

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/28/2016 04:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mecklenburg County Government (S419C170010)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	8
Sub Total	10	8
Quality of the Preschool Program Design		
Quality of the Preschool Program Design		
1. Quality of Program Design	25	22
Sub Total	25	22
Preschool PFS Partnership		
Preschool PFS Partnership		
1. Preschool PFS Partnership	25	25
Sub Total	25	25
Quality of the Work Plan		
Quality of the Work Plan		
1. Quality of the Work Plan	25	25
Sub Total	25	25
Quality of the Project Leadership and Team		
Quality of the Project Leadership and Team		
1. Quality of Leadership	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Budget Narrative		
Budget Narrative		
1. Budget Narrative	10	9
Sub Total	10	9
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study		
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study		
1. Absolute Priority	0	0

	Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study			
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study			
1. Absolute Priority		0	0
	Sub Total	0	0
	Total	105	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - PFS Panel - 10: 84.419C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Mecklenburg County Government (S419C170010)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

- 1. The Secretary will consider the needs of the Target Population. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the magnitude of the need of the Target Population for the services to be provided by a potential PFS project. Applicants should clearly state and demonstrate the extent of the problem facing the Target Population using data and other relevant information.**

Strengths:

The applicant includes evidence-based studies to demonstrate the need for the Preschool Pay For Success project. The applicant effectively presented information about the effectiveness of preschool, and an array of data showing the magnitude of the need for services. Information included specific data about current unmet needs in kindergarten readiness. The proposal highlighted important questions for research. It also acknowledged the potential for unintended negative consequences, and the need to take a macro-view of the potential results. The applicant will focus PFS efforts on economically at-risk four-year-old children, and will provide services to those who cannot yet be served within current funding level for either public pre-K or high quality subsidized child care. These unserved eligible children are the Target Population, selected based on the age, the resident of the County, and Federal Poverty Level.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that children who are at risk for, or are identified as having special needs, including social emotional needs are referred for services; however, they do not provide any data related to the numbers or percentages of the current enrollment in the program that are special needs, or are being provided specialized services, making it impossible to determine the level of special education services being provided, or the level of need for special education services to be provided.

Reader's Score: 8

Quality of the Preschool Program Design - Quality of the Preschool Program Design

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the design of the proposed preschool program. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed preschool program, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the intervention strategy is likely to improve student outcomes for the Target Population, based on quantitative, qualitative, or theoretical evidence, including the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable and will demonstrate student success. In responding to this criterion, applicants should identify clearly specified and measurable outcomes for the preschool program and explain how these outcomes can be achieved by the program. While these outcomes will inform the selection of Outcome Measures for the PFS project, they do not limit a grantee from evaluating additional Outcome Measures in the course of completing the Preschool PFS Feasibility Study.**

Strengths:

The applicant will implement research-based curriculum based on early literacy development and social-emotional development, which is beneficial to children's core knowledge in personal information, naming colors, following verbal two and three step directions, counting by rote, and verbal fluency and articulation. In addition, instructional coaching, training opportunities, as well as classroom- and program-based technical assistance will be ongoing professional development

for staff to enhance child outcomes. The professional development for staff enhances the supports that wrap around teachers, children and their families, and prepares children for success in developmentally appropriate reading, writing, emotional literacy and empathy.

Weaknesses:

The proposed project does not describe if the assessment of children's learning and development is on an ongoing basis or not. In addition, the curriculum used for the PFS program covers literacy development and social-emotional development, but does not include the aspects of children with special needs.

Reader's Score: 22

Preschool PFS Partnership - Preschool PFS Partnership

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the Preschool PFS Partnership. In evaluating a Preschool PFS Partnership, the Secretary will consider the following:**

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

- 1. (c)(1) The quality of an existing Preschool PFS Partnership, including the history of the collaboration, or, if a Preschool PFS Partnership does not exist, the quality of the plan to form a Preschool PFS Partnership.**

Strengths:

The applicant describes a well-established public/private partnership that was initiated by the County with the surrounding schools, stakeholders, working groups, expert subject advisors, and intermediary. This project was initially proposed by the County in the year 2000. Eight years later the partnership has grown stronger. The project partnership will include the County Manager, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Child Care Resources Inc., professors of Psychology at the University of North Carolina, and Urban Institute (D.C.) subject matter experts.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

