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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/20/2020 12:56 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Virginia Department of Education (S425B200002)

Reader #1: ********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Highest Coronavirus Burden			
1. Coronavirus Burden		20	20
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan			
1. Project Services/Plan		35	32
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resource	es		
1. Management Plan/Resources		25	22
	Sub Total	80	74
	Total	80	74

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Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - FY20 REM - 10: 84.425B

Reader #1: *******

Applicant: Virginia Department of Education (S425B200002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Highest Coronavirus Burden

- 1. A: Highest Coronavirus Burden (up to 20 Points)
 - (2) The extent to which the applicant has a high coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors identified by the applicant in response to Application Requirement 3. (up to 20 points)

Strengths:

Approximately 20% of students attend schools in rural areas of the state. The state claims to have been significantly impacted in several areas:

- 1. Increased unemployment has resulted in "the number of initial claims filed from mid-March through the June 13, 2020 filing week totaled 849,486, which surpassed 20% of pre-pandemic, nonfarm employment." (p. e 17). Unemployment impacts families and further expands already existing gaps related to, for example, poverty, food insecurity, and access to reliable technology.
- A third quarter one-billion dollar revenue shortfall will impact public school funding.
- 3. The VA legislature has instituted budget reductions and suspensions that directly impact public school funding. The most notable impact of these budget decisions in relation to coronavirus burden include unallotted funds that would have increased the number of counselors in schools, provided school meals, funded at-risk student wrap-around services, and secured more pre-K funding.
- 4. Food insecurity due to unallotted funds. The fact that funds purposed to provide meals for families in need will go unallotted, is disconcerting and adds to the burden Virginia is experiencing.
- 5. Loss of childcare slots due to closures. As of the grant submission, 365/2,600 childcare providers in the state had reopening plans. Families with younger and school-aged children need reliable childcare in order to be able to hold employment. The loss of childcare slots increases the burden the coronavirus has had on families.

All of these have the potential to impact school-based decisions and resource allocation. The public school funding reductions and suspension increase the burden of the coronavirus response.

Weaknesses:

None Noted

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

1. B: Quality of Project Services and Project Plan (up to 35 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of project services and project plan.

In determining the quality of the project services and project plan, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible

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project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (up to 5 points)

In addition, the Secretary considers--

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project is an exceptional approach to absolute priority being addressed and includes a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. (up to 10 points)
- (2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project to respond to the needs of students. (up to 10 points)
- (3) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. (up to 5 points)
- (4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

5 points. The plan has sufficient strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented, namely students with disabilities. The plan supports "options for students who require special services (students with disabilities, English Learners) to participate with facilitation/assistance from special education teachers, mentor teachers, or coaches who can check in personally and coach students through assignments" (p. e26).

8points (1) (VDOE has a strong foundation for this project to build on. The Project is focused on expanding the state's Virtual Virginia (VVA) into a comprehensive learning management system (p. e22). Areas of expansion include the VVA platform, content, public TV partnership, and educator professional development. The plan is comprehensive with strong alignment to the absolute priority. That Virginia has an strong virtual learning system with the capability of being expanded into a full LMS, is exceptional and efficient.

10 points (2) When VA schools closed to in-person instruction in March, VVA was expanded in an emergency response to the new instructional reality. However, the emergency expansion was limited and is not sustainable. While there is a content base for upper grades, much work will be done to build K-8 content. Also, the LMS will be agile enough to allow teachers create their own content (p. e13). Building out the content to ensure students K-12 will have access to remote learning as well as expanding the VVA to a true LMS fills a critical gap.

3 points (3) This grant would allow VDOE to have an in-house LMS that includes not only comprehensive content, but also instructor course management abilities, varied instruction integration, and supports for special education students, English language learners, school counselors to serve students, parent feedback (p. e 24).

5 points (4) The intentional plan to address needs of students requiring extra academic supports and use of professional learning communities to reflects current best practice. Compensating teachers to lead regional professional learning communities speaks to value of and research behind teacher leadership (p. e30).

