

**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: Capitol Region Education Council (U310A180066)

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	17
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	20	17
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	64
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	67

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFEC - 1: 84.310A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (U310A180066)

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 provides very detailed information describing their approach to create a conceptual framework for the application. For example, the applicant indicates CREC's theory of impact recognizes that, in order for the efforts to improve family engagement in education to be successful and have lasting, meaningful impact on students' experiences in school, trust and respect must be established between home, school, and community partners (Edwards, 2016; Epstein, 2016); Cultural responsiveness and a commitment to equity must be reflected in the development and implementation of all resources. The theory of impact will be reflected in each aspect of the project design, as CREC and partners will engage in work that consistently and continuously reinforces the concepts of dual-capacity building (e20 -e22).

2. The applicant's narrative indicates that school districts will access resources and receive direct service and training aligned to identified needs and evidence-based best practice. The applicant provides assurances that the latest research will be consulted. For example, content for the virtual resource center will be developed and hosted in a universally accessible online platform; a revision protocol for online content will be developed with feedback mechanisms from LEAs, parents, teachers, students, the advisory committee and other stakeholders, to ensure that resources reflect the latest evidence of strong practice and that modules are responsive to needs of all stakeholders (e48- e49).

3. The applicant provides details on plans to continue the program beyond federal funding. For example, critical to continue the program beyond federal dollars is the school district. As a school district finds success, case studies and tools featuring the district's experience, including the perspectives of family, youth and community members, will be added to the school's curriculum to allow other school districts to benefit from this learning. In addition, the emphasis on dual-capacity building, extensive training on high-impact, evidence-based intervention models, the emphasis on dual-capacity building, extensive training on high-impact, evidence-based intervention models, the creation and maintenance of a digital resource center accessible to all, and partner agency support for enduring and sustainable shifts in the cultures of school communities, the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the funded period. (e49-e50).

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 will seek to engage a diversity of perspectives by serving under-represented groups. All of the partnership members have existing relationships within multiple family, youth and school networks from which to solicit advisory committee members. The program will actively encourage and promote greater diversity of perspectives and inclusion of under-represented and nontraditional family and youth representatives. In addition, CREC will engage with various Connecticut professional associations for schools, administrators and local governing boards to ensure that the advisory committee is representative of key stakeholders and constituents (e38).
2. The applicant provides an extensive chart identifying all partners of the program and what they bring to the partnership. Attachment F shows whether the support is a direct service, a capacity building strategy, and/or a resource to be made accessible online; and the group of stakeholders intended for participation. Table 3 outlines the trainings, interventions, direct (Table 3. Summary of Connecticut's SFEC Strategies, Supports and Services) services and technical assistance models that will be offered to schools and communities based on the assessment of needs across Connecticut LEAs, (e42). Reflected in Table 3, (Summary of Connecticut's SFEC Strategies, Supports and Services), is a comprehensive body of strategies and programs for improving family engagement and/or direct services that increase quality of family-school-community relationships and engagement from the program's partners (e41 to e47).
3. The applicant provides a narrative indicating the milestones and accomplishments that the management team expects to accomplish in the beginning months of SFEC implementation. Short-term outcomes include implementation of structures and resources that need to be in place to launch initial project activities, including: convening meetings and confirming roles and responsibilities for both the project management team and the advisory committee; communication of available project resources to stakeholders; engagement of SEA- and LEA-level leadership; review inventory and needs assessment to determine baseline level of LEA and community needs (e56 -e58; e68).
4. The qualifications for the Project Director are excellent in formal training and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project and experience in designing, managing, or implementing similar projects to provide the needed

leadership, (e50). The required field experience and administration capabilities are adequate. Qualifications and experience for other key staff appear to meet the required standards for the project. Experience and educational background are described. The requirements are enough to meet the needs of the project. The applicant will seek to employ persons who have succeeded in overcoming barriers like those confronting the target population. The Director's credential includes, CREC Resource Group / Capitol Region Education Council, Hartford, Master of Public Policy / Georgetown University, Washington, DC, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and French / James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.(e103). The applicant provides the resumes of all key positions in the appendix and all demonstrate solid qualifications for the job (e103, Appendix, e102 to e19).