- 2. (c)(2) The extent to which the roles and responsibilities of members or proposed members of a Preschool PFS Partnership are clearly described and are appropriate and sufficient to successfully implement a PFS project.**

Strengths:

The roles and responsibilities of the PFS partnership are clearly described and are sufficient to successfully implement the project. The County Manager will serve as the Partnership & Executive Committee Chair, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools will be in charge of identification of Outcome Measures for target population. Child Care Resources Inc. will support County Manager for PFS study.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

Quality of the Work Plan - Quality of the Work Plan

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the work plan. In determining the quality of the work plan, the Secretary will consider the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

- 1. (d)(1) The adequacy of the work plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed Feasibility Study project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks on time. Applicants should identify whether a contractor will conduct the Feasibility Study and, if appropriate, the extent to which the timeline for selecting and hiring the contractor is reasonable and sufficient for completing the project on time and within budget.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clearly written work plan that includes a detailed list of tasks and responsibilities for the project broken into time periods for work initiation and completion. The applicant projects that the hiring process for the contracting consultant may take up to three months and they have developed the work plan around that time frame. The timeline for selecting and hiring the contractor is reasonable and the ensuing work plan is sufficient for completing the project on time and within their proposed budget.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 12

- 2. (d)(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring stakeholder feedback in the operation of the proposed Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot. If the Feasibility Study includes the reduction in special education placement as a Financial Benefit, the extent to which the work plan includes outreach to and involvement of the representatives from the State and local special education community or individuals with special education expertise, including groups representing families.**

Strengths:

The proposed governance/management structure for the PFS initiative will be comprised of an executive committee, a steering committee and workgroups. This structure is good because it ensures the stakeholders are fully engaged and the project is sufficiently staffed to complete the work streams as planned.

Although the proposed project does not intend to use special education reduction as a payable outcome measure, the representatives from pre-K and K-12 special education programs are included to ensure the needs and outcomes for special needs children are well addressed in the intervention model and the evaluation.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The project director will spend 10 percent of his time on the project. This is appropriate and adequate given the limited extent of the project director's responsibilities in the management plan. Most of the project activities will be led and coordinated by the project coordinator and the school analyst who will spend 50 percent of their time on the project. This time commitment is appropriate given the extensive array of activities they will be responsible for carrying out under the management plan.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

Quality of the Project Leadership and Team - Quality of the Project Leadership and Team

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the project leadership and team. The Secretary will consider the extent to which the applicant has the project and financial management experience necessary to manage the Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot, including:**

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

- 1. (e)(1) Managing and overseeing similar projects (e.g., PFS or other project related work, experience with early childhood education) with specific examples of prior accomplishments and outcomes; and**

Strengths:

The project leadership and team have experience necessary to manage the PFS project. The applicant proposes that the project team lead will be the project manager. The individual in that position has been involved in PFS studies for two years.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

- 2. (e)(2) Managing Federal grants, including plans for ensuring compliance with Federal guidelines.**

Strengths:

The project leadership and team have the experience necessary to manage Federal grants. The senior project resource will provide oversight and expert consultation to the proposed project. He has over 30 years of experience overseeing research and projects for government agencies and the Department of Education. In addition, the

Sub Question

County has a history of managing Federal grants in fiscal year 2016.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Budget Narrative - Budget Narrative

- 1. The Secretary will consider the adequacy of resources necessary to complete the Feasibility Study, including any philanthropic or other resources that may be contributed toward the project. In determining the adequacy of resources, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the budget will adequately support program activities and achieve desired outputs and outcomes.**

Strengths:

The applicant identifies other sources of funds than PFS grant to support project activities. For example, the County will pay for the cost of personnel, fringe benefits, and equipment.

