

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/20/2020 12:54 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education, Illinois State Board of (S425B200012)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Highest Coronavirus Burden		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	15
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	25
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	65
Total	80	65

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - FY20 REM - 3: 84.425B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Education, Illinois State Board of (S425B200012)

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 well documents indicators of the coronavirus impact with emphasis on the correlation between highest affected communities and the prevalence of greater financial, academic, and demographic inequities. For example, the applicant states, " ... the burden of coronavirus in Illinois is borne primarily by communities that are already under-resourced and whose students were struggling academically" (page e17). The applicant discusses another significant indicator of this fact thusly, "Just over half of the 914 schools in improvement status are ranked in the top five for COVID19 cases, deaths.... These schools are also ... least equipped for remote learning.."(pg 19).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a clear understanding of how the "connectivity concerns were heightened by the pandemic" (e28). Based on the survey administered to teachers which is referred to on pg. e29 "some" students have difficulty accessing high-speed internet" It would be beneficial to have a clearer picture of the counties and percentage of students that were most adversely affected.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

Sub-criterion 1: The proposed project demonstrates an innovative approach to absolute priority 2 as it incorporates the inclusion of the Parent Liaison as a critical position, as recommended by the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA). The applicant confirms, “a parent liaison is critical to this work. ISBE uses a Parent Liaison to increase parent awareness of the opportunity, gather feedback on the virtual course offerings and capitalize on extant partnerships with various statewide groups to create an advisory committee” (pg. e22) (Also see duties and responsibilities on pg. e22)

Sub-criterion 2: The applicant adequately identifies weaknesses and gaps in service based on the analysis of the COVID-19 impact and presents a thorough description of inequities that were present prior to Covid-19 to justify the need for the ESF-REM grant to enhance virtual learning capabilities throughout the state and address such issues as lack of devices, inadequate connectivity. To demonstrate this issue, the applicant states that results from a survey, along with the data regarding internet-connectivity, provide a picture of the dual nature of the digital divide in Illinois. This divide is a barrier, which exacerbates extant inequities in Illinois (pg. e29 & e30).

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant provides a sound Project Plan Detail that thoroughly describes milestones, timelines and SMART goals (e62-e65) demonstrating anticipated number of students who will have enhanced access to remote learning opportunities that improve student outcomes. For example on Appendix F, the applicant indicates that SMART Goal #3 will identify “the number of students served in the fall at 1,000 funded by the ESF grant and 1200 total enrollment at a 10% increase over baseline”. (pgs.e62)

Weaknesses:

Criterion B: The applicant provides no evidence that there will be specific strategies to ensure equal access and treatment towards traditionally non -represented groups in the project design. An appropriate place to demonstrate this would be in the I-CAP Student Selection Process shown on pg. e25 – 26 and in Addendum D, pg. e59.

Sub-criterion 4: The applicant does not demonstrate that considerable research has been conducted to inform this project design and/or evidence of effective practices.

Reader's Score: 25

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:

Sub-criterion 1: The applicant provides an adequate detailed project plan and evidence of the use of a well developed, Performance Target chart that depicts measures for meeting project milestones. For example, the applicant states in "Performance Target a.k.a. SMART Goal #1 that for all years and quarters the applicant will "meet 90% or better of established project milestones, and have 80% of established project milestones on-track (from on track, at risk, off track quarterly)" (pg.e66).

Sub-criterion 2: The applicant well documents the use of funds for the proposed project using clear and concise rationale. For example, in year 1, the applicant allocates [REDACTED] to support the work of agency staff...particularly the Parent Liaison who will serve at 25% capacity and two staff members from Curriculum and Instruction who will devote 15 – 20% of their time, respectively, to work with vendors...(pg. e88). Every allocation has a corresponding rationale.

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant describes considerable allocation [REDACTED] "to support registration costs for students to enroll in courses in the new Illinois Virtual Course Program based upon "Favored Nation Pricing" which the applicant states ensures "the lowest price" thereby improving the potential for "approximately 6,000 students to be served annually". (pg.e92)

Sub-criterion 4: The applicant notes that "the use of grant funds in the amount of [REDACTED] can provide access to more than 16,000 additional courses" (pg. e92) which provides evidence of the applicants intent to achieve the anticipated results and benefits

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education, Illinois State Board of (S425B200012)

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	27
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	21
Sub Total	80	68
Total	80	68

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - FY20 REM - 3: 84.425B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Education, Illinois State Board of (S425B200012)

