

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2018 08:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: PACER Center, Inc. (U310A180001)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Management Plan/Project Personnel		
1. Management/Personel	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1a or 1b		
1. CPP 1(a) or CPP 1(b)	3	0
Sub Total	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Total	106	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFEC - 1: 84.310A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: PACER Center, Inc. (U310A180001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers—

- (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.
- (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

Strengths:

1. The applicant identifies itself as PACER Center, a statewide nonprofit organization with 40 years of experience in family engagement. The applicant provides evidence in the logic model located in the Appendix, showing the conceptual framework for the project; it demonstrates that the project design is evidenced based, and it summarizes the inputs, goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. The applicant clearly identifies sources used to develop the conceptual framework. For example, the applicant states, PACER's design and underlying conceptual framework for its MN SFEC applies family engagement research and promising best practices from the field to reinforce and ensure activities will lead to impactful and systemic results. The principles from the U.S. Department of Education's Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships are also used. The Dual Capacity Framework is embedded throughout the project design to ensure families and school staff have a shared belief of the importance of working together to improve outcomes for all students. e18 e21, e22, e23.

2. The applicant provides a narrative indicating the research consulted is the latest work done in the field. For example, the applicant indicates PACER's direct services to parents and families, such as trainings and individual assistance, emphasize the importance of parental high and shared expectations for their children. Multiple studies have demonstrated that parents' high expectations have a statistically significant positive effect on the academic achievement of students. The research consulted includes: Lee & Brown, 2006; Vera et al., 2012; Ross, 2016; Wang & Hofkens, 2014; Jensen & Minke, 2017. In addition, the applicant indicates they will address families whose first language is not English. For example, the project will develop family-friendly materials in multiple languages in order to give families the information they need to make decisions about educational choice. e22, e23.

3. The applicant clearly identifies the components of the plan to continue successful activities beyond the federal funding period. For example, PACER's Minnesota's Statewide Family Engagement Center activities and resources were planned to produce outcomes that will be sustained after the end of the project. Knowledge gained by professionals and families in trainings will continue to inform their behavior in parent-school communications and partnerships that occur after the project period has ended. Web-based resources including tip sheets, videos, and archived trainings will be maintained on PACER's website. They will also provide technical assistance to evidence-based parent education programs such as Head-Start, Early Childhood Family Education, and other programs on family engagement strategies. A focus will be on reaching culturally and racially diverse and low-income parents and students, e34-e35.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted.
2. No weaknesses noted.
3. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by 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, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers—**
 - (1) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.**
 - (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.**
 - (3) 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.**
 - (4) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

Strengths:

1. The applicant provides a narrative with a very detailed plan to receive a diversity of opinions about the goals, objectives and methods of implementation used by the program. For example, the applicant provides details showing the components of the plan: To develop an effective statewide family engagement infrastructure, it will be necessary that PACER involves the Minnesota Department of Education, education professionals, families, and community members in the project's implementation early on. PACER consulted with Minnesota Department of Education staff on this proposal for their ideas on building statewide capacity. Additionally, PACER conducted an online survey of parents statewide and received more than 300 responses that are being used to help guide the development of the MN SFEC project design. The applicant indicates PACER will convene a special advisory committee for the MN SFEC project within the first 6 months of the project period, and the committee will continue to meet two to three times a year throughout the duration of the grant. Membership will include all stakeholders state-wide. 35-e37.

2. The applicant provides a narrative with clear evidence of numerous and substantial partnerships. For example, the applicant indicates The Minnesota Department of Education will be a major partner to maximize effectiveness of the project by helping ensure that PACER's SFEC family engagement activities and strategies are systematically embedded into existing statewide school programs. e36

PACER has signed preliminary MOUs with 25 organizations, including local education agencies, charter schools, community organizations, and parent education programs. These partners will help with a range of implementation activities, including outreach to families who are culturally and racially diverse, low-income, homeless, or have students with disabilities or in foster care. The applicant provides a list of the organizations providing a Memorandum of Understanding. e37-e38.

