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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (S425B200026)
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	31
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	24
Sub Total	80	75
Total	80	75

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (S425B200026)

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:

   To a great extent, the applicant discusses the state's burden caused by COVID-19. High unemployment rates are noted as burdens, and the applicant provides clear details of the state's unemployment rate in comparison to the rates of the major cities of the state to show the true depth of the burden, i.e., Rhode Island's unemployment rate of 17.9% in comparison to Providence's rate of 20.7% (p. e23).

   The applicant demonstrates that students' access to technology in the cities and rural areas is another burden to be addressed in this project, i.e., "over 25% of Rhode Islanders lack access to stable in-home internet" (p. e23) and schools report that over 50,000 additional technological hardware devices are needed to fully equip all K-12 students in their homes in order to access educational courses/materials (p. e23).

   To a great extent, the applicant identifies the burden of school closures on students and schools, as local school districts stated a need for more virtual instruction materials for remote learning and blended learning (p. e29).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses found.

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:

(Equal Access)
The applicant provides clear and comprehensive strategies for ensuring equal access of its project activities to students and parents who have traditionally been underrepresented, e.g., students with disabilities will have the following: all non-text content will have alternative text, proactive wrap-around advising services mandated for all students engaged in distance learning, online media will also have captions and accessibility via transcripts (p. e11). Digital instructional materials will be adapted to meet the needs of multilingual learners which indicates having materials be easily accessed for ELL children/youth and their parents (p. e30). English Language Learners will also have access to English language skills remediation modules prior to entering post-secondary education so they will not need remedial English courses at the college levels (pp. e12, 24).

(1)

The applicant well-explains that its project will expand upon the state's existing course access program online that focusses on courses geared to college/career opportunities for middle/high school students, i.e., existing Advanced Course Network (p. e17). A new component is also well-detailed for the addition of elementary grade-level courses that will be aligned to state academic standards in core subject areas, i.e., ELA, math, science (p. e29). The project is well-designed and an exceptional approach to bring remote learning to all ages of students, add a component for parent and student counseling for course selections, enhance the technology platform to better serve all students, and also expand remote course choices in math, ELA, and science for students so they might attain industry-recognized credentials (pp. e17, 23, Logic Model, p. e69).

The applicant's plan demonstrates quality in its intentional course development/selection process involving a wide depth of educational stakeholders, i.e., teachers, school administrators, college professors, business leaders, and high-demand career sectors, including healthcare, defense, manufacturing (pp. e26-e27). This type of input presents an exceptional approach in providing online courses that are actually needed in the current career/college fields.

The project's strategy also is exceptional for intentionally providing professional development to the state's educators in effective utilization of the Advanced Course Network, i.e., School Counselors' Advisors' Program and annual training (p. e33).

The applicant well-details its approach to advising students and parents about the online courses, how to select appropriate courses for students, and how to utilize the process, i.e., Curriculum Visualization Tool, students' individualized learning plans, Student Ambassadors for younger students, and Parent Ambassadors to help parents navigate the course offerings (pp. e29, e32-e33).

(2)

To some extent, the applicant details how it addressed some gaps in services and opportunities realized during the COVID-19 issue, i.e., alternative methods for student meal distributions, at-home literacy kits for elementary and middle

Carnegie/WestEd teacher professional development summer weeklong course regarding effective online education , First Books, Books are Wings, Summer 2020 virtual readiness math and ELA courses for 2,000 high school-students, and social-emotional learning component in virtual courses for high school students (pp. e37-e39).

(3)

A likelihood exists that the project's services will expand the state's Advance Course Network to provide additional access to academic core and elective courses for high school students and also elementary/middle school curricular offerings available to all public and non-public students in the state for both remote coursework and blended in-class education (pp. e23-e24, e28). This expansion is viable and significant in that the remote content will be expanded to serve over 42,000 students, increasing almost three-times the current capacity (p. e24).

A well-thought lottery-selection strategy is described to give both public and non-public school students access to the limited course spaces, if needed. This strategy is well-developed and has a feature for assigning additional weight scores to students from traditionally underrepresented populations, i.e., youth in poverty, youth with disabilities, and ELL students (p. e28).

(4)

To a great extent, the applicant presents recent research evidence supporting its formation of its project strategies and reflects best practices in the field of education for online - remote learning. Several research sources support the project's strategy of improving quality of instructional materials to improve higher student achievement and also increasing the effectiveness of the educators, i.e., Steiner's 2007 research regarding Curriculum Research published in Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy (p. e45). A clear description is also presented for best practices for providing cost-effective educational materials that can be accessed via the internet, i.e., Polikoff & Koedel, 2017, Impact of Textbooks in California, Economic Studies at Brookings, Evidence Speaks Report (p. e46).

