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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (S425B200003)
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	28
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	73
Total	80	73

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (S425B200003)

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:

A.   Coronavirus burden statement focused on impact on education. The health impact required NC to move to remote learning that has impacted students in rural and poverty areas. Nearly 6 in every 100 NC students are English language learners, more than 60% higher than the national average. "These historically marginalized and disadvantaged populations face an achievement gap exacerbated by diminished access to quality remote instruction" (p. e20).The student impact has left the most struggling students and more specifically high percentage of ELL learners without access to quality remote instructions (p. 4).

The theme throughout the coronavirus burden section is that of the impact on rural areas and students from poverty. "Beyond the burden index factors, NCDPI organized an assessment of the coronavirus impact in NC based on four areas: health challenges, student challenges, economic challenges, and infrastructure challenges" (p. e19). The impact of the burden on families can be identified in the impact the virus response has had on unemployment and infrastructure, especially in rural parts of the state (pe.21). NC is very focused on how COVID burdens impact their most vulnerable students and have experienced burdens well beyond the burden index.

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)

(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:

3 points. The plan intentionally includes contracting with specialized content experts who specialize in content catered to special populations such as students with physical and cognitive
disabilities, and English language learners (p. e19). The budget also reflects resources to support these intentional efforts. By hiring individuals with expertise and budgeting for meeting the needs of underrepresented students, there is sufficient evidence these students' needs can be prioritized.

9 points. (1) The project goal is to "stabilize or improve student achievement": Instruction (p. 9) – develop a facilitator structure that is a trainer of trainers system that will develop 10 facilitators per PSU, per year. These facilitators will provide professional development to ensure educators have the training and support to build relationships and facilitate learning of students via blended learning. In tandem, parent resources will provide family support to the content being developed. The Logic Model on p. e25 provides evidence of the plan to best ensure this project reaches its potential. This training model is an exceptional approach as it builds leadership capacity within organization to lead their own learning and is an important self-sustainability factor.

8 points. (2)   Currently, NC states it has strong high school content developed but only four middle school units and no elementary instructional support. The goal will be to ensure all of these areas have comprehensive content instructional and content supports for educators, students, and families (p. e29). Ensuring there is content, instructional support, and parent resources expands virtual and blended learning opportunities K-12 and equips educators and parents in a manner that will fill a much needed gap.

5 points. (3) Access will focus on highest need communities where more than 13% have no access to wifi. NC states this will address subscription barriers, signal strength and access to equipment issues. In recent years, the state has invested significantly in equitable access to broadband and wifi extension for communities (p.e33). NC has placed itself ahead of the curve by having invested in equity issues for several years now indicating the state's initiative has been driven by identifying and addressing needs. This project will expand and enhance their already effective practices which can lead to positive impact on student learning as indicated by the Logic Model (p. e25).

3 points. (4)   NC directly states self-sustainability as a goal. There are three areas of focus: Instruction, content, and access. While focused on rural areas, the outcomes will have significant reach of 100% of K-8 families and 65% of Public School Units (PSU) within 34 months (p. 27). The goal to use funds in a manner that will have sustainability beyond the grant is important as it is clear school systems must become more agile far into the future.

Weaknesses:

Where the plan falls short is purposefully planning how the expertise and resources will be utilized to specifically reach and train educators to better meet the needs of traditionally underrepresented students.

(1) There is no stakeholder engagement plan or indication what stakeholder groups will be formally engaged in the

development of the project. It appears as if the response to COVID-19 has been very much driven with a top-down decision making process (p. e22). People support what they help create and classroom teachers are a valuable and critical voice to tap when planning and developing projects that directly impact them. The letter from the principal's association indicates they have been engaged in giving feedback to the plan however there is no indication any teacher groups or committee has had opportunity to provide feedback (p. e79).

(2) While there is mention of resourcing parents of low income, "at-risk" students, the term "at-risk" is not defined and there no mention of equipping teachers with the skills and tools needed to support learning for students from low income homes and with disabilities in an online or blended instructional setting (p. e31).
(4) There was a missed opportunity to purposely and clearly include a plan for professional development that will increase educators' knowledge, understanding, and best practices regarding engaging struggling students in deep learning experiences. The project didn't convincingly outline there would be intentional and clear training that will support educators serving students with special needs or ELL. Best practice in building educator capacity to serve students with special needs or ELL students begins with ensuring objectives are clear, specific to outcome and students being served, and measurable.

Reader's Score: 28

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:

4 points. (1) In addition to an organizational chart clearly indicating the oversight plan for the project, there is also a comprehensive implementation crosswalk with measurable outcomes and a timeline (p. e38). There is a clear vision of the outcomes and the path that will be followed to ensure the outcome goals are achieved and on budget.

5 points. (2) Funds are allocated to fund all aspects of the projects including the professional development, parent resource activities, and increasing access to more effective technology and removing barriers to access (p. e86). The funds appear to be able to fully support the project's goals.