3. The applicant provides evidence of on-going inspection of activities to insure the program is on track and meeting the identified goals and objectives. For example, the applicant indicates MN SFEC activities have been carefully designed to ensure that the budget, timeline, personnel, and resources are adequate to support the project. The SFEC management plan includes regular review of project milestones, ongoing project evaluation, and strong financial oversight to ensure SFEC achieves its desired objectives on time and within budget.

Details of the plan include that PACER will ensure the achievement of project milestones by regularly monitoring the project timelines. The project staff will meet weekly to discuss the project's progress, any roadblocks, and upcoming plans. The status of project activities and budget expenditures will be reviewed monthly to ensure project goals are being met on time and within budget. e39, e40

4. The applicant identifies the key personnel including education, training and experience. The applicant indicates the MN SFEC Project staff in place have vast expertise in the family engagement field, with many having years of experience working with families and professionals to improve outcomes for students. For example: Paula Goldberg, PACER Center Executive Director, MN SFEC Principal Investigator (In kind): The PI will oversee the administration of the grant and ensure project activities are completed on time and within budget. Credentials for all other key staff are equally documented and resumes included in the appendix. e86-e97.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted
2. No weaknesses noted
3. No weaknesses noted
4. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers—

- (1) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits.**

Strengths:

1. The applicant's provides evidence showing the work of the organization is relevant to barriers faced by the target community. The years of commitment by staff to this and similar programs indicates experience and dedication to the program by the staff. For example, PACER has signed Preliminary MOUs with 25 organizations, including local education agencies, charter schools, community organizations, and parent education programs. These partners will help with a range of implementation activities, including outreach to families who are culturally and racially diverse, low-income, homeless, or have students with disabilities or in foster care, The applicant provides a list of programs that demonstrate PACER's experience and past success with projects that provide training, information, and support to State education agencies, local education agencies, educators, parents, and organizations on family engagement policies and practices that are effective for parents, especially those of disadvantaged students. e38, e44, e45

2. The applicant provides an excellent and detailed budget narrative. The budget appears well organized and adequate to support planned services and activities. Cost seems reasonable in relation to the objectives and scope of the project. Expenditures and personnel responsible for the budget are clearly identified. For example, Consultants: Consultants will

play a key role in making sure the program is

On track and within budget. The figures provided to cover expenditures of consultants are reasonable. For example, Evaluation - \$5,000 will be available annually for project evaluation activities with Katharine Shepherd, at the University of Vermont. MOUs- \$10,000 will be used to support some organizations with Memorandums of Understanding, in completing agreed upon project activities. Speakers - \$5,000 will be available annually for guest speakers for trainings and workshops. Interpreters/Translators –\$1,000 will be available annually for sign language interpreters, translation review, etc. as needed for the project. PACER has signed Preliminary MOUs with 25 organizations, including local education agencies, charter schools, community organizations, and parent education programs. These partners will help with a range of implementation activities, including outreach to families who are culturally and racially diverse, low-income, homeless, or have students with disabilities or in foster care. Appendix. e111, e116.

3 . The applicant's narrative indicates the program is structured to reach thousands of target students and other stakeholders. For example, PACER will provide additional in-kind support to the project to assist with management and the development and dissemination of products. Free Google ads will help relevant stakeholders across the state and beyond find project information and resources. The costs of the project are planned economically to serve thousands of people directly and hundreds of thousands indirectly. E47, e48

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted.
2. No weaknesses noted.
3. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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:**
 - (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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce promising evidence (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) about the project's effectiveness.**

Strengths:

Does not apply

Weaknesses:

Does not apply.

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1a or 1b

1. The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed to--

- (a) Create SFECs that will provide direct services to parents and families through evidence-based (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) activities.**
- (b) Provide families with evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) strategies for promoting literacy. This may include providing families with access to books or other physical or digital materials or content about how to support their child's reading development, or providing family literacy activities (as defined in section 203(9) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act).**

Note: An application will not receive points for both (a) and (b) under Competitive Preference Priority 1.