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted.
2. No weaknesses noted.
3. The applicant does not clearly identify the schedule of activities of the program. No specific dates are provided along with activities. Table 5 e54 to e56.
4. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 17

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 a very detailed narrative of the commitment of the partners to the program. For example, to show the commitment of the partner of the program, the applicant provides a general Memorandum of Understanding as follows: "This document serves as a Memorandum of Understanding between Capitol Region Education Council and organizations that comprise a partnership consortium, including the African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Inc., Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, and State Education Resource Center. Consortium members will define responsibilities of mutual collaboration and support regarding implementation of the strategies described in the application submitted by CREC on behalf of the consortium of organizations, in partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education, to establish a Statewide Family Engagement Center, e157" The MOU also describes what the partners will contribute to the program. For example: Each signer of this MOU agrees to: Provide fiscal, in-kind and programmatic support, within available resources, to support effective long-term implementation of the strategies described in the application; Ensure completion of the activities specified in the application and share authority for final approval of same (e157).

2.The budget is reasonable, cost-effective and adequate to support the project. The applicant provides a well-documented budget narrative. The budget is well organized and adequate to support planned services and activities. Costs are

reasonable in relation to the objectives and scope of the project. Expenditures and personnel responsible for the budget are clearly identified. Budget Narrative, e160 to e165

3. The applicant provides narrative with ample details funding will be put to increasing target student participation. For example, WestEd will work with each SEA to develop a tailored approach to expand and deepen capacity within the SEA and their LEAs to support evidence-based family engagement practices at the school level. In Years 1 and 2, this will involve working in partnership with GaDOE to expand the existing trainer of trainer model, including leadership academies for district teams to support their implementation of APTT and increase participants. The goal of the training is to strategically increase the quantity and quality of available trainers that can support expansion of the student body and ongoing implementation of APTT and other evidence-based strategies that support family engagement (e33), e34, e35

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses noted
2. No weaknesses noted.
3. The numbers provided by the applicant do not reflect the number of persons the program will impact. Without the figure, it is not possible to assess if costs are reasonable in relationship to results. e32, e33, e34.

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:**
 - (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:

Does not apply.

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:

2. The applicant provides details of how activities meet Competitive Preference Priority 2. For example, Navigating School Choice Options: There are a myriad of educational programs throughout Connecticut that families may consider for their children outside of their neighborhood or zone schools. Building on the information available to families on RSCO operated programs, a more comprehensive catalog of educational choice options throughout the state will be developed and information sessions offered to families, students and community members. This strategy meets the criteria under Competitive Preference Priority 2, to provide families with the information and tools they need to make important decisions regarding the educational choice that is most appropriate for their children (e46).

Weaknesses:

2. No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (U310A180066)

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	15
Sub Total	100	15
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	18

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFEC - 1: 84.310A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (U310A180066)

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 applicant provided a helpful narrative of the components of the logic model, which include inputs, short-term outcomes, mid-term outcomes, and impact (e61-e63). Inputs include a wide range of activities, such as training and coaching for improving family engagement in education and establishing the management team and advisory committees (e61). Short-term outcomes include expected milestones and accomplishments in the early months, such as the engagement of SEA- and LEA-level leadership and reviews of needs assessments (e62). Mid-term outcomes include benchmarks to be monitored throughout the funded period, such as the number of school-family partnership activities and the rates of family participation in adult education programs (e62). Finally, impact refers to intended long-term changes, such as an increase in the number of families reporting enhanced capacity to work with schools (e63). This detailed explanation of the model is helpful in that it names benchmarks of progress toward key outcomes that will be monitored with evaluation activities.

The applicants also provide a table (e65-e67) that aligns implementation and impact evaluation questions with qualitative and quantitation data sources and collection methods, as well as analytic approaches.

Some of information regarding objective performance measures, how they are related to the intended outcomes of the project, and what quantitative and qualitative data will be produced can be gleaned from the logic model narrative and Table 6.

(2) The applicant explains that both formative and summative data will be collected, and annual reports on progress will be developed (e64). Importantly, the evaluation will also consider the extent to which implementation fidelity and quality affect outcomes.

(3) This criterion was not addressed.

Weaknesses:

(1) The logic model description (e61-e65) and Table 6 (e65), which depicts the project evaluation plan, does not clearly lay out objective performance measures, how they are related to the intended outcomes of the project, and what quantitative and qualitative data will be produced by each. The application would be improved with the addition of a table that included some of the information from the logic model narrative along with the Table 6 information. In this way, the reader could clearly see the connection between performance measures, outcomes, and data collection methods.

(2) It is not clear which methods will be used to assess the extent to which implementation fidelity and quality affect outcomes and impact (e64). Additionally, the applicant has not provided a timeline of evaluation activities, so it is not clear whether or not the evaluation plan will allow for periodic assessments of progress toward achieving intended outcomes (e67). (The authors state that a timeline will become available a later date.)

(3) The applicants did not demonstrate how the methods of evaluation will produce promising evidence (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) about the project's effectiveness.

