

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Utah State Board of Education (S425B200022)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Highest Coronavirus Burden		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	19
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	23
Sub Total	80	69
Total	80	69

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 REM - 2: 84.425B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Utah State Board of Education (S425B200022)

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:

While the state has relatively good broadband access, reaching an overall 92.9% of households, applicant identified specific Utah counties with some of the highest levels of unconnected residents in the entire country. Two examples cited were San Juan county, where 47% of the population is without broadband, and Piute county, with 30% not connected (e24) Similar patterns are present regarding the distribution of childhood poverty (e24-e25). This disproportionate geographic impact has been exacerbated by an uneven implementation of e-learning across the state, beginning in March when schools were closed (e25).

Weaknesses:

The applicant was unclear if remote counties with high levels of childhood poverty and limited access to broadband were indicators of rural or small populations.

Reader's Score: 19

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:

The applicant demonstrates strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented include partnering with community organizations that serve these groups. In addition, the applicant's plan for utilizing microgrants include surveys and scores to identify families impacted by COVID-19 (pe26).

Sub-criterion 1- This Project Plan identifies students based on household level.

The applicant outlines an effective approach using an RFP process to identify vendors with curriculums for grades 9-12. The plan also emphasizes the importance of dual credit and technical certifications, which aligns with career pathways (pp. e27-e28).

The applicant's approach also leverages existing programs and partnering relationships to deliver technology solutions where needed, especially for developing software application portals (pp. e28-e29). The applicant's plan describes Qualtrics registration portals for parents which will help streamline registrations and signups (p. e30).

Further, the applicant's selection process is well designed and focuses on the overall goal of student needing courses to graduate high school. The plan appears to be prioritized based on student's grade level and COVID-19 impact (p. e31).

Sub-criterion 2- The situation analysis addresses any shortfall which includes technology grants with provisioning broadband services (p. e35).

Sub-criterion 3- Expanded access is assured by the nature of the microgrant program, with a target of 2,500 students per year, for 3 years (p. e27).

Sub-criterion 4- The applicant demonstrates a plan to integrate new course offerings into pathways and extend dual enrollment offerings to help high school students earn college credit (pp. e27-e28) Both approaches are well documented and considered best practices.

Weaknesses:

While a key goal of this project is to reach underserved populations, the applicant's overall approach to recruitment is generic. The applicant's approach to registration lacks an effective process and appears insufficient to reach targeted families selected to be served. Implementing a web-based portal—a technology solution requiring Internet access and a computer with a browser (p. e33) appears contradictory to offering microgrants to families experiencing lack of broadband and internet services.

Sub-criterion 1- The applicant's proposed approach to use curriculum providers specified to be "accredited, rigorous virtual school programs" (pp. e27-e28) does not detail instructional quality or pedagogical standards.

Sub-criterion 2- The applicant was not clear regarding access and broadband services. Although the lack of broadband access was identified in the situation analysis, a percentage of students will need broadband and others may not. But the microgrant will offer Internet connection and a laptop to students regardless if there is a need (p. e42). In addition, it is not clear whether the anticipated 2 courses per student (p. e42) will meet student's individual education plans.

Sub-criterion 3- No weaknesses noted.

Sub-Criterion 4- Finally, there is no support provided to demonstrate the efficacy of a specific pedagogical approach (p. e33)

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- Deliverables, roles, and responsibilities are clearly outlined in the detailed quarterly timeline (pp. e39 -e41)

Sub-criterion 2- The applicant's plan to leverage and scale an existing technology deployment program through Utah's Education and Telehealth Network is sufficient (p. e29).

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant's approach based on the number of students served and hours on task appears structured and reasonable, particularly paying outsourced providers on a linear scale (p. e22). The proposed usage of funds seems adequate to support the project. Individual component costs seem reasonable, with the \$100/year pre-negotiated broadband subscription price (e42) a relative bargain.

Sub-criterion 4: Overall, this proposal should generate 15,000 incremental course enrollments (2,500 students/year X 3 years X 2 courses per student), at a total cost of [REDACTED].

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: No weaknesses noted.

Sub-criterion 2- No weaknesses noted.

Sub-criterion 3- No weaknesses noted.

Sub-criterion 4- Although there may be long-term benefits by increasing organizational capacity to deploy distance education resources in the future, the cost per incremental course enrollment over the duration of this grant, which is [REDACTED], seems high.