Strengths:

Does not apply

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed to provide families with the information and tools they need to make important decisions regarding the educational choice (as defined in the NIA) that is most appropriate for their children.

Strengths:

The applicant provides narrative indicating PACER's MN SFEC will conduct several activities that will provide information to families about the range of educational options available to them; including traditional public schools, public charter schools, online learning, home schooling, co-enrollment college programs, private options, and others. The project will develop family-friendly materials in multiple languages in order to give families the information they need to make decisions about educational choice. For example, PACER will create resources that help families understand school report cards, so they can more easily compare performance of Minnesota's schools. e21, e22

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: PACER Center, Inc. (U310A180001)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	0
Quality of Management Plan/Project Personnel		
1. Management/Personel	20	0
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	20	0
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	18
Sub Total	100	18
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1a or 1b		
1. CPP 1(a) or CPP 1(b)	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Sub Total	3	0
Total	106	21

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFEC - 1: 84.310A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: PACER Center, Inc. (U310A180001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers—
 - (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.
 - (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
 - (3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by 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, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers—
 - (1) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.
 - (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.
 - (3) 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.
 - (4) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers—

- (1) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits.**

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 0

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:

- (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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce promising evidence (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) about the project's effectiveness.**

Strengths:

(1) The evaluation plan closely follows the logic model (e85), which explicitly connects the project's five goals to expected outcomes (e50-e52). The applicants describe the planned formative and summative evaluation activities for each of the project's five goals (e50-e52). For example, to assess project progress toward the measurable outcome goals of at least 80% of parents reporting that the training they attended increased their understanding of how to support learning in the classroom and at home, at least 80% of parents reporting that their children's academic progress increased because of help provided by the SFEC, and at least 400 parents participating in Goal 3 activities annually, the applicants propose recording the number of parents and family members participating in training and individual assistance activities and the number of high-impact services delivered, administering workshop evaluations to participating parents immediately following training, administering pre- and post-surveys to parents receiving individual assistance services, and administering six-month follow-up surveys with parents who attended trainings (e51-e52).

(2) The applicants state that the project director will review performance feedback data as soon as it becomes available. These periodic assessments of progress toward achieving intended goals will make it possible to make any necessary changes in a timely manner (e50). Importantly, the applicants state that the formative assessment process will include taking account of whether the project is effectively serving culturally and racially diverse and low-income families (e50).

(3) The applicants propose implementing sound methods of evaluation, including pre- and post-surveys and six-month follow-up surveys (e52-e53), which if well-implemented, can provide promising evidence about the project's effectiveness. Additionally, follow-up surveys are a feasible method for assessing the project impact over time.

Weaknesses:

(1) It is not clear what kinds of qualitative data the applicants would collect. They discuss pre- and post-surveys and follow-up surveys; however, they do not state what kinds of data they would collect with the surveys (e.g., e50). The survey data could be quantitative or qualitative, or a combination of both; however, the applicants do not specify. There is some indication, however, that the survey data will be quantitative. For example, the applicants state that "the questions in the survey rate parents' knowledge and skills... so growth can be measured over the time..." (e53). This is a description of quantitative survey data. Other methods of evaluation proposed by the applicants (e.g., counts of workshop attendees, academic achievement measures) would produce strictly quantitative data.

(2) The applicants do not discuss their planned analysis methods. There is no indication of how the data will be analyzed (e50-e52).

(3) The applicants do not discuss methods for controlling for selection bias. For example, parents who participate in individual assistance activities may qualitatively differ from those who do not participate in individual assistance activities, and these kinds of important differences among community members are not considered in the evaluation plan (e52-e53). Additionally, the results of pre- and post-survey and follow-up survey studies may in some cases be confounded with time. For example, improvement in parents' skills and knowledge with respect to navigating the school system could reflect more time and experience with the school system as their children get older rather than the effects of dedicated training/workshops (e52-e53).