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 application includes a breakdown of the counties ranked by assets to burdens, which effectively addresses evidence for this section. (p. e43 – p. e44) The application also provides a very clear overview of the focus of the Illinois Course Access Program (I-Cap) in “prioritizing access for students who attend public and nonpublic schools in Illinois and reside in the areas of the state hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.” (p. e14) It includes a rationale in using the “business analytics software to create a customized course list for students” and a program design that involves expanding offerings based on need (p. e14). This would allow the Illinois State Board of Education to expand their current “Illinois Virtual Course Program” for the “hardest hit” and help alleviate the burden for communities and districts. (p. e16) The state addresses the coronavirus burden with specific data on p. e17, which appears to be impacting under-resourced communities where students are struggling academically. Tables which include the schools most affected by the COVID-19 burden are included (p. e45 – p. e46). The data appears to be comprehensive as they reference 21 variables in how they evaluated the assets and burdens for counties. (p. e18)

The evidence they include makes an argument for supporting the lowest 5% of schools academic performance, high rates of low income students who qualify as Title I schoolwide programs (along with other factors), which successfully demonstrates that they have addressed this criterion with statistical information. (p. e19) This evidence builds on the problems, issues and needs they have identified in their proposal, and builds an argument for the need for devices and hotspots (p.e19). Of significance is their proposal in addressing the coronavirus burden was the statistical information, which provided a compelling argument for the need for broadband access and other assets. (e. 20)

Also, the state of Illinois has the twenty-third highest percentage of population without broadband access according to the “Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K12 Education Models Discretionary Grants – Percentile calculation of coronavirus burden by State, as referenced in the notice inviting applicants.”

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

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:

Sub-criterion 1: The project plan includes a proposed project plan to address absolute priority 2 on p. e30 – e32. It is very specific and includes timelines, performance measures, as well as milestones and deliverables. This demonstrates that the applicant would address absolute priority 2.

Sub-criterion 2: A selection process is identified (p. e25), which includes students who are eligible for free and reduced lunches, as well as students in the EBF Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts, (p. e25 - p. e26).

Sub-criterion 3: It is likely that the services provided by the project would expand access to area remote learning options because it includes a plan for including a wi-fi hotspot map, to help families and students without access (p. e34), as well as through the development of a robust statewide broadband network, which includes a partner. (p. e35) Because these would be essential in expanding access, it appears that that the applicant would be successful in this area.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: Although the applicant has indicated that they will expand their current virtual I-CAP program, it is not clear to what extent the project is an exceptional approach to absolute priority two. (p. e20 – p. e21) The learning technology centers that are outlined on p. e37 have already been in existence since 1996 and the other items outlined do not include the extent to which a novel approach will be adopted in addressing priority 2. (p. e37 – p. e40)

Sub-criterion 2: Based on the data on p. e75 - e76 traditionally underrepresented groups are listed as very small percentages in a prior vendor model, with white students in the majority. It is not clear how specific underrepresented groups would be the priority. For example, the applicant mentions the partnership support between ISBE and the Illinois Math Science Academy, but it is not clear if the students would be from traditionally underrepresented groups. (p. e90) According to p. e69 marginal groups do not appear to be the target of this program.

Sub-criterion 4: A reference to developing courses with universal design principles in mind are referenced, as well as Section 508 provisions for technology and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, but the extent to which these resources

represent effective practices and research is unclear. (p. e21) More detail on how specific research references support the proposed project are needed, such as from the website referenced. (p. e28) A current research survey was referenced about 'E-Learning Technology Needs,' but a more specific explanation would help to assess the extent to which they are connected to the proposed project (p. e19) Without necessary detail in the narrative it is difficult to assess. Much more detail related to how research supports best practices and what specifically they are related to this proposal is needed.

Reader's Score: 27

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:

Sub-criterion 1: The management plan appears on p. e62 – p. e.65 and provides appropriate detail about the work stream and milestones, as well as timelines, and is accompanied by SMART goals. The information provided was clear and begins to demonstrate how it would address the management plan, along with the program objectives and intra-agency collaboration & I-CAP Structure (p. e60). The performance targets that begin on p. e66 also demonstrate the extent to which the objectives will be met, along with the significance of the project as it includes the details needed to accomplish the project tasks.

Sub-criterion 2: The funds identified in the budget narrative (p. e88 - p. e99) are comprehensive and encompass three years of the program. A rationale accompanied all of the budget totals, which was clear and provides evidence that it will adequately support the proposed project. The outlined funds therefore appear to be reasonable considering the scope of the work.