Reader's Score: 15

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 reports in the application for competitive preference priority 1(b). Both reports are relevant to the proposed project in that they focus on similar populations and settings (e.g., low income families, Title I schools, students of color) (e.g., e40, e42).

(Epstein & Sheldon, 2016)

The sample was drawn from the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) (pages 206-207). The authors state

that districts and schools join NNPS seeking guidance and support in implementing effective partnership programs, and because they all join for the same reason, “the sample eliminates one kind of selection bias” and allows the researchers to compare schools/districts with many years of experience in implementing partnership programs to schools/districts who have just begun (page 207). Survey data were collected from all of the member schools (347 K-12 schools in 21 districts nationwide). The proportion of elementary and secondary schools in the sample matches that in the nation (page 205, 207). The authors use hierarchical linear modeling to examine how school and district practices and policies affect partnerships between families and schools, which accounts for the fact that schools within the same district are similar and produces less biased estimates (page 209).

There are several significant and positive effects reported in this study. For example, controlling for demographic variables, strong principal support was significantly associated with strong partnership programs (page 210). Additionally, the study describes the effects of the strength of a school’s partnership program (e.g., page 210), and school partnership programs are key components of the proposed project (e.g., e21). Additionally, outcomes for which the study found favorable effects of the key project component are relevant for the proposed project. For example, the study found a favorable effect of increased family engagement on student attendance (page 211), and attendance is a relevant outcome for the proposed study (e40, e63, e93, e95, e134).

Westat and Policy Studies Associates (2001)

This report details the Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance (LESCP), which examined changes in student performance in a sample of Title I schools (page 1). The researchers selected a purposive sample; therefore, the schools were not statistically representative of high-poverty schools in their districts, states, or the nation. However, the analyses included statistical controls for important variables like student and school poverty (e.g. page 24, 47).

There are a number of significant and positive effects. For example, outreach to the parents/families of low-achieving students in third-grade was associated with greater gains in achievement from third- to fifth-grade (pages 35-36).

Additionally, the study describes the effects of teacher outreach to parents (e.g., page 35-36), which is a key project component (e.g., e25), and outcomes for which the study found favorable effects of the key project component are relevant for the proposed project. For example, the study found a favorable effect of teacher outreach to parents on reading and math achievement, and improvements in performance on state assessments of English language arts and mathematics are expected outcomes of the proposed project (e.g., e63).

Both of the cited reports meet the promising evidence eligibility requirements.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

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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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2018 03:53 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (U310A180066)

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	18
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	30	0
Sub Total	100	68
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	1
Sub Total	3	1
Total	106	69

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - SFEC - 1: 84.310A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (U310A180066)

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 conceptual framework underlying the proposed project's demonstration activities is based upon a theory of impact for family-school-community partnership that will help to organize and direct the essential resources required, including partnerships with other agencies, to guide the services and supports for schools and communities. This theory of impact recognizes that, in order for the efforts to improve family engagement in education to be successful and have lasting, meaningful impact on students' experiences in school, trust and respect must be established between home, school, and community partners (Edwards, 2016; Epstein, 2016) (e21).

The project is also based on and designed to extend/expand Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement. This framework was developed during the 2017-2018 school year via a collaborative process that engaged diverse stakeholders including parents, educators and communities (e19-e20). Drawing on the guiding principles in Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement the CREC and its partners are prepared to build on existing infrastructure, capacity and expertise to support Connecticut in becoming a model for effective family engagement in education (e20).

2. The services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice as defined in the Connecticut State Dept. of Education (CSDE) Evidence-Based Practice Guide for Student-Family-Community Engagement. The Evidence-Based Practice Guide for Student-Family-Community Engagement reflects a large body of research that identifies high-impact strategies to engage families that can produce dramatic gains in children's social and emotional development, academic achievement and success for life. The strategies adhere to research that demonstrates the organizational conditions that promote effective family-school partnerships and high-quality family engagement in student's school experiences. The applicant provides information on the alignment of Connecticut's guidance for evidence-based family engagement practices with the Dual-Capacity Building Framework (e25). Services and activities reflect a strong understanding of current best practices for family involvement. In addition, the project will contract with a national expert on family engagement throughout the life of the funding (e164).

3. The proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. For example, the emphasis on dual capacity building, extensive training on high-impact, evidence-based intervention models, the creation and maintenance of a digital resource center accessible to all, and partner agency support for enduring and sustainable shifts in the cultures of school communities will yield results that will extend beyond the funded period (e49-e50).