Reader's Score: 18

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1a or 1b

1. The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed to--

(a) Create SFECs that will provide direct services to parents and families through evidence-based (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) activities.

(b) Provide families with evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) strategies for promoting literacy. This may include providing families with access to books or other physical or digital materials or content about how to support their child's reading development, or providing family literacy activities (as defined in section 203(9) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act).

Note: An application will not receive points for both (a) and (b) under Competitive Preference Priority 1.

Strengths:

The applicant cites two individual studies in the application for competitive preference priority 1(a). The first, Lee and Bowen (2006), examined the effects of different kinds of parental involvement on the academic achievement of elementary school children by race/ethnicity, poverty, and parent educational attainment. A random sample of 700 third-

through fifth-graders was selected from all third- through fifth-graders in one community's seven elementary schools. 70 randomly selected Hispanic/Latino students were added to increase their representation. Of those 770 students, 497 provided consent. The authors determined that these 497 students were representative of the population; however, 82 children were excluded due to missing values or because their parents did not select African American, Hispanic/Latino, or European American as the race/ethnicity. These 82 children were more likely than the children included in the study to receive free/reduced-price lunch and had lower scores on the academic performance outcome measure (200-201). Because the authors do not control for selection bias, the citation does not meet the promising evidence eligibility requirement.

The second citation that the applicants provide, Ross (2016), used data from the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002; a nationally representative study of tenth graders) to investigate the effect parental involvement on high school completion and postsecondary attendance. The author adjusted for nonresponse bias and the unequal probability of selection associated with ELS: 2002 (8, 12).

This study describes the effects of parental expectations and parental involvement, which are both central components of the proposed project (e15). Services and activities associated with supporting parents in having high expectations for their children's academic achievement are described throughout this application and explicitly associated with Goal 3 (e.g., pages e15, e25). Services and activities associated with supporting parents in their school engagement are also described throughout the application and explicitly associated with Goals 2 and 3 (e.g., e23-e26).

Ross found components of parental expectations and parental involvement to be significant and positive predictors of high school completion and postsecondary attendance. For example, parental aspirations for their children's postsecondary education was positively correlated with both high school completion and postsecondary attendance (page 17). The outcomes of high school completion and postsecondary attendance are relevant for the proposed project plan, which includes an examination of improved student outcomes, defined as "a decrease in the achievement gap and more postschool success for students in college and career" (e34).

In line with Ross's (2016) findings, the applicants plan to emphasize in their activities the importance of parents' high expectations for students. For example, their direct services to parents and families, such as trainings and individual assistance, will focus on the importance of parental high expectations for their children (e20). Another example is they will create outreach materials emphasizing the importance of high expectations that can be made available at schools, community organizations, libraries, and other locations (e32).

This citation meets the promising evidence eligibility requirement.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

- 1. The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed to provide families with the information and tools they need to make important decisions regarding the educational choice (as defined in the NIA) that is most appropriate for their children.**

Strengths:

n/a

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: PACER Center, Inc. (U310A180001)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Management Plan/Project Personnel		
1. Management/Personel	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	70
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1a or 1b		
1. CPP 1(a) or CPP 1(b)	3	0
Sub Total	3	0
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Total	106	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFEC - 1: 84.310A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: PACER Center, Inc. (U310A180001)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers—

- (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.
- (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

Strengths:

1. The applicant presents a sound conceptual framework, based upon ED's Dual Capacity-Building Framework, with specific goals, activities, outputs and outcomes (see Logic Model, Appendices B1 (e85) which provides comprehensive information on each element of the model). The SFEC goals articulated in the logic model and further detailed in the project workplan (e28-e34) encompass all of the application requirements in both scope and implementation timeline, including partnerships with the SEA and organizations, and direct services to parents with focus on culturally and racially diverse and low-income families.