Weaknesses:

- (1) Those who would be overseeing the project do not have project management or LMS development experience, calling into question whether VDOE has the leadership capacity to execute a project of this scale. Efficient project management is going to be critical to the success of this project.
- (3) While expanding the platform with the multi-faceted considerations lays a strong foundation necessary to impact student outcomes, however there is no direct evidence it will.

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Reader's Score:

32

Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources

1. C: Quality of the Management Plan and Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers-

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 5 points)
- (2) The extent to which the proposed use of funds will adequately support the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
- (4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 10 points)

Strengths:

5 points (1) There is a management plan that includes timelines and persons managing the project for each area of the proposed project. The timelines have specific goals and identify the responsible party. In addition to the management plan clearly aligning to the USDOE performance measures for ESF-REM grant, the VDOE added eight other performance measures that will drive assessment of usage, expansion of the LMS, and teacher training (p. e38). The applicant's proposed timeline and management plan and ability to execute it in a timely manner and on budget is convincing.

3 points (2) The project funds the LMS system development and customization, staff training, and course management tools, training for teachers and course delivery, and ongoing customer and technical support (p. e39). The project utilizes professional learning communities across the state to provide feedback, troubleshoot user and content issues, and share successes and struggles of meeting student learning needs. The project funding encompasses the all areas that must be considered when building and sustaining an effective LMS. The proposed budget engenders confidence that it is sufficient to meet the objectives with the exception of better resourcing to ensure well-executed, quality professional development.

4 points (3) Supports for students with disabilities and English language learners are strong strands that are pulled throughout the plan and specifically and intentionally addressed both in practice and budgeting (p. e58). The project includes "professional development on the "just in time" assessment tools" that will allow teachers to better identify and address gaps in student learning (p. e13) This increases the project's potential significance along with the comprehensive robust LMS development plan that is included in the budget.

10 points (4) 107 out of 132 Virginia school divisions have expressed interest in utilizing the proposed expanded VVA LMS, opposed to purchasing another LMS (p. e25), indicating there would be significant utilization and based on the applicant's plan, the project possibly will become self-sustaining. "Virginia's ESF-REM proposal has the potential to serve all 1.38 million K-12 students through remote learning via an extensive, robust learning management system and by televised instruction" (p. e40). This extensive reach justifies the costs.

Weaknesses:

(2) Quality professional development is on-going and collaborative. Stipends for teachers to lead professional development need to reflect the resources quality and effective professional development warrants. The bulk of the

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budget is for hiring FTEs while the actual implementation in terms of training educators doesn't seem to support the time and resources necessary to recruit highly qualified educators and execute quality professional development.

(3) Without interim performance measures, it's difficult to determine how the final performance measures will be met.

Reader's Score: 22

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Virginia Department of Education (S425B200002)

Reader #2: ********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Highest Coronavirus Burden		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	20
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	34
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Tota	al 80	79
Tota	I 80	79

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Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - FY20 REM - 10: 84.425B

Reader #2: ********

Applicant: Virginia Department of Education (S425B200002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Highest Coronavirus Burden

- 1. A: Highest Coronavirus Burden (up to 20 Points)
 - (2) The extent to which the applicant has a high coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors identified by the applicant in response to Application Requirement 3. (up to 20 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed description demonstrating a high coronavirus burden as evidenced by increased unemployment, decrease revenue, budget reductions and suspensions, food insecurity, loss of childcare slots, and community spread (pp. e17-21). For example, the applicant provided data to support its claim of increased unemployment with "an average of more than 3,200% spike in weekly average unemployment claims" comparing to the weekly average of seven-week prior to May 15 (p.e17). In April 2020, Virginia reported a fall of 20.6% in total General Fund revenue collection (p. e17). The decreased revenue would negatively affect the state budget that helps pay for public education. Per Feeding America, "in 2020 Virginia will have a 53% increase in food insecurity over 2018" due to the pandemic (p. e19). Increased food insecurity has caused may families to seek assistance from food distribution centers. In addition, the loss of childcare slots has become a concern to school division as many teachers are also parents, whose your children will need child care.