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Utah State Board of Education (S425B200022)

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	30
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	23
Sub Total	80	73
Total	80	73

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 REM - 2: 84.425B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Utah State Board of Education (S425B200022)

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:

Given the diversity of the state, the applicant provides a compelling argument about the needs to be addressed through this project, based on disaggregated data rather than statewide, overall percentages. The applicant uses a detailed ranking methodology, similar to that which was used by the U.S. Department of Education, to determine the counties in Utah most significantly impacted by COVID-19. (p. e23-e24) Three counties are identified as 'highly impacted', which provides detail about the diversity in the level of the coronavirus burden across the state. (p. e24) The applicant provides a detailed explanation of the wide variability in these percentages by county. In addition, the application provides updated information from June 27, 2020 on the number of cases and hospitalizations, as well as cumulative number of deaths, which is larger than what is considered in the federal burden table. (p. e20) The additional piece of information provided by applicant, when ranking their counties, is the March filing of unemployment claims, again demonstrating the diversity of impact across their state. (p. e23)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

Strengths:

Strategies ensuring equal access for underrepresented group: Not only will the applicant use local community organizations to advertise and recruit families to apply for grant funding, they will also provide translators at in-person events, and recruiting materials in multiple languages within the parent registration portal. (p. e32-e33) This will help ensure and parents with limited proficiency in English are still able to apply.

Sub-criterion 1: The applicant provides an excellent plan for ensuring the grant funds are allocated where the need is greatest. Specifically, utilizing parent applications that detailed their individual COVID-19 impact is an exceptional approach to distributing grant-funded resources. Requiring internet providers to provide extensive technical assistance to low-income families also represents an essential component for expanding access to remote learning. (p. e29)

Sub-criterion 2: The applicant identifies weaknesses in funding for the expansion of online course offerings. (p. e34) For example, the applicant states “demand for remote learning opportunities has been outpacing resources available in the state” (P. e34). The primary focus of the project is increasing access to advanced high school courses where students can also earn college credit, and the applicant cites an increased demand for these types of courses over the past five years. (p. e34) Details are provided, by county, showing the gaps in broadband internet service across the state. (p. e23-e24)

Sub-criterion 3: The approach focuses primarily on increasing access to online dual-credit, or ‘concurrent enrollment’ courses for high school students. (p. e34) This course access is likely to yield improvements in student outcomes since ‘early college’ models, allowing students to earn college credit while in high school, have been shown to have a significant positive impact on students’ postsecondary degree completion. Providing parents with microgrant funding for both technology and tuition for course providers will expand opportunities for lower-income families. (p. e29) Prioritizing students needing courses for graduation is likely to improve graduation rates, as well. (p. e31)

Sub-criterion 4: The use of “learning success coaches” is a research-based strategy found to have a positive impact on students’ transition to college coursework. (p. e28) The applicant presents a detailed plan for seeking providers with a “demonstrated track record” in student outcomes, which is likely to result in high-quality options designed around industry best practices. (p. e36)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

Strategies ensuring equal access for underrepresented group: The process for awarding microgrants described on page e31 includes prioritization for families in poverty and those impacted by COVID-19, but does not prioritize members of subgroups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. For example, little detail is provided on how course providers will ensure students with disabilities have equitable access

to the online coursework.

Sub-criterion 1: No weaknesses were noted.

Sub-criterion 2: While the applicant cites an increased demand for concurrent enrollment courses and online education programs over the past five years, little detail is presented on the demand for these digital learning options among specific subgroups of students. (p. e33-34) For example, the concurrent enrollment courses are considered more advanced, preparing students for postsecondary enrollment so it is unclear whether students demonstrating average or below average achievement would need, or benefit greatly from, the expansion of advanced course options. Also, it is not clear whether the subgroups most impacted by COVID-19 (e.g. impoverished communities, Navaho Nation, p. e25) have shown increased demand for advanced high school course options. Further, information on the population size of the highly impacted counties would have been helpful in demonstrating the gaps in services within those regions.

Sub-criterion 3: No weaknesses were noted.

Sub-criterion 4: The application does not include any indication the applicant has reviewed research or 'best practices' from national organizations focused on technology integration or online learning, such as the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) or the National Council for Online Education (NCOE). These national organizations could provide a wealth of guidance on best practices and research related to effective delivery models for online learning.

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:

Sub-criterion 1: The organizational chart (p. e37) clearly depicts relevant project personnel. Further, Diagram G, page e39, provides extensive details on the role each individual will play in project implementation. Pages e40-e41 clearly describe project milestones and specific target dates for completion.

Sub-criterion 2: Funds to families to support up to two courses per year will be sufficient to cover the providers' costs. The applicant is committing a significant amount of state funding to supporting this project's launch and maintenance throughout the grant period. (p. e88) The state program called Lifeline (p. e42) is a strong approach to providing inexpensive broadband program for qualified families.

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant plans to add on to existing state partnership with Qualtrics in order to minimize grant-funded costs for infrastructure (p. e40) which presents a very cost-effective solution that allows the majority of the grant funds to go directly to families in need.