2. The applicant proposes to provide services grounded in research that show the positive impact of high expectations (see evidence form). For example, research has demonstrated that having high expectations is among the top predictors of improved academic achievement and is predictive of other types of parent engagement (e20-e21). The concept of high expectations will be embedded throughout SFEC activities. Family and professional trainings will emphasize the importance of high expectations. Resources will be developed and disseminated that will assist families to track their children's academic progress in statewide assessments and report grades to help them meet challenging standards. Additionally, individual assistance will support parent and professionals to have meaningful and effective conversations about students' education to build family-school partnerships focused on learning in the classroom and at home (E21). Technical assistance trainings and activities will emphasize the importance of teachers' and parents' shared high expectations for students so they can improve their academic achievement and school readiness (e24). PACER will offer trainings and assistance to help families understand how schools function, best practices for communication with school staff, understanding educational choice options including charter schools, information about how to track and understand their child's academic progress, and the importance of having high expectations (e25). PACER will utilize a Parent Academic Tracking Sheet – a chart that parents can use to record their children's academic progress on report cards and statewide assessments which was developed as part of a small local project. A new secondary level tracking sheet for grades 7-12 will be developed so PACER staff can help parents of older children understand necessary requirements for graduation and support high expectations for postsecondary education and employment. PACER will also develop and disseminate record-keeping folders that families can use to organize important school documents, such as standardized test scores and report cards (e25). The resources developed by the project will be translated into multiple languages and provide families with information using family-friendly language on topics such as making decisions about educational choice, having high expectations and supporting children for success after high school, and available technology tools to support learning (e27). The project will develop, pilot, and present 5-10 community workshops annually for 100-150 parents annually statewide. Trainings will be presented in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali to provide knowledge about the school system, the importance of high expectations, communicating with teachers, and how to support learning

at home (e30). Project outreach materials will be developed that emphasize importance of high expectations in multiple languages that can be left at schools, community organizations, libraries, and other locations to recruit culturally and racially diverse and low-income families to participate in project activities (e32).

3. Activities are planned to ensure that results will extend beyond the project period (e34). For example, knowledge gained by professionals and families in trainings will continue to inform their behavior in parent-school communications and partnerships after the project period ends. Web-based resources including tip sheets, videos, and archived trainings will be maintained on PACER's website. A dissemination plan to share public grant deliverables with other SFECs and organizations serving families will be developed and implemented.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted
2. No weaknesses noted
3. No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by 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, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers—

(1) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

(2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.

(3) 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.

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

Strengths:

1. The perspectives of the state's diverse population will be integrated into the special project advisory committee. The project will convene a special advisory committee that will include parents, including those who are racially and culturally diverse and education professionals, representatives from elementary and secondary school students, members of the business community, and state and local education agency officials. Feedback from a diverse range of perspectives will also be collected via other means such as evaluations (e36-e37).

2. The applicant has engaged a significant number of project partners for collaboration (via preliminary MOUs) that represent a range of diversity and will maximize the project's effectiveness(e-38-e39). PACER's strong relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education will ensure that engagement activities and strategies developed by the project are systematically embedded into existing statewide programs (e38). Partners include local education agencies, charter schools, community organizations and parent education programs. Partners will help with outreach to families who are culturally and racially diverse, low-income, homeless, or have students with disabilities or in foster care, participate in

piloting of technical assistance and parent training activities and dissemination of project resources (e38). Partners represent a wide range of community organizations and parent education programs that are focused on parents who speak languages other than English (e39).

3. The applicant presents detailed plans for deliverables and clearly defines responsibilities. This well-developed management plan ensures adequacy to achieve successful results throughout the life of the project. The management plan includes regular review of project milestones, ongoing project evaluation, and strong financial oversight to ensure that the project achieves its desired objectives on time and within budget. For example, PACER will ensure the achievement of project milestones by regularly monitoring project timelines and implementing formative and summative evaluation activities (e-40).