The applicant provided another convincing example to explain the burden impacted on schools that the existing learning management systems in some school districts have been overtaxed with the sheer number of students and teachers trying to access them at the same time, resulting in shutting down its system (p. e21)..

The above details supported with data clearly presented a high burden caused by the pandemic on the parents, students, and schools in the state.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

1. B: Quality of Project Services and Project Plan (up to 35 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of project services and project plan.

In determining the quality of the project services and project plan, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (up to 5 points)

In addition, the Secretary considers--

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- (1) The extent to which the proposed project is an exceptional approach to absolute priority being addressed and includes a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. (up to 10 points)
- (2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project to respond to the needs of students. (up to 10 points)
- (3) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. (up to 5 points)
- (4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

5 points

Ensure equal access:

The applicant proposed to provide virtual online learning platform. TV classrooms, and professional development opportunity to teachers on assessment tools and strategies that would be accessible to all schools and districts that include members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, so that equal access is ensured (p. e23 & 26).

10 points

1) The applicant demonstrated a comprehensive approach focusing on four areas with a detailed project plan to address the needs (p. e22). The applicant proposed to expand current virtual learning platform including conversion of existing synchronous courses to an asynchronous format available to schools across all grade levels and subject content areas.

10 points

2) The applicant identified the gap in services that the current online platform for students in Grades 6-12 has a limit of 15 students per course with no enrollment fees; fees would be charged if the limit of 15 students exceeds to access the online learning materials. In addition, the instruction is unavailable in an asynchronous format. The applicant proposed to close the gap by further developing subject contents aligned to the state standards for all grade levels and subjects including fine arts, physical education, and career and technical education (p. e27), integrating science, technology, engineering and math activities into grade band modules and career explorations. All new content created using grant funds will be made available for public access with no fees. Further, the applicant addressed to include course content modifications to meet the needs of students with disabilities and English Learners.

The applicant proposed to expand TV classrooms because almost all families have a television in case many families do not have access to the Internet through broadband or cell phone services required for online instruction (p. e28). In April 2020, the applicant launched Virginia TV Classroom partnering with four Virginia public media stations to broadcast teacher-led classroom instructions aligned with the state standards (p. e28). The applicant intends to hire and train teachers broadcasting contents per elementary grade level cluster for a 36-week period, 6 weeks of which have already been produced. In addition, the applicant proposed to create and edit Algebra I and Earth Science for broadcast supporting remediation and credit recovery (p. e29).

The applicant proposed to provide professional development to teachers on formative assessment tools and strategies via webinars and professional learning communities (pp. e29-30), which is an effective practice.

The applicant clearly identified the gaps and proposed plans to address these weaknesses as evidenced by the detailed description with above examples.

4 points

3) The proposed project provides access to all students for remote learning. The aforementioned approaches are innovative reflecting current best practices in education and will likely improve student outcomes (p. e21-22). pp e??

5 points

4) The virtual online learning platform and contents offered to all schools and students reflect current knowledge and effective practices as evidenced by contents alignment with the Virginia Standards of Learning including career and

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technical education contents for middle and high school students (p. e22). Further, the applicant cited an article posted by REL MidAtlantic reporting the existing research to identify promising practices that educators could implement when schools closed quickly (p. e34). The author inferred several principles based on the evidence (p. e34-35), which have served as the guiding principles for the project that the applicant proposed. Thus, the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Weaknesses:

Ensure equal access: No weaknesses noted.