Weaknesses:

The proposed project does not provide detailed description of the contractor's role serving as subject matter experts. Their hourly rate and hours of service provided need to be addressed in detail as well.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority

- 1. Competitive Priority: Outcome Measures Across Various Domains**
To meet this priority, an applicant must propose a Feasibility Study to evaluate if PFS is viable that would evaluate social and emotional or Executive Functioning Outcome Measures, or both. These potential outcome measures may be predictive of future school success, cost savings, cost avoidance, and other societal benefits, and may appropriate to include in a PFS project. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant specifies Outcome Measures to be tracked beginning at the time of the program matriculation and extending through third grade. Data demonstrates how the target population lags behind other groups achieve key outcomes that a future PFS project will seek to achieve. The composite score reflects the set of knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes that typically define kindergarten readiness.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study - Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study

1. Under this priority, the applicant must propose a Feasibility Study that will determine the viability of using a PFS approach to expand or improve a preschool program for a Target Population, and describe the potential Outcome Measures the applicant proposes to identify and evaluate for appropriateness for PFS. Any applicant that includes a Feasibility Study for a PFS project that proposes to reduce the need for special education and related services as an Outcome Measure must also include at least one other meaningful and substantive Outcome Measure of short-, medium-, or longterm student achievement, such as kindergarten readiness, reading and math growth or achievement, and improved social and emotional skills.

Yes

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study - Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study

1. Under this priority, the applicant must propose a Feasibility Study that will determine the viability of using a PFS approach to expand or improve a preschool program for a Target Population, and describe the potential Outcome Measures the applicant proposes to identify and evaluate for appropriateness for PFS. Any applicant that includes a Feasibility Study for a PFS project that proposes to reduce the need for special education and related services as an Outcome Measure must also include at least one other meaningful and substantive Outcome Measure of short-, medium-, or longterm student achievement, such as kindergarten readiness, reading and math growth or achievement, and improved social and emotional skills.

Strengths:

The applicant is proposing to conduct a Feasibility Study to determine if a Pay For Success approach can be adapted to support pre-K services in the County; and if not, to determine at what scale does Pay For Success become viable.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that at-risk children are referred for services, however, they do not provide any data related to the numbers or percentages of the current enrollment in the program that are special needs or are being provided specialized services, making it impossible to determine the level of special education services being provided or the level of need for special education services to be provided.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mecklenburg County Government (S419C170010)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Sub Total	10	10
Quality of the Preschool Program Design		
Quality of the Preschool Program Design		
1. Quality of Program Design	25	19
Sub Total	25	19
Preschool PFS Partnership		
Preschool PFS Partnership		
1. Preschool PFS Partnership	25	20
Sub Total	25	20
Quality of the Work Plan		
Quality of the Work Plan		
1. Quality of the Work Plan	25	20
Sub Total	25	20
Quality of the Project Leadership and Team		
Quality of the Project Leadership and Team		
1. Quality of Leadership	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Budget Narrative		
Budget Narrative		
1. Budget Narrative	10	8
Sub Total	10	8
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study		
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study		
1. Absolute Priority	0	0

	Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study			
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study			
1. Absolute Priority		0	0
	Sub Total	0	0
	Total	105	87

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - PFS Panel - 10: 84.419C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Mecklenburg County Government (S419C170010)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary will consider the needs of the Target Population. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the magnitude of the need of the Target Population for the services to be provided by a potential PFS project. Applicants should clearly state and demonstrate the extent of the problem facing the Target Population using data and other relevant information.

Strengths:

- The applicant has included a detailed description of the target population, as well as key selection criteria to build the argument for the project's need.
- The applicant has cited multiple sources of data in building the Need argument, both in terms of demographics describing target population, and also NAEP data supporting argument for why the target population is in need of the proposed project.
- Overall, the Need for Project section demonstrates the applicant's understanding of the target population needs and the challenges associated with proving effective interventions. The section makes an effective argument for provision of proposed services.

Weaknesses:

- n/a

Reader's Score: 10

Quality of the Preschool Program Design - Quality of the Preschool Program Design

1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the design of the proposed preschool program. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed preschool program, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the intervention strategy is likely to improve student outcomes for the Target Population, based on quantitative, qualitative, or theoretical evidence, including the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable and will demonstrate student success. In responding to this criterion, applicants should identify clearly specified and measurable outcomes for the preschool program and explain how these outcomes can be achieved by the program. While these outcomes will inform the selection of Outcome Measures for the PFS project, they do not limit a grantee from evaluating additional Outcome Measures in the course of completing the Preschool PFS Feasibility Study.