Sub-criterion 4: The estimated cost of [REDACTED] per family (p. e42) will allow the applicant to serve 2,500 families per year, which will provide a significant amount of support to lower-income populations in need of remote learning options for their students. In addition, providing lower-income families with opportunities for their children to get a head start on college through dual-credit courses is a strong approach to increasing postsecondary enrollment and degree completion in the state.

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: No weaknesses were noted.

Sub-criterion 2 : No weaknesses were noted.

Sub-criterion 3: The cost estimate of \$620 per course is high, given these are high school courses that may also count toward college credit. (p. e42) The applicant compares this to the cost of not graduating from high school, however, the students likely to sign up for advanced concurrent enrollment (dual credit) courses are usually not the student subgroups most at risk of dropping out of high school. Further, the applicant cites a current course provider with only a 24% completion rate and another with only a 70% completion rate (p. e48) so in these cases, paying \$620 for a course that a large percent of students do not complete is not an efficient use of funds.

Sub-criterion 4: No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 23

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Utah State Board of Education (S425B200022)

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	20
Sub Total	80	75
Total	80	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 REM - 2: 84.425B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Utah State Board of Education (S425B200022)

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:

Sub-criterion 2: Pages e21 through e25 provide data points by county explaining how Covid-19 has affected Utah. This data is most telling - "Forty-seven percent of households in San Juan County do not have a broadband internet subscription making remote learning extremely difficult. Piute County has 30% of its households without broadband internet, and 20% or more of households in Rich, Wayne, Beaver, and Kane counties, respectively, do not have broadband internet access. Thus, the ability to access remote learning through this crucial resource is not equal throughout the state" (page e24). The explanation of the need for broadband for families at this time and expanded online courses through Utah Connects was thorough and clear to the reader.

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: No weaknesses noted

Sub-criterion 2: 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--

(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:

The applicant describes in pp. e29 - e31 underrepresented groups will be prioritized in receiving services provided by the grant funds. The plan is descriptive and list current business partnerships working with USBE. These business partners agreed to provide internet services and computers to eligible families.

Sub-criterion 1: The applicant gives clear description of a Project Plan which includes Utah Connects. Utah Connects is designed to help students overcome 'stay home' barriers that Covid-19 may present in the coming school year, particularly students in grades 9-12 (page e28). Utah Connect will survey parents to ensure that hardware and broadband needs are addressed and fulfilled. In addition, the Project Plan includes Learning Success Coaches to provide one-on-one student support and ensure success in online courses. This support will help students pursue certifications and college/career pathways.

Sub-criterion 2: The project plan will provide broadband and hardware to identified target students. Qualtrics XM and Google are providing translation of online surveys so that parents can receive and provide feedback in their native language. For parents without connectivity, Utah Connect staff will be available to assist them via telephone or in-person appointments. The Project Plan demonstrates students with disabilities will have equal access and activities on Utah Connects. The Division of Special Education will ensure that "high-quality remote coursework will be vetted for accessibility within the RFP selection" (page e12).

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant demonstrates a plan to assist families without electricity and assistance in charging needed electronics, etc. USBE will provide students with more course options to fulfill graduation requirements and ensure Covid-19 does not interfere with high school completion. This plan demonstrates the ability to satisfy students' requests for more online dual enrollment classes and earning college credits (pages e33-34).

Sub criterion 4: USBE provides effective hiring practices and strong memberships affiliation. Their affiliation with Quality Matters and hiring of Learning Success Coaches demonstrates the ability to implement an efficient online learning program (p. e36).

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: No weaknesses noted

Sub-criterion 2: No weaknesses noted

Sub-criterion 3: No weaknesses noted

Sub criterion 4: No weaknesses 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 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 is detailed and is broken down into implementation activities, responsible personnel, and milestones/timeline (page e40). The chart is complete and focused on the needed tasks to accomplish the goals.

Sub-criterion 2: The proposed use of funds for broadband and hardware is reasonable to provide families with access to online learning. Families will also receive facilitation services to help with online access.

Sub-criterion 3: The budget is reasonable per the information provided on pages e42 and 43. The applicant explains the need to expand online courses, issue microgrants to families, and expanding internet access which is a reasonable cost.

Sub criterion 4: See weakness

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 1: No weaknesses noted

Sub-criterion 2: No weaknesses noted

Sub-criterion 3: No weaknesses noted

Sub criterion 4: The applicant explained cost per course on page e42; however, access to required courses beyond the funded amount is not clear. It is unclear if a student is home because of Covid 19 whether they have access to all the courses they need online or just the two allowed by this grant.

Reader's Score: 20

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