5 points. (3) The grant will fund a comprehensive team to guide and develop all aspects of the project. A LTW Project Director, Project Manager, Regional Professional Development Leads, and Content Lead costs and roles are clearly outlined (p. e36). Having regional professional development leads ensures consistent and equitable access to trainings for educators which is an exceptional plan in terms of reach and providing quality training.

10 points. (4) The project has the potential of reaching 50,400 educators, about half of NC's total teaching force (p.42). While 100% would be ideal, the manner in which the plan will be executed has sustainability past the length of the grant

and to reach more. Reaching half of NC's teaching force is a substantial number and indirect reach as teachers collaborate and learn from each other will extend the reach of the project.

Weaknesses:

None Noted

Reader's Score: **25**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (S425B200003)
Reader #2:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Highest Coronavirus Burden		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	18
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	32
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	75
Total	80	75

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (S425B200003)

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 about the burden imposed on the state facing challenges in four areas: health, student, economic, and infrastructure (p. e19). For example, the state has the largest percentage of students attending school in rural communities among the ten largest states in the country. More than 58% of NC's rural students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch; 40% of rural enrollment is by students of color; nearly 6% of students are English language learners, which is 60% higher than the national average (p. e20). These existing gaps were exacerbated due to limited access to remote instruction as the applicant stated that "the gap widens in rural communities, where 95% of North Carolinians who lack broadband access reside" (p. e21). The descriptions are sufficient to demonstrate a high coronavirus burden impacted students and schools.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant failed to provide information describing the pandemic burden impact on parents in response to Application Requirement 3.

Reader's Score: 18

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)

(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:

2 points
Equal access:
The applicant proposed to develop high-quality standards-aligned remote learning content that are available to all students, serving as an example of the strategies that the applicant proposed to ensure equal access to all including members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, and disability (p e.25).

10 points
1) The applicant provided a detailed plan addressing the identified needs and barriers focusing on instruction, content, and access to support effective and equitable remote learning. The applicant emphasized integrating the elements of training, infrastructure improvement, and community customization when addressing each barrier (p. e23-24). The applicant proposed to regionalize peer networks for facilitators and principals so that they can better support teachers in blended learning; provide parent guides for online lessons to better support students when they are at home; provide offline learning resources to students when internet access is not available. The plan is comprehensive and well-thought as evidenced by the logic model (p. e25).

10 points.
2) The applicant described details about the specific gaps in services under each of the barriers and how the proposed project would address and close the gaps (pp. e26-33). As an example, the state has allocated funds to improve internet connectivity for students by providing community and home mobile internet access points; beyond that effort, the applicant proposed to provide offline learning resources to students by delivering hands-on student learning kits and preload devices such as tablets so that the offline distribution strategy will support resilience during disruptions that impact the availability of online resources (p. e33), which is exceptional demonstrating above and beyond efforts.

5 points
3) The applicant proposed to utilize the county-tier system to determine priority (p. e34) to provide additional technical assistance to the 45 most economically distressed and rural counties. With the intentional, purposeful planning and strategic implementation approaches, as outlined in the logic model. the applicant would enable teachers, parents, and students with better access to online instructional trainings and content resources (p. e34). The well-thought and extensive approach would most likely lead to improvements in student outcomes,

5 points
4) The applicant demonstrated a rationale based on research as evidenced by the logic model and "LTW [Light The Way] Research Rationale" (pp. e35-36). The descriptions are detailed, comprehensive, and convincing.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

Equal access:
The applicant proposed to provide trainings to teachers focusing on improving the effectiveness of blended-modality teacher instruction and support parents with resources (pp. e28-29), but the applicant failed to address how it would encourage the participation of teachers who have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

1) No weaknesses noted.

2) No weaknesses noted.

3) No weaknesses noted.

4) No weaknesses noted.

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:

Strengths:

5 points
1) The applicant described in detail the roles and responsibilities as evidenced by the Project Organization Chart (p. e37), which clearly defines duties assigned to each personnel stakeholder. A clear timeline demonstrates the two implementation phases presenting milestones for accomplishing tasks as evidenced by "LTW Implementation Timeline" (p. e38). In addition, the applicant presented data collection and reporting structure as well as communication plans to monitor the progress of the project, inform ongoing improvement, and disseminate best practices (p. e39-40). Further, the applicant provided a financial and contractor management plan to ensure that the accounting procedures are followed in compliance with state and federal regulations (p. e40). The management plan is comprehensive and exceptional serving as a roadmap to ensure the completion of the proposed project on time and within the budget.

5 points
2) The applicant provided convincing details to demonstrate the adequacy of use of funds to support the project. The applicant provided a detailed budget narrative (p. e87-98) aligning each component of the proposed project to the state's overall Strategic Plan and ESSA implementation plan for resource and efficiency (p. e41). The proposed use of funds appeared adequate to support the implementation of the project.