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 details regarding how the project 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, by convening an advisory committee comprised of: parents; education professionals with expertise in improving services for disadvantaged children; representatives of local elementary schools and secondary schools, including students; representatives of the business community; and Representatives of SEAs and LEAs. Parents will comprise a majority of the advisory committee (e37). In addition, the project partners have extensive backgrounds in ensuring diversity of perspectives and all of the partnership members have existing relationships within multiple family, youth and school networks from which to solicit advisory committee members (e38).
2. Services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services. All partnership members are or have been programs funded by the U.S. Dept. of Education (e33-e36). The project will benefit from the collective knowledge and substantial experience of all of these partners. For example, the African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities is a Community Parent Resource Center authorized under the IDEA. As such, it provides training, advocacy and peer support to parents of children, youth and young adults across the spectrum of physical, mental and behavioral diagnoses and their families. Since 1999 (e33). The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) has been providing support, information, training and empowerment to Connecticut families and the education professionals who provide for them for almost 40 years. It is the Parent Training and Information Center authorized under the IDEA. CPAC has a long history of collaborative work with both state and local education agencies, providing both direct consultation and dual capacity training (e34). The State

Education Resource Center (SERC) is quasi-public educational agency established to assist with the provision of professional learning opportunities that promote educational equity and excellence in schools and districts across the state. Of particular note is the continued operation of the CT SERC, previously funded as CT's PIRC, which has been maintained after federal PIRC funds were no longer available (e36).

3. The proposed project 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 is clearly laid out in the application's summary of strategies, supports and services in Table 3 (e42-e46) and the project timeline (e56-e58). In addition, the activities of the project partners are clearly defined in Table 4 (e55) providing a clear understanding of the responsibilities of each partner. For example, the SERC will provide training and facilitation for schools, families, and community members on school-family-community partnerships, equity in education, equity and social justice and support for English learners (e55). The project plans to "maximize utilization of technology" which will allow maximum impact of funds (e60).

4. The key project personnel have outstanding qualifications, including relevant training and experience. The project director has over 25 years of experience working directly with students, families, educators and community members to support students at-risk of school failure and in developing family-school-community partnerships to support student success. The project director will manage daily responsibilities, coordinate resources to achieve project outcomes and monitor the ongoing development and implementation of project activities (e50-e51). In addition, a project management team will be formed that will be comprised of the senior leaders and experts of all project partners (e51). The senior leaders of key project partners have extensive experience relative to the project's objectives as detailed in their resumes (e113-e119).

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. Each of the project partners have demonstrated a clear commitment to the project and, more importantly, all are already well established within the state having been in existence for many years. As such, they are uniquely situated to provide direct services and capacity building activities that reflect and address the needs of the state. For example, the

many years of experience of the CREC, the African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP), the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) and State Education Resource Center (SERC) (e31-e36) will provide outstanding commitment and leadership to the project. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has indicated its strong commitment to the project. For example, the CSDE will designate an individual to serve as the primary contact for all communications regarding the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. Each of the project partners has signed a MOU (e157-e158).

2. The applicant demonstrates that the budget is reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. For example, in Year 1 of the project, more resources will be spent on establishing project structures and processes, conducting inventories, facilitating and reviewing assessments and developing action plans (e60). This extensive planning and building of the projects infrastructure will enable the project to achieve full implementation in Years 2-5.

3. The project costs appear to be justified in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. For example, the project has identified a group of school districts, called "Alliance Districts," which represent Connecticut's 33 lowest-performing districts. The Alliance Districts will receive targeted activities to dramatically increase student outcomes and close achievement gaps and opportunity gaps (e39-e40). This approach closely aligns with the purpose of Title I of ESSA.

Weaknesses:

1. No weaknesses found.

2. No weaknesses found.

3. The requested funding of \$1million annually appears somewhat high in relation to the student population of the state and, within the state, to the student population in the Alliance Districts (e40) (\$4.50/student in Year 1). The applicant might revisit the budget to determine if the project objectives could be achieved with reduced funding.

Reader's Score: 18

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 provides details regarding how the project would 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 in Table 3 (e46). The applicant states "There are a myriad of educational programs throughout Connecticut that families may consider for their children outside of their neighborhood or zone schools (e46). Building on the information available to families on RSCO operated programs, a more comprehensive catalog of educational choice options throughout the state will be developed and information sessions offered to families, students and community members (e46)."

The applicant includes a footnote stating that this service meets the criteria under Competitive Preference Priority 2 (e46).

Weaknesses:

The applicant should be more deliberate regarding its intention to satisfy the requirement for CPP 2. For example, the information regarding "Navigating School Choice Options" presented in the Summary Table 3 might have been broken out into a separate section that directly addressed CPP2 rather than imbedding inside a table and indicating that the activity relates to CPP2 only via a footnote (e46).

NOTE: This was thoroughly discussed by reviewers and full points available (3) cannot be awarded due to this weakness.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

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