Strengths:

- The applicant has described well the quality of proposed preK program.
- Intended goals, objectives and outcomes are clearly specified, and tools and assessments to track outcomes are described and discussed in terms of data they provide.
- The partnership described in the proposal seems to possess rich interdisciplinary expertise from practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders, supporting a high likelihood of successful grant implementation.

Weaknesses:

- Although tools, assessments and actual measures are discussed, along with intentions for data sharing, the actual analytical procedures to be used are not included.
- Prior experience and team members' expertise is referenced, but not specifically connected to the goals of the project; specific connections to team members' expertise is needed to build an argument for a successful feasibility study.
- The applicant has mentioned all feasibility study components (e.g., preK program model to be implemented/used, measurable outcome measures, etc.), but no specifics about the cost/benefit analysis are described beyond saying that this analysis will contribute to the creation of a shared economic model that will help determine the willingness and capacity of stakeholders to implement a PFS project.
- The applicant has not included a plan for external evaluation, beyond describing team members' prior expertise and background.

Reader's Score: 19

Preschool PFS Partnership - Preschool PFS Partnership

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the Preschool PFS Partnership. In evaluating a Preschool PFS Partnership, the Secretary will consider the following:**

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

- 1. (c)(1) The quality of an existing Preschool PFS Partnership, including the history of the collaboration, or, if a Preschool PFS Partnership does not exist, the quality of the plan to form a Preschool PFS Partnership.**

Strengths:

- The partnership for the project is well described, and functions of both executive committee and steering committee are outlined.
- The plan outlines key leadership and collaboration responsibilities, distributing the load of the project and showing how each partner expertise would be utilized.
- The table summarizing the PFS feasibility pilot grant plan provides a robust framework connecting teams, project phases, deliverables, and timeframe for execution of the plan. It will be a helpful framework for monitoring project's progress and assessing productivity throughout the project.

Weaknesses:

- It is unclear who will serve on the project working groups.

Reader's Score: 12

- 2. (c)(2) The extent to which the roles and responsibilities of members or proposed members of a Preschool PFS Partnership are clearly described and are appropriate and sufficient to successfully implement a PFS project.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

- The responsibilities for the project are defined, both in narrative by describing roles and responsibilities for each named partner in the project; in addition, the applicant has provided two separated graphs outlining: (a) the relationships between the executive and steering committees, and the relationships among and between the working groups and the evaluator; and (b) the timeline with phases and deliverables.
- The role of the study team and evaluation advisers seem appropriate – contributing to both the steering committee’s work and supporting working groups, dealing with data and analysis, interventions and outcomes, as well as with contracting and funding

Weaknesses:

- It is unclear and how the working groups will collaborate to ensure quality and integrity of grant responsibilities, functions, etc.

Reader's Score: 8

Quality of the Work Plan - Quality of the Work Plan

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the work plan. In determining the quality of the work plan, the Secretary will consider the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

- 1. (d)(1) The adequacy of the work plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed Feasibility Study project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks on time. Applicants should identify whether a contractor will conduct the Feasibility Study and, if appropriate, the extent to which the timeline for selecting and hiring the contractor is reasonable and sufficient for completing the project on time and within budget.**

Strengths:

- The described timeline for the project is very detailed – the deliverables and the responsibilities of the partners seem reasonable.
- The team has developed milestones for all of the components of the project.

Weaknesses:

- The team has developed an intense timeline for project implementation, and with so many teams and working groups with distributed responsibilities, it would be challenging for the team to stay on track.
- One of the major weaknesses of the application is the lack of detail regarding planning for evaluation and the actual cost/benefit analysis: potential measures are named, but little specific information in terms of actual procedures is provided.

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

2. (d)(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring stakeholder feedback in the operation of the proposed Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot. If the Feasibility Study includes the reduction in special education placement as a Financial Benefit, the extent to which the work plan includes outreach to and involvement of the representatives from the State and local special education community or individuals with special education expertise, including groups representing families.

Strengths:

- The financial benefit is implied because of the implementation of a high-quality preK program.
- The applicant provides evidence of a diverse team of partners, some of whom seem to have extensive expertise in early learning and development, including issues of special education.

Weaknesses:

- The proposal does not offer detail in terms of description of planning for actual outreach and project procedures related specifically to ensuring reduction in special ed placement (i.e., the financial benefit). The applicant does not explain what processes will be put in place and how would they support reduction.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

- The provided timeline and the commitment to the project director and the teams are appropriate and adequate with regard to the outlined milestones and deliverables.