Weaknesses:

(Equal Access)

No weaknesses found.

(1)

The applicant does not fully discuss how its strategy of providing additional virtual course offerings in Career and Technical Education will be accomplished for the hands-on components and the work-based learning components (pp. e24, e26).

(2)

It is not clear the extent of the gaps in services, policies, and opportunities caused or exasperated by COVID-19 pandemic. The applicant states some general statements of gaps in services, but does not fully discuss the extent of gaps as it obtained data from schools, families, and educators in the state's outreach for gap input in March 2020, i.e. pervasiveness of lack of online curriculum to meet the needs of students at particular grade levels, levels of teachers' expertise in implementing online learning, or lack of internet device speed to effectively access online materials (p. e36-e37).   The applicant does not fully explain if the statewide Parent Survey in 2020 was conducted before or after schools were closed due to the virus in order to actually show how parents were involved in at-home learning with their children (p. e41).
(3)

The applicant does not adequately explain why non-public students may be charged a fee for the online Advanced Course Network, while all accepted public-school students will not be charged a fee, i.e., fees charged to non-public school students who do not meet a financial need threshold (p. e28).

(4)

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 31

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 fully explains how the project will be managed and clear responsibilities of key state-level staff, i.e., Chief of Teaching and Learning Division of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Rethink Project Director and the Director of Office of College and Career Readiness (p. e47). Specific project responsibilities are detailed and aligned to the project strategies, objectives, and grant requirements, i.e., Transformation Specialist at the state level implementing and ensuring schools with highest needs are targeted for improvement strategies and the Rhode Island Department of Education's Chief of Fiscal Operations managing the grant expenditures and budget reporting (pp. e47-e48).

Nine clear project objectives are detailed and linked to planned strategies, baseline data, data calculation methodology, and timelines for completion of tasks, i.e., Objective 1.1 Add seat capacity for existing high-demand courses with a planned student outcome of increasing 1,000 seat/course spaces during Project Year 1 and increasing an additional 750 spaces in Project Year 2 (pp. e75-e76). This specificity shows a reasonable management plan to conduct the project on time and ensure a successful outcome for students and educators.

The applicant provides project management chart with strategies, school-year timeline of implementation of strategies and specific Rhode Island Department of Education Offices responsible for strategy implementation. This specificity will ensure greater likelihood to strategies being completed on time, i.e., Rhode Island Department of Education's Office of College and Career Readiness working with public colleges in the state during the Fall of Project Year 1 to identify specific courses to place online for K-12 students (p. e70).

(2)

The applicant clearly explains that the grant funds will adequately support the proposed project, i.e., development of remote Advanced Course Network courses (p. e48). The funds will also provide funding for a Rhode Island Parent Ambassador who will give direct services to schools and families and provide training to parents in becoming better engaged in their students' learning and academic outcomes (p.e91).

(3)

The applicant's project costs are reasonably explained in light of the quality and quantity of courses to be offered, strategies aligning to project objectives, expansion of technology to increase "seat" capacity, and procurement of third-party instructional materials (p. e48). The applicant project many more students will be accessing some parts of the new curricula, with a substantial increase from a current 1600 K-12 students accessing online curricula to 44,0000 K-12 students having access to online curricula over the years (p. e89). Contractual Services are well-detailed in the Budget, and those expenditures are aligned to the Project's Objectives and potential significance of having one unified data platform for online coursework and interoperable learning records, i.e., The Uniform Enrollment Platform Technology and The Advanced Course Network Expansion (pp. e94-e95).

(4)

To some degree, the applicant demonstrates some reasonableness of the project's costs in relation to the total number of students to be served, as it will increase online course enrollments from 1,000 students to 5,000 students over the three-year grant period, i.e., ███ annually per pupil (pp. e48-e49).

Weaknesses:

(1)

No weaknesses found.

(2)

No weaknesses found.

(3)

No weaknesses found.

4)

The applicant does not fully explain how it ascertained that the per-student cost of the project is reasonable. No comparison data of cost analysis per-student for comparable online programming design/implementation are presented in order to actually demonstrate the reasonableness (pp. e48-e49).