- 1) No weaknesses noted.
- 2) No weaknesses noted.
- 3) Though the applicant proposed to hire and train teachers broadcasting content areas, it is unclear how teachers would be hired and trained such as teacher qualifications, expectations, period of employment, and training topics. Though it is stated that "a budget is outlined in the budget narrative" (p. e29), limited to no information was found regarding the protocols and processes to be used guiding the hiring and training other than "approved state procurement process" (Budget Narrative, p. 6). With the limited information, it is difficult to predict the likelihood the proposed approach would lead to improvement in student outcomes using TV classrooms.
- 4) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 34

Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources

1. C: Quality of the Management Plan and Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers--

- (1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 5 points)
- (2) The extent to which the proposed use of funds will adequately support the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
- (4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 10 points)

Strengths:

5 points

1) The applicant proposed performance targets by the end of three-year grant period based on the baseline data (p. e38) and person responsible of the proposed project (p. e39) The budget narrative included a clearly defined timeline outlining the activities and deliverables (p. e55-62) The project director proposed has extensive experience in learning and innovation and large project management as evidenced by his resume. Key personnel resume is included as well (p. e47-50). The management plan including a detailed budget narrative is adequate with clearly defined roles and

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responsibilities, timelines, and milestones that would enable the completion of the project on time and within the budget.

5 points

2) The budget narrative provided appeared adequate regarding use of funds which would support the proposed project as evidenced in "Virginia: Ready to Reopen with Remote Learning Budget Narrative" The budget proposal provided detailed descriptions that are specific on each itemized budget allocation (p. e55-62).

5 points

3) The applicant provided a budget narrative that the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project as evidenced by itemized budget allocation in alignment to the objectives proposed. All of the amounts proposed are within the fair range amount and seem necessary (p. e55-62).

10 points

4) The applicant described that the 107 out of 132 school divisions have expressed interest in signing to the proposed project, which would benefit over 39,000 teachers and 550,000 students. It is very impressive to the anticipated results and benefits (p. e40-41).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 25

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Virginia Department of Education (S425B200002)

Reader #3: ********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Highest Coronavirus Burden		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	20
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	35
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	15
Sub	Total 80	70
	Total 80	70

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Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - FY20 REM - 10: 84.425B

Reader #3: ********

Applicant: Virginia Department of Education (S425B200002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Highest Coronavirus Burden

- 1. A: Highest Coronavirus Burden (up to 20 Points)
 - (2) The extent to which the applicant has a high coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors identified by the applicant in response to Application Requirement 3. (up to 20 points)

Strengths:

2.The application clearly addresses a high coronavirus burden and clearly describes information factors as well as measurable and observable indicators of change that are both qualitative (e.g., changes in health, how lives were changed) and quantitative. Learning management systems are overtaxed and have caused it to shut down, leaving teachers and students unable to access the internet. Because of the virus, remote learning was mandated. Total COVID-19 cases - 58,994 (confirmed and probable); Total COVID-19 hospitalizations - 5,913 (confirmed and probable); Total COVID-19 deaths - 1,645 (confirmed and probable). The above data from June 23, 2020 have been provided that explains how COVID-19 has contributed to or exacerbated disparities. e20 21

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

1. B: Quality of Project Services and Project Plan (up to 35 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of project services and project plan.

In determining the quality of the project services and project plan, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (up to 5 points)

In addition, the Secretary considers--

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project is an exceptional approach to absolute priority being addressed and includes a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. (up to 10 points)
- (2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project to respond to the needs of students. (up to 10 points)
- (3) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. (up to 5 points)

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(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant has identified a plan to provide equal access and treatment for participants. Purposeful outreach efforts to assure that members of all groups are encouraged to participate in proposed projects are addressed. Strategies will address underrepresented populations consideration and increased access to high-quality remote learning. Appropriate accommodations such as special education teachers, mentor teachers, or coaches who can check in personally and coach students through assignments will ensure that those with disabilities, Language barriers, etc. have equal treatment and access to program materials. e26