Weaknesses:

- n/a

Reader's Score: 3

Quality of the Project Leadership and Team - Quality of the Project Leadership and Team

1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the project leadership and team. The Secretary will consider the extent to which the applicant has the project and financial management experience necessary to manage the Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot, including:

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

1. (e)(1) Managing and overseeing similar projects (e.g., PFS or other project related work, experience with early childhood education) with specific examples of prior accomplishments and outcomes; and

Strengths:

- The applicant names and outlines the team's significant prior accomplishments in grant management, including experience with feasibility studies.
- The description of existing projects, project outcomes and accomplishments provides a strong argument for the capacity of the team to undertake the proposed work in the proposal.
- The applicant's discussion of the current state of affairs in the state shows deep understanding and

Sub Question

familiarity with the field of ECE in the state and nationally.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 3

2. (e)(2) Managing Federal grants, including plans for ensuring compliance with Federal guidelines.

Strengths:

- The proposal outlines the team's significant prior experience and accomplishments in federal grant management, including understanding of importance of ensuring compliance with requirements, timelines, and criteria for successful grant administration and monitoring.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 2

Budget Narrative - Budget Narrative

1. The Secretary will consider the adequacy of resources necessary to complete the Feasibility Study, including any philanthropic or other resources that may be contributed toward the project. In determining the adequacy of resources, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the budget will adequately support program activities and achieve desired outputs and outcomes.

Strengths:

- The applicant provides adequate evidence of consideration of philanthropic or other resources - the proposal lists some of the partnering entities willingness to donate their time and content expertise to help ensure successful and timely attainment of the proposal's objectives.
- The project strong collaboration of key expert partners (researchers, practitioners, state-level administrators, etc.) shows a diverse expertise and commitment to the goals of the proposed project. The partnering entities' letters of support exemplify types of expertise they possess and their willingness to contribute various resources to ensure the success of the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

- There is an insufficient description of how resources will be used optimally at different stages of the project, and what specific resources are to be utilized by teams and work groups.

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority

1. Competitive Priority: Outcome Measures Across Various Domains
To meet this priority, an applicant must propose a Feasibility Study to evaluate if PFS is viable that would evaluate social and emotional or Executive Functioning Outcome Measures, or both. These

potential outcome measures may be predictive of future school success, cost savings, cost avoidance, and other societal benefits, and may appropriate to include in a PFS project. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

- The competitive preference priority is addressed separately toward the end of the proposal and states that the applicant proposes to use the PFS Feasibility Study to evaluate social-emotional and behavioral Outcome Measures and strongly consider including at least one Social-Emotional measure as a basis for outcome payments.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 5

Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study - Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study

1. Under this priority, the applicant must propose a Feasibility Study that will determine the viability of using a PFS approach to expand or improve a preschool program for a Target Population, and describe the potential Outcome Measures the applicant proposes to identify and evaluate for appropriateness for PFS. Any applicant that includes a Feasibility Study for a PFS project that proposes to reduce the need for special education and related services as an Outcome Measure must also include at least one other meaningful and substantive Outcome Measure of short-, medium-, or longterm student achievement, such as kindergarten readiness, reading and math growth or achievement, and improved social and emotional skills.

Yes

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study - Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study

1. Under this priority, the applicant must propose a Feasibility Study that will determine the viability of using a PFS approach to expand or improve a preschool program for a Target Population, and describe the potential Outcome Measures the applicant proposes to identify and evaluate for appropriateness for PFS. Any applicant that includes a Feasibility Study for a PFS project that proposes to reduce the need for special education and related services as an Outcome Measure must also include at least one other meaningful and substantive Outcome Measure of short-, medium-, or longterm student achievement, such as kindergarten readiness, reading and math growth or achievement, and improved social and emotional skills.

Strengths:

- The applicant has provided clear evidence of addressing the absolute priority, which seems to be an integral part of the high quality preschool program, described in the proposal. As the applicant proposes to use this high quality program, the absolute priority becomes an organic part of the project.