The applicant also does not explain the reasonableness of the cost per student in the development of the courses for the Advanced Course Network, i.e., ███ per student for new course development (p. e48). No comparison data are presented to show the cost per-student for course development for other states in order to prove this project's costs are reasonable.

Reader's Score: **24**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/20/2020 12:55 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (S425B200026)
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	35
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	80
Total	80	80

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (S425B200026)

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 applicant presents a detailed description of the State's coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors other than those required in the application that shows the importance of the effect of COVID-19 on students, parents, and schools in the State. Additionally, the applicant provides a detailed chart that shows problems in employment based on geographical locations, such as 17.9% of residents being unemployed. The State's public health department reports five out of every ten residents have been inflicted with COVID-19. Compared to Bronx, New York the Rhode Island's area of Central Falls' infection rate exceeds the rate of 2,852 per 100,000. The identified city has COVID-19 cases that has exceeded the State's rate of 2,181 per 100,000 along with the added economic burden of the highest unemployment rate (20%), exceeding the State's rate of 19.5 % unemployment (e22-e23).

    Weaknesses:

    No weaknesses found

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 will utilize effective strategies for guaranteeing equal access and treatment by providing access to course earning college or industry-credentials not provided at a student's school. The applicant indicates students of color and students living in poverty attend schools that have few advanced courses. The applicant will use a lottery system to ensure students from disadvantaged populations, students living in poverty, students with disabilities and English Language Learners have access to the proposed project's services. Options for financial assistance will be explored to ensure all students in the State have access to project services (e28 & e35-e36). The applicant confirms a strong commitment through its General of Education Provisions Act (GEPA) statement for ensuring equitable access to project services for all learners in the State by stating the anticipated project will follow the State's equal opportunity and admissions policies to include employment of staff in alignment with hiring practices that are fair and free of discrimination, in addition to ensuring the availability of access to educational programs and activities is achieved (e10-e13, e35, & e88).

(1) The applicant introduces designated proposed project services that exemplifies an   exceptional approach to meet and address Absolute Priority 2. The applicant proposes focusing on option B of Absolute Priority 2 by expanding existing high-quality course access program through the Advanced Course Network. The proposed project will serve additional students, increase new courses based on parent and student likeness. Elements of workforce development needs, and alignment with key curriculum requirements will be included in the proposed project to support the Advanced Course Network as a mechanism for transiting virtual curricular pathways into elementary and middle grades, increasing the diversity of core and elective choices for secondary students and create integrated support for learners with disabilities and English language differences. The proposed project has created strategies for achieving increased virtual course choices in an effort to achieve college credit or workforce recognized credentials. Advanced courses will give learners a competitive edge to achieve postsecondary success and work skills for lifelong learning. The applicant will make sure courses are aligned with appropriate standards. Annual reviews of course selections and offering will be conducted by the State's Department of Education. Most important, parents will be utilized as members of stakeholder groups, consisting of industry leaders, teachers, and administrators. This action will help close the gaps in the equity of course offerings, because parents and students will have the ability to request new course offerings and participate in surveys for improvement to course offerings (e22-e24 & e34).

(2) The applicant identifies gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure and opportunities and plans strategies for overcoming barriers impacting the target population. The applicant reveals in the State, 45% of residents have a postsecondary degree or industry -recognized credential and projected 70% of jobs current require those credentials. Furthermore, the applicant indicates a need to create more pathways to postsecondary and industrial credentials and the COVID-19 pandemic supports that need. The applicant conveys not having enough seats to meet the demand of participation in Advanced Course Network courses, in addition to an issue in access; only 24% of the 76 courses in the 2019-2020 school year were on-line, which created an equity obstacle for students who could not afford transportation. The applicant hopes the development of the proposed project will increase capacity through increased funding for addressing limits by adding more course sections to current courses and transiting face-to-face courses into virtual learning instruction. The applicant cites an educational issue based on high schools in the state not providing advanced courses designate as endorsed courses. Many students were left out of having access to Advance Placement content courses. The absence of high-quality instructional materials used by local education agencies is an existing issue as reflected in K-8 Math and English Language Arts curriculum. The proposed project will eliminate these existing gaps in service. Statewide data show that 70% cited that are involved with providing academic and social support their child but 9% of parents cited that they were involved in school engagements. The results point to an important conclusion that parents may not have the necessary tools to interact with their child's school. The proposed project will include a statewide family ambassador program to give parents opportunities to be work with schools (e36-e42).