- 1. The applicant has clearly described an exceptional approach to absolute priority being addressed and includes a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. They will initiate services such as, expanding: Virginia's Current Virtual Learning Platform; Content Provided by Virtual Virginia; Instructional Content for Broadcast by Public Media Television Stations; and Technology to Provide Professional Development. They have noted that their services will offer students and teachers online access to instructional content at no cost to each division. For a limited time, each school division is able to integrate its local school division student information system (SIS) with the Virtual Virginia learning management system (LMS). to address specific educational needs of students, their parents, and teachers. These components are designed to facilitate effective learning and strengthen public schools' preparedness for learning disruptions. There resources are appropriate, as they will allow access to technology for all students especially those in remote communities. e24
- 2. The nature and magnitude of gaps have been clearly identified. They have addressed weaknesses in services and infrastructure, including lack of Internet connectivity, lack of teacher preparedness, and access to technology unavailability of asynchronous courses whereby students could proceed through the work at their own pace. To address this, they will extend Wi-Fi to schools parking lots, distribute mobile hotspots to students, and provide professional development. Likewise, to address the lack of broadband access, they will broadcast teacher-led classroom instruction via television and partner with Radio Poder WBTK 1380 AM, a Richmond Spanish-language station, to launch "Virginia: Educación en Radio," the commonwealth's first bilingual radio learning program. The program features prerecorded lessons in multiple subject areas to support continuity of learning for Spanish-speaking students in grades K-12 while schools are closed. e36
- 3. The application adequately addresses the likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. The proposed project is designed to develop and implement systemic initiatives to expand and enhance skills, strategies and knowledge of families including the use of technology tools needed to effectively communicate and meet the educational needs of their school-age children through increased access to high-quality remote learning. Additionally, the project provides professional development to enhance the competencies of school personnel as well as strategies for expanding access to remote learning options which is helpful in improving student outcome. They provide methods to build meaningful relationships among students and families that support student learning; implements community engagement initiatives in an effort to cultivate and sustain partnerships to accomplish the goals, the primary indicator targets, and meet the purpose of the project. e42
- 4. The applicant has clearly addressed how their choice of services reflects up-to-date knowledge such as, REL

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MidAtlantic, Instruction in the Age of COVID-19: Exploring the Evidence on Remote Learning, Hurwitz and Malick (May 28, 2020) and includes appropriate references. Strategies are adequate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. Regional professional learning communities/user groups will "meet" electronically to discuss their use of the 'Just in Time' tools as well as their successes and challenges with helping students recover learning loss to ensure access to high-quality remote learning; expand high-quality course-access programs; and address the specific educational needs of their state. e 34
Weaknesses:
None Noted.
1. None noted.
2. None noted.
3. None noted.
4. None noted.
Reader's Score: 35
Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources
1. C: Quality of the Management Plan and Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points)
In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers
(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 5 points)
(2) The extent to which the proposed use of funds will adequately support the proposed project. (up to 5 points
(3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 10 points)
Strengths:
Strengths:
1. The applicant has provided information needed in order to effectively assess the efficiency of their management plan.

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Details regarding milestones and specific responsibilities on the timeline for actions necessary to carry out and support the implementation and evaluation plan; and strategies to achieve the objectives within budget on time are documented. The applicant clearly documents committed staff responsibilities that are linked to specific times and project milestones. Additionally, the Assistant Superintendent (Master of Teaching, Secondary Education, 1994) who has experience in large project management as well as grant management will lead the project; oversee all aspects of student testing including test development and test administration in both online and paper/pencil modes, state and federal accountability and the administration of the federal ESEA programs. Budget and project oversight, accountability and processes, fiscal, personnel and records management components are addressed as well.

2. None noted.

3. None noted.

4. The costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served, objectives, implementation plan, and to the anticipated results and benefits. The number of students enrolled in Virtual Virginia high school courses (9,231). (20,000) are expected to be enrolled in 2022-2023. e38

Weaknesses:

- 1. None noted.
- 2. The application noted limited information regarding proposed activities for Year 2 & 3, therefore it is difficult to clearly determine whether the cost would adequately support the proposed project to achieve the anticipated results and benefits.
- 3. With the limited to no information about the performance target for Year 2 & 3, it is difficult to fully determine whether the costs are reasonable in relations the objectives"

4. None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Status: Submitted

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