Weaknesses:

- Based on the assumption that by using a high-quality program that provides some evidence of reducing special ed needs, this proposal uses a roundabout way of addressing the absolute priority. A more explicit way of addressing the absolute priority and explaining exactly how it factors in by using this high quality preK program would have been helpful if included in a separate section, as the applicant did with the competitive priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/27/2016 05:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mecklenburg County Government (S419C170010)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	10	10
Sub Total	10	10
Quality of the Preschool Program Design		
Quality of the Preschool Program Design		
1. Quality of Program Design	25	23
Sub Total	25	23
Preschool PFS Partnership		
Preschool PFS Partnership		
1. Preschool PFS Partnership	25	25
Sub Total	25	25
Quality of the Work Plan		
Quality of the Work Plan		
1. Quality of the Work Plan	25	25
Sub Total	25	25
Quality of the Project Leadership and Team		
Quality of the Project Leadership and Team		
1. Quality of Leadership	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Budget Narrative		
Budget Narrative		
1. Budget Narrative	10	10
Sub Total	10	10
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. Competitive Priority	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study		
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study		
1. Absolute Priority	0	0

	Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study			
Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study			
1. Absolute Priority		0	0
	Sub Total	0	0
	Total	105	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - PFS Panel - 10: 84.419C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Mecklenburg County Government (S419C170010)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

- 1. The Secretary will consider the needs of the Target Population. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the magnitude of the need of the Target Population for the services to be provided by a potential PFS project. Applicants should clearly state and demonstrate the extent of the problem facing the Target Population using data and other relevant information.**

Strengths:

The applicants have identified a target population of the 2,700 four year olds at or below 200% of the federal poverty line who are currently not served by preschool in Mecklenburg County, NC. The needs of the target population are describing using data from a variety of sources. Compellingly, recent findings about intergenerational income mobility are included that reveal that poor children born in Charlotte NC have especially low probabilities of escaping poverty in adulthood. Data on test score gaps between minority and white children reveal stark disparities at third grade. Additional information is presented about the prevalence of economic disadvantage among parents in this county. A careful assessment of the magnitude of the un-served population of four year olds is included. Almost 50% of the four year olds in this county are not enrolled in licensed day care of a public preschool center.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Quality of the Preschool Program Design - Quality of the Preschool Program Design

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the design of the proposed preschool program. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed preschool program, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the intervention strategy is likely to improve student outcomes for the Target Population, based on quantitative, qualitative, or theoretical evidence, including the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable and will demonstrate student success. In responding to this criterion, applicants should identify clearly specified and measurable outcomes for the preschool program and explain how these outcomes can be achieved by the program. While these outcomes will inform the selection of Outcome Measures for the PFS project, they do not limit a grantee from evaluating additional Outcome Measures in the course of completing the Preschool PFS Feasibility Study.**

Strengths:

The applicants propose to expand the existing North Carolina preschool program currently offered in both public school settings and in non-school preschool sites. The existing public preschool program in Mecklenburg County predates the state preschool program. Eligible children throughout the state and in the county are now offered enrollment in either the NC pre-K program or the county-specific Bright Beginnings program. The NC state program is described as high quality according to the ranking system of the National Institute of Early Education Research, and the county-specific program is considered to be very similar except with respect to funding sources. Although both programs are targeted towards students at risk due to educational or socio-economic risk, the majority of children in Mecklenburg County are eligible for both. Both preschool programs are described as being of high quality, with the non-public school sites described as

having 5 stars from the state rating system. The school district has a long history of successful partnership with licensed child care centers that offer the public pre-K curriculum. The curriculum and professional development plans are well described.

The outcomes of children participating in the expansion of the preschool program will be assessed using three different assessment tools: the PPVT, a Devereux early childhood assessment, and TS-Gold. This proposal includes a summary of several evaluations of the public preschool programming in Mecklenburg County that suggest that the Bright Beginnings program can have a significant effect on the outcomes of interest.

Weaknesses:

There was little discussion of how the number of preschool slots would be expanded and if any challenges regarding facilities or geography might be encountered.