4. PACER staff bring a range of diversity, length of service and experience to the project (e41-e44). The applicant's long history of serving parents and families in the state (as the PIRC and PTI) will enable the applicant to leverage existing resources to produce both quick and long-lasting impact (e41). As a statewide organization with more than 30 programs, PACER brings a wide range of specialized resources and has a unique capacity to implement high-impact activities that will improve academic outcomes for student. PACER executive director (ED) will provide overall supervision of the project. She has served as ED since 1978. She is recognized as a national leader in family engagement and has many years of experience in federal grant management, budgets, and collaboration with state and local education agencies. The project director has been with PAVER for 30 years and is an expert in cultural competence, parent-professional partnerships, and nonprofit management. She has directed state and national technical assistance projects and was the project director for PACER's PIRC grant from 1995-1997 (e42). Project staff are representative of the diversity of Minnesota families enabling them to provide training and individual assistance to culturally and racially diverse families. Most of the project staff have been with PACER for many years and bring a wealth of experience working with families (e42-e44).

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses were found.
2. No weaknesses were found.
3. No weaknesses were found.
4. No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers—

- (1) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits.**

Strengths:

1. The applicant provides evidence of effective, long-term relationships with partners and has secured preliminary MOUs from an impressive list of organizations representing key racial/ethnic groups and low-income families. For example, organizations are representative of the types of relationships PACER has across the state and represent a diverse range of stakeholders (e46). The Minnesota Dept. of Education has made a commitment to be a partner in building a statewide infrastructure for family engagement (e46). Community organizations and parent education programs will help PACER

recruit project participants, co-sponsor events, disseminate SFEC information and resources, and provide input into project activities. Community partners with a focus on serving disadvantages families, including those who are culturally and racially diverse (Asian, African American, Somali, American Indian, and Hispanic), low-income, homeless, immigrants, or have students in foster care or with disabilities (e47). District and school partners will assist in project implementation by participating in family engagement technical assistance activities, helping promote parent trainings to families in their schools, and providing input on the development of a statewide infrastructure for family engagement (e47).

2. Costs appear reasonable in relation to objectives, design, and potential significance. Each objective of the project has been carefully planned based on experience and data from past projects and knowledge of family and professional needs. PACER has many years of experience in allocating the appropriate and adequate amount of staff time commitments needed to meet the objectives of the project (e47-e48).

3. Applicant clearly demonstrates that the number of persons to be served is reasonable (e48). The costs of the project are planned economically to serve thousands of people directly and hundreds of thousands indirectly (e48). The project will provide direct services to parents, with a focus on culturally and racially diverse and low-income families, to assist them to be more engaged in their children's education and help students reach challenging academic standards. The project will provide indirect services by partnering with districts, schools, and community organizations on best practices in family engagement and developing print and electronic resources and disseminate project information through newsletters, websites and social media (e15). The applicant has extensive experience managing project expenditures. This will ensure that project activities are cost effective.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses were found.
2. No weaknesses were found.
3. No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 20

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:**
 - (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 methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce promising evidence (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) about the project's effectiveness.**

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1a or 1b

1. The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed to--

(a) Create SFECs that will provide direct services to parents and families through evidence-based (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) activities.

(b) Provide families with evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) strategies for promoting literacy. This may include providing families with access to books or other physical or digital materials or content about how to support their child's reading development, or providing family literacy activities (as defined in section 203(9) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act).

Note: An application will not receive points for both (a) and (b) under Competitive Preference Priority 1.

Strengths:

N/A

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed to provide families with the information and tools they need to make important decisions regarding the educational choice (as defined in the NIA) that is most appropriate for their children.

Strengths:

The applicant describes several methods that will be used to provide actionable information to parents and families on education choice, of which there are many in Minnesota.

Resources will be made available in several languages in order to reach parents of diverse backgrounds.

Individualized services will also be available (e21-e22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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