Unit 2 (U351C170051)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Quality of Project Services		
1. Project Services	25	24
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	27
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Leveraging Technology		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Total	105	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Professional Development for Arts Educators - 7: 84.351C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Educational Service Unit 2 (U351C170051)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

Strengths:

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and my score reflects my personal assessment of this section. The seven schools slated to participate in the initiative all have free and reduced meal rates above 55% with one district having a 100% rate (pg. 3). Additionally all seven schools are on the state's persistently lowest achieving schools list (pg. 3). The applicant reports that students in the identified schools only receive on average 37 minutes of art lessons per week. The applicant surveyed teachers to determine the extent to which they incorporated arts into their lessons and found this to be lacking. Additionally, teachers reported that they did not personally engage in activities focused on arts on a regular basis (pg. 5). Lastly, teacher preparation programs in the area report that they are lacking in providing pre-service teachers with an adequate amount of arts training.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services.

(3) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a well-developed plan to provide professional development to the identified teachers in the seven schools. The project plan and implementation strategies are based on research and best practices as noted in the literature. The applicant frames the project based on standards developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Association, the Nebraska State Content Standards for Fine Arts, the Nebraska State Standards for science, math, ELA, and SS, and ISTE technology standards (pg. 8).

The applicant used the Center for Public Education's Five Principles of Effective Professional Development to develop the comprehensive PD plan (pg. 12). Teachers will receive 60-75 hours of training each of the four years, weekend workshops, on the job coaching, fine arts experiences, as well as graduate coursework. This extensive array of training not only provides extensive opportunities for professional growth, but addresses the varied learning needs teachers have as well.

The applicant clearly defines the time frame in which each of the training activities will occur.

Weaknesses:

Did not specify how many clock hours master teachers would spend with teacher coaches.

Reader's Score: 24

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

The qualifications of each of the key project personnel are provided and each bring an array of experiences that will enable to the applicant to meet the goals set forth in the proposal. The consultants' and contractors' credentials are impeccable.

Weaknesses:

Although the Project Director has a myriad of experiences writing, evaluating, and administering grants, it does not appear she has any experience in arts initiatives.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(3) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key

project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a very detailed and thorough timeline for project implementation (pg. 38-39). Each member of the management team has clear responsibilities and a time frame for which to accomplish the goals set forth. The district partners have guaranteed their support of the project through letters of support. The applicant references the fact that key personnel have worked on other significant grants as confirmation that they will find success with this grant as well. The applicant states that there will be on-going work and collaboration and that all partners will meet regularly.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a vague communication plan among stakeholders. The applicant states that all partners will meet regularly but does not specify what regularly means. Additionally, the only group with specified meeting specifications is the leadership team.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

Strengths:

The applicant, along with the highly qualified evaluation team, has developed an extensive evaluation plan that will use a wide variety of evaluation techniques and methods. The applicant discusses in detail the varied uses of qualitative and quantitative data sources (pg. 44). Additionally, formative assessments will be used throughout the project in order to continually monitor and make adjustments when needed.

The applicant and evaluator will develop a Program Implementation Fidelity Matrix, which is an implementation progress measurement tool. The Evaluators have been trained on how to effectively use this tool (pg. 46).

The applicant sites work by Dr. Thomas R. Guskey as the framework for evaluating the PD (pg. 47). This framework supports the idea of using "five levels of professional development evaluation" as expounded upon in the table on pg. 47-48.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a hierarchical logistic model for use in evaluating the initiative, but does not speak directly to a theory that will guide the evaluation.

Reader's Score: 27

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Leveraging Technology

1. Projects that are designed to leverage technology through one or more of the following:

(a) Using high-speed Internet access and devices to increase students' and educators' access to high-quality accessible digital tools, assessments, and materials, particularly open educational resources.

(b) Implementing high-quality, accessible online courses, online learning communities, or online simulations, such as those for which educators could earn professional development credit or continuing education units through digital credentials based on demonstrated mastery of competencies and performance-based outcomes, instead of traditional time-based metrics.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a robust plan for the implementation of technology throughout and beyond the implementation of the project. Adequate technology infrastructure exists to support technological strategies outlined in the project for students and staff. The applicant will guide technology integrated with ISTE standards and protocols. Lastly, teachers will utilize on-line learning while engaging in graduate course work.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
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