Reader's Score: 23

Preschool PFS Partnership - Preschool PFS Partnership

- 1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the Preschool PFS Partnership. In evaluating a Preschool PFS Partnership, the Secretary will consider the following:**

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

- 1. (c)(1) The quality of an existing Preschool PFS Partnership, including the history of the collaboration, or, if a Preschool PFS Partnership does not exist, the quality of the plan to form a Preschool PFS Partnership.**

Strengths:

The proposed partnership is well described. The application starts out with a discussion of the history of existing partnerships and data sharing arrangements among the early care and education community. The proposed partnership will consist of a number of important stakeholders from the County, the school district, the child care community, and a consulting firm called Third Sector Capitol Partners. Third Sector is known within the PFS community as an experienced partner in conducting feasibility studies of PFS projects. Working already with this PFS partner, the applicants clearly have obtained an understanding of the key elements of PFS and have constructed a partnership arrangement that is well suited to this project. The roles of each partner are spelled out in the proposal. Both the intermediary (Third Sector) and the advisors or overseers of the evaluators have already been chosen.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

- 2. (c)(2) The extent to which the roles and responsibilities of members or proposed members of a Preschool PFS Partnership are clearly described and are appropriate and sufficient to successfully implement a PFS project.**

Strengths:

The roles are well described and are appropriate for the proposed project.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Quality of the Work Plan - Quality of the Work Plan

1. **The Secretary will consider the quality of the work plan. In determining the quality of the work plan, the Secretary will consider the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

1. **(d)(1) The adequacy of the work plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed Feasibility Study project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks on time. Applicants should identify whether a contractor will conduct the Feasibility Study and, if appropriate, the extent to which the timeline for selecting and hiring the contractor is reasonable and sufficient for completing the project on time and within budget.**

Strengths:

The contractor has already been selected for this feasibility study. As a result, the proposal contains a clear set of responsibilities and a detailed timeline for completing work and achieving milestones. Because the contractor has significant experience performing feasibility studies for PFS projects and because the county wants to move forward with their early childhood education plans, the timeline is aggressive. It appears that the intermediary (Third Sector Capital Partners) already has plans in place for conducting this feasibility study. As a result, it seems reasonable that the timeline for selecting the intermediary is short. The work plan reveals a sophisticated understanding of PFS processes, such as allowing for time to create a Special Purpose Vehicle (described as a separate contracting entity) to help facilitate the implementation of the PFS model. Attention also has been paid to the arrangements needed to maintain the integrated longitudinal data base that will be created for use with the PFS-induced expansion of preschool programming.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 12

2. **(d)(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring stakeholder feedback in the operation of the proposed Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot. If the Feasibility Study includes the reduction in special education placement as a Financial Benefit, the extent to which the work plan includes outreach to and involvement of the representatives from the State and local special education community or individuals with special education expertise, including groups representing families.**

Strengths:

The plan ensures input from a variety of stakeholders. In addition to the core stakeholders (including the county manager, school superintendent, CCRI leader and the professors overseeing the evaluation), the proposal lists a number of other important stakeholders who will be included on a steering committee. This committee will include early childcare educators, parents, leaders in the business community, and representatives of local community service organizations. Although a key innovation of this proposal is the decision not to focus on special education cost savings, which is an outcome that has troubled analysts and observers in other PFS preschool projects, the

Sub Question

proposal does include a discussion of including special education educators and parents.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The proposal contains a fairly detailed description of the time commitment of the core stakeholders and relevant staff. The county will assign at the county's expense a half time project manager who will work closely with the county manager. The feasibility grant will pay for a half time analyst in the public school system who will help make sure that necessary data for the PFS feasibility study will be available. The intermediary will be devoting 40% of a team leader's time to the project. Two other staff members associated with the intermediary will devote part of their time.

The time commitments of the project director and team seem appropriate.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Quality of the Project Leadership and Team - Quality of the Project Leadership and Team

1. The Secretary will consider the quality of the project leadership and team. The Secretary will consider the extent to which the applicant has the project and financial management experience necessary to manage the Preschool PFS Feasibility Pilot, including:

Reader's Score: 4

Sub Question

1. (e)(1) Managing and overseeing similar projects (e.g., PFS or other project related work, experience with early childhood education) with specific examples of prior accomplishments and outcomes; and

Strengths:

The chosen intermediary clearly has significant experience with PFS-related work, having been instrumental in helping to create the PFS initiatives in Massachusetts, Ohio and elsewhere. More specifically, the proposal describes the PFS experience of the key personnel that Third Sector Capital Partners will be devoting to the NC feasibility study. The proposal also describes at length the nature of the county government's experience with managing grants.