5 points
3) The applicant provided detailed budget proposal and narrative aligning each item under each category with the proposed activities (p. e90-98). The costs are reasonable and sufficient.

10 points
4) The applicant provided clear and detailed description that the proposed project is expected to impact 100% of K-8

families and more than 65% students in the state with 34 months. The impact of online learning materials would be available to 1.5 million K-12 students and their parents. The online training would certify up to 2400 teachers through three certification cycle (p. e42). The potential impact is impressive.

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: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (S425B200003)
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	30
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	75
Total	80	75

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (S425B200003)

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 includes data that substantiates the need for their project. Because of the virus, there were statewide school closures and remote learning was mandated. According to a June 2020 state-wide PSU survey, needs regarding teacher instruction include teacher readiness for remote learning; student readiness for remote learning; quality, standards-aligned, and culturally relevant remote learning content; instruction for special populations; technology infrastructure issues (mobile Wi-Fi gateway router devices, and community and home mobile internet access points). Their application clearly explains how COVID-19 has contributed to or exacerbated disparities and how it impacts access to quality education. e33

   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)

(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:

0 points
None noted.

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, teacher preparedness to deliver lessons in a blended format; standards-aligned, and culturally relevant remote learning content; and broadband and device access. They have noted that their services will offer an online learning environment, teacher-driven structure, leadership, and interaction which are crucial elements in facilitating effective learning and strengthening (public school unit [PSU] preparedness for learning disruptions. Professional development services will be available which be inclusive of educators accessing new standards-aligned virtual content to better serve the needs of students. This will provide more qualified teachers to accommodate remote learning. e24

2. Technology gaps within the target area have been clearly identified. They have noted weaknesses in services and infrastructure, including lack of student access to broadband
technology, and gaps in high quality standards-aligned digital materials and curriculum. To address this, they will employ the LTW Design that supports distance learning and teacher preparedness to deliver lessons in a blended format. Additionally, to address the lack of broadband access, they will provide community and home mobile internet access points and utilize a mobile-friendly and a print-friendly version of student-facing materials to allow teachers to interact with rural students without home broadband connections. Also, to further demonstrate their commitment to provide access to technology, LTW Design support will be concentrated in the highest-need communities to. e31

3.The application has sufficiently demonstrated how their project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. To address students' needs they will employ a variety of solutions to meet students as well as teachers' needs. Their initiatives will facilitate learning within remote areas as well as learning resources and technical assistance for parents, (100% of NC K-8 families); and rural and economically disadvantaged communities. Strategies include online and offline courses as well as blended options which will allow a teacher to assign individual pieces of digital content to students in a physical classroom, so the teacher can provide individualized support and instruction which will undoubtedly assist students with educational gaps. e36

4.The applicant has clearly addressed how their choice of services reflects up-to-date knowledge, such as (Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, & NCDPI. (2018). North Carolina Digital Learning Initiative) and includes appropriate references. Strategies are adequate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. Specific services for the target group will include groups of regional educators who will engage in peer sharing and address problems in order to ensure access to high-quality remote learning; expand high-quality course-access programs; and address the specific educational needs of their state to ensure the successful implementation of online courses. Additionally, their design meets this criterion as they offer teacher proficiency in remote learning, varying instructional designs to address diverse needs as well as increase digital resources. e35

Weaknesses:

The application noted that there would be purposeful outreach efforts. There are no specific details or a plan addressed as to how this will be administered. Therefore, it is unable to determine if this is sufficient to ensure equal access and

treatment. e33

1. None noted.

2. None noted.

3. None noted.

4. None noted.

Reader's Score: 30

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:

   1.The applicant has provided clear information that is needed in order to effectively assess the efficiency of their management plan. 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 Project Director (Doctor of Education in School Leadership) has authority to effectively conduct the project, and has appropriate professional qualifications, experience, and administrative skills to effectively fulfill the objectives of the project. Budget and project oversight, accountability and processes, fiscal, personnel and records management components are addressed as well. This plan will allow the project to stay on task and ultimately accomplish its goals and objectives. e37 56

   2.The application proposes a budget that is sufficient to support the activities of the project. Proposed expenditures are outlined in areas of personnel, supplies, travel, and supplies. Costs are related to the objectives of the project are clearly demonstrated by the applicant. e91

   3.Their budget clearly links the proposed expenditures to the proposed objectives, design, activities and significance of the proposed project. The budget addresses the needs and objectives of the project, and is sufficient to support project activities. A budget narrative is included and shows reasonable costs in relation to services proposed such as training, participant transportation and costs for staff. e90

4.The applicant provides relevant information regarding costs in relation to the number of persons to be served, objectives, implementation plan, and to the anticipated results and benefits. Forty-five of the highest-need communities will receive supplemental access support to extend impact to more than 250,000 rural students and their families. Over the life of the grant, NCDPI expects to certify up to 2,400 educators through three LTW certification cycles (10 per PSU per cycle). e42

Weaknesses:

1. None noted.

2. None noted.

3. None noted.

4. None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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