(3) The proposed project plans to provide services that has the potential to lengthen services and meet the needs of the target population by expanding access remote learning and enhancing student outcomes. The expansion of an advanced course network will double the increases in the completion of college-credit industry-certificate bearing classes. The successful implementation of the proposed project expansion of the virtual course network option provides the potential for additional students to earn credits and credentials in the online environment. This positive trend has been documented by Michigan's Virtual Advance Placement Program that leads to increased access and academic success in advance courses (e43).

(4) The applicant proposes project services that reflect recent research and effective practice for achieving academic success. Current research shows that when high-quality curriculum moves online it has the potential to achieve the same level of success as face-to face high-quality instruction. The applicant's plans include reviewing current research of the impact on student outcomes when using high-quality teaching and learning materials, virtual curricular strategies, advance placement courses, dual enrollment, career preparation, and high-quality curriculum (e44). Additionally, applicant provides a bibliography that lists citations in order, evidence-based citations, (e82-e85).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

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:

   (1) The applicant provides a successful management plan that is centered on meeting the proposed project objectives on time and within budget. The management plan fully describes who will be designated for carrying out the tasks and meeting the objectives. The applicant cites the time commitment for key personnel working on the grant. The management plan includes crucial components such as succinct timelines based on implementation yearly phases and quarterly reports, established program tasks, and vivid milestones for completing project activities necessary for successfully completion of the grant over a three-year period. The applicant will form a cross-departmental team of experts from the Office of College and Career Readiness, the Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, and the Office of School Improvement to facilitate the grant. The Chief of Teaching who has 16 years of experience at the agency has been designated as the team lead. The Chief of Fiscal Operation who has experience managing the State's department annual budget will assume the fiscal responsibilities for compliance of the use of funds. The Office of College and Career Readiness will assist with facilitating integration of the Advanced Course Network and expansion use of the

Individualized learning Plan in the proposed project, "Unified Enrollment Platform." The applicant provides a written listing of key project team members and their responsibilities. Furthermore, the applicant provides an extensive chart that defines detailed responsibilities, timelines, and milestones (e46-48 & e70-e75). The applicant provides well-developed resumes that shows the team members' broad experiences, diverse skills, and quality education credentials needed for facilitating the grant to completion (e55-e63).

(2) The applicant clearly presents in the narrative budget funds essential needed to fund the anticipated project. The applicant provides in the budget narrative all costs related to project activities. The proposed project costs listed are personnel, fringe benefits, travel, contractual expenses, other, direct, and indirect costs. (e88-e96). The Governor of the State has provided a letter to guarantee backing of the grant (e66-e67).

(3) The costs appear appropriate in relation to obtaining the objectives and executing the anticipated program activities. There are no unrelated costs described in the budget. The applicant provides an itemized budget that categorizes all costs associated with the grant. The total budget requested amount of ███████ will support the project over a three-year grant period (e88-e96).

(4) The applicant provides costs that are appropriate in relation to number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. The applicant proposes a total allocation of ███████ toward development of new Advanced Course Network and increasing seating from 1,000 to 5,000. The applicant estimates cost of the project to be ████ per-student and decrease to ████ per-student over time (e48). The proposed project will expand services of student access to high-quality curriculum from 1,600 students to 44,000 by the expanding the Advanced Course Network (e88).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 25

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/20/2020 12:55 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (S425B200026)
Reader #3: **********

	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	34
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	78
Total	80	78

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (S425B200026)

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:

Factors identified by the applicant:
The applicant provides detailed extenuating and complicating factors that impede the State's ability to meet the needs of all students with its current program (page e21). These factors include "disproportionate impact on many of the city centers in the urban core and the urban ring-our high density communities (HDCs)," especially impacting Providence, with "approximately 1/5 of the state's students" (page E21), and in a small community, Central Falls. Students are "predominantly communities of color, primarily Latinx" (page e21).

In addition to these factors, the applicant explains the extenuating circumstance involving both schools systems being "under forms of additional state-determined action" (page e21), and "the needs and challenges of these two systems are the responsibility of both RIDE and the State of Rhode Island" (page e22). In addition, these two communities comprise "almost ¼ of the state's student population" (page e21), making it pivotal to create programming that will directly address the needs and challenges that are exacerbated by COVID-19.

A table (page e22) depicts COVID cases per 100k, and for HDC's, whether they are a small community such as Central Falls or an urban area such as Providence, they are representing a "larger proportion of hospitalized patients compared to their population" (page e22). In addition, a correlate is high unemployment rate, 20.7% for Central Falls and 19.5% for Providence

Other factors that indicate a high Coronavirus burden for the State of Rhode Island include the following:
o   25% lack access to stable, at-home internet;
o   over 17.9% are unemployed; and
o   50,000 pieces of hardware required for the State to go 1:1 (page e23).