Weaknesses:

While the county government itself is described as having significant experience managing grants, more description of the county manager's specific expertise could have been provided with specific examples.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

2. (e)(2) Managing Federal grants, including plans for ensuring compliance with Federal guidelines.

Strengths:

The project leadership and team has experience managing federal grants. The application specifically describes the county government's extensive experience with grants. Both the county manager and the team leader from Third Sector have experience with applying for (or helping to apply for) and managing grants.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Budget Narrative - Budget Narrative

1. The Secretary will consider the adequacy of resources necessary to complete the Feasibility Study, including any philanthropic or other resources that may be contributed toward the project. In determining the adequacy of resources, the Secretary will consider the extent to which the budget will adequately support program activities and achieve desired outputs and outcomes.

Strengths:

The budget seems appropriate for the nature of the work described over the 9 -12 month period. Importantly, the county will be contributing some of their own funds to pay for a half time assistant to the county manager. In addition, the Urban Institute will be contributing \$25,000 of their own funds to support this project. The majority of the budget consists of the various staff either at the school district or working with the intermediary.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority

1. Competitive Priority: Outcome Measures Across Various Domains

To meet this priority, an applicant must propose a Feasibility Study to evaluate if PFS is viable that would evaluate social and emotional or Executive Functioning Outcome Measures, or both. These potential outcome measures may be predictive of future school success, cost savings, cost avoidance, and other societal benefits, and may appropriate to include in a PFS project. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The feasibility study is expected to focus on a variety of outcomes beginning in preschool. For the purposes of establishing metrics for cost savings, the proposal focuses strongly on 3rd grade school performance and SEL outcomes. The proposal describes existing interest in the county in promoting socio-emotional outcomes and suggests that the feasibility will help identify and establish the best evidence-based strategies for promoting this outcome. The existing public pre-Ks in Mecklenburg County have been evaluating in the recent past with respect to how they contribute to SEL growth among the children enrolled. The discussion in the proposal also links the current interest in expanding SEL initiatives to the PFS-funded preschool slots to existing interests in North Carolina starting over 10 years ago. Some of the stakeholders in the PFS initiative have been involved for a decade or more in the state-wide promotion of healthy

social behaviors in licensed child care classrooms across the state. This proposal clearly meets the Competitive Preference Priority.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study - Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study

1. Under this priority, the applicant must propose a Feasibility Study that will determine the viability of using a PFS approach to expand or improve a preschool program for a Target Population, and describe the potential Outcome Measures the applicant proposes to identify and evaluate for appropriateness for PFS. Any applicant that includes a Feasibility Study for a PFS project that proposes to reduce the need for special education and related services as an Outcome Measure must also include at least one other meaningful and substantive Outcome Measure of short-, medium-, or longterm student achievement, such as kindergarten readiness, reading and math growth or achievement, and improved social and emotional skills.

Yes

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study - Absolute Priority – Feasibility Study

1. Under this priority, the applicant must propose a Feasibility Study that will determine the viability of using a PFS approach to expand or improve a preschool program for a Target Population, and describe the potential Outcome Measures the applicant proposes to identify and evaluate for appropriateness for PFS. Any applicant that includes a Feasibility Study for a PFS project that proposes to reduce the need for special education and related services as an Outcome Measure must also include at least one other meaningful and substantive Outcome Measure of short-, medium-, or longterm student achievement, such as kindergarten readiness, reading and math growth or achievement, and improved social and emotional skills.

Strengths:

This proposal clearly satisfies the Absolute Priority. The applicants propose to expand an established system of preschool programming for four year olds to the 2,700 children a year who otherwise would not enroll in preschool. The proposal describes the potential appropriateness of PFS financing to achieve this expansion. If funded, the feasibility study would bring together local partners (especially the county and the school district) to work with a well-known project intermediary in the area of PFS. The applicants make a convincing argument that unmet need exists and that the pre-k system in the county and the state should be expanded to provide more slots for high-quality preschool education. Various child outcomes are identified. Of special note is the attempt to base a PFS early education initiative on an outcome other than reductions in special education expenditures. A PFS feasibility study will be useful for helping to identify and quantify potential government cost savings arising from improvements in early school performance and emotional-socio- learning.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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