Sub-criterion 3: Both the management plan and resources are fully developed and demonstrate the extent to which the costs will be reasonable to the project.

Sub-criterion 4: The number of students served are included on p. e69, which is clear and concise. The costs are reasonable considering the students who will benefit from this program.

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: Performance measure two listed on p. e68 needs more detail about how parents liaisons will be involved and to what extent. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent this will occur.

Although one of the anticipated results is that parents and student satisfaction ratings related to the number and type of course offerings be high (p. e72), along with increasing online course offerings (p. e75), it is not clear what the other anticipated results and benefits are in the program. These are not explicitly stated. A logic model would help provide much needed detail in understanding the flow of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes-impact, assumptions and external factors. More detail would make the application proposal stronger.

Reader's Score: 21

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education, Illinois State Board of (S425B200012)

Reader #3: *****

	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	30
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	24
Sub Total	80	72
Total	80	72

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - FY20 REM - 3: 84.425B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Education, Illinois State Board of (S425B200012)

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:

Application is clear that the state's COVID-19 cases, fourth in total deaths nationally, and eighth for new cases per 100,000 in the last seven days. (pg. e17). Additional data analysis suggests that the burden of coronavirus in Illinois is borne primarily by communities that are already under-resourced and whose students were struggling academically (pg. e18).

Weaknesses:

Pre-COVID, data suggest that 82.2% of schools in Illinois were under-resourced and fall into EBF Tiers I or II, 23.6% are in improvement status, and 61.2% are Title I schoolwide programs (pg. e19). Schools with these financial, academic, and demographic inequities are consistently clustered in counties that are most heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it seems clear they were already in significant distress.

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:

B1: Application is clear that grants funds will expand existing initiative: “The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will utilize the Education Stabilization Fund – Rethink K-12 Education Models (ESF-REM) grant to expand the current Illinois Virtual Course Program (IVCP) > Illinois Course Access Program (I-CAP).” It is also specifically noted that FRPL students receive priority (pg. e25).

B2: It is clearly articulated how Illinois developed a communication plan for parents that provides information on Wi-Fi hotspots and companies that offer free or reduced-price costs for connectivity. To this end, ISBE is collaborating with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) on community broadband infrastructure initiatives in order to develop a robust statewide broadband network to fill existing gaps and improve outcomes (pg. e29).

B3: The focus on including a parent liaison to increase family engagement is a strong feature (pgs. e24, e30)

B4: The application is precise in naming a multitude of established partnerships with various entities, e.g. Dept. of Child and Family Services, IL Association of School Superintendents, IL Education Association and others (pg. e33-37)

Weaknesses:

It is unclear which underrepresented populations – beyond FRPL students – are to be served.

B2 & B3: The Course Opportunity and Access Tool (COAT) appears to simply be a clearinghouse leading to the catalog of virtual school offerings (pg. e23-24, replacing the existing IVCP catalog which currently consists of more than 800 courses from six providers (pg. e23). Seems a lot of emphasis is being placed on the design of the portal facilitating improved access and utilization (B2, B3). While certainly the manner of delivery can impact access, simply changing the portal doesn't guarantee improved utilization; the application provides little detail on how the changes would accomplish stated goals.

B4: There are no specifics as to how course providers will ensure the existing requirements are met and all courses are aligned to the high-quality rubric (pg. e23; B1, B4)

Utilizing a vote-based system will collect data on parent interest in the proposed courses, suggesting popularity and not efficacy will propel course inclusion decisions (pg. e22, B4).

Reference to courses adhering to “universal design concepts” provides no specifics as to what the concepts entail (pg. e21, footnote 9).

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:

C1: Application includes a thorough and well-articulated expenditure rationale (pgs. e88 – 98). Capitalizing on current infrastructure, existing staff from Curriculum & Instruction Dept will oversee I-CAP is a plus (pg. e30)

C2: The cost detail is reasonable in application and in scope to support the presented goals (pgs. e88 – 98). Of particular interest, a collaboration with the Illinois Math Science Academy to bring some of their content online, so eligible students who might not otherwise be able to attend the school in person, can access their offerings remotely.

C3: The detailed rationale articulates reasonable cost estimates for the stated activities (pg. e88 – 98)

C4: Funding appears adequate to serve the anticipated number of students as reported in the Project Plan (pgs. e62 – 65).

Weaknesses:

C1: Application did not contain budget summary (pg. e6, 7 ; C1)

C2: No weaknesses noted

C3: No weaknesses noted

C4: No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 24

Status: Submitted
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