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that the Rhode Island's rate of infection has worsened since the numbers for this application were published; however, they do not offer those rates within the application itself (page e21) .

Loss of one point.

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:

Ensuring Equal Access
The applicant states that they will offer virtual Readiness courses to prepare students for upcoming classes; coupling that with the removal of the transportation barrier due to the virtual nature of the course and access to classes give students the chance to take classes that will provide them with Council Designations that they might not have access to in their home school. This project is ensuring equal access for all students (page e25).

Because the "Advanced Course Network is open to all public and non-public students" in the State, the applicant is ensuring equal access to all students, and if students come from a disadvantaged population, they will be given a higher weight in the enrollment lottery, giving them an increased chance at enrollment (page e28).

The applicant is ensuring access for students with disabilities and multilingual learners by requiring vendors to embed Tier 1 supports and accessibility features into their products (page e30).

In its initial year, student enrollment reflected an overrepresentation of Hispanic (48%), Black (18%), F/RL (63%) compared to their percentage of the student population. Students qualifying for special education and ELL services near the percentage of RI high schools at 11% and 7% in CAN and 15% and 8% respectively for the state (page e36).

Exceptional Approach
The applicant explains that the state is expanding virtual options to K-12 (page e29), including elementary access for the first time. In addition, the applicant recognizes the need for the school to pivot from brick and mortar to remote instruction; therefore, it is ensuring the high quality of instruction no matter the platform. They will accomplish this by procuring/developing highly-rated core ELA and Math curriculum used by high-needs schools; develop programs to address the common learning gaps of struggling students; and providing professional develop to ensure the integrity of the curriculum and standards (Page e29).

The high schools receiving School Counselor Advisors are low-performing based on measures indicating percentage of students earning college credits or industry-recognized credentials (page e32), thereby locating the assistance in the highest need schools to ensure access through raised awareness and encouragement. Furthermore, the program will

enlist the assistance of Student and Parent Ambassadors to provide avenues for raising awareness and ensuring access (page e32).

Specific Gaps or Weaknesses
The applicant identified that in its initial year of implementing ACN, over 90% of student enrollment came from the urban core; however, by SY 2018-2019, 56% of enrollments were from the urban core. They attribute this to three factors:

1.   The technical nature of the ACN platform; and
2.   Courses are first come, first served and suburban districts had resources to active promote and approve enrollment faster than under-resourced schools (page e35). These factors have been addressed through simplifying the platform and through this grant, promotion of the ACN will be made equitable (page e35).

In spite of the state's rapid response to COVID-19 through the creation of a guidance document and providing needed resources, there remains substantial disparities across different communities in the state, specifically for students who are differently abled, multilingual learners, and children of first responders (page e38).

Likelihood of Expanding Access/Lead to Improvements
The applicant provides evidence that the project will result in courses that are in alignment with the 10 Priority Sectors identified by the Dept. of Labor and Training, which include Bioscience, Business, Construction, Defense, Education, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Marine Trades, providing a pathway for postsecondary employment for students in identified sectors (page e26).

The applicant explained how the communities are involved in determining which courses meet students' needs for "high wage, high demand careers" (page e27), and to ensure the program's success, the narrative includes a description of ambassadors who guide implementation who will be intentionally selected because they are education and community leaders. They can leverage their perspectives and skills to advise, create resource and training, and serve as spokespeople for PrepareRI (page e27).

Because the applicant has built-in a transparent Tier-based monitoring system, they have not only created a mechanism to provide parents insight into courses so that they can make informed course decisions, it also provides a mechanism to end or continue a contract with a vendor (page e27).

Reflects Up-to-Date Knowledge
The application acknowledges the need for evidence-based virtual and hybrid instruction, and also acknowledges that the state must provide this to teachers; thus there is a plan to provide professional development on an ongoing basis (page e30). The training will also initiate a train-the-trainer approach so that the PD can continue (page e31).

To ensure that all students are aware of the course-access programs, the state will utilize its ILP systems to disseminate information and to provide "aligned and intentional counseling support for student pathways" (page e31). To ensure the success of the program, the applicant describes how the state will develop and launch a School Counselor Advisors program (modeled after Advise TN) and work in 11 high-needs high schools to train school counselors on ACN; focus on supporting counselor to guide students to ACN through a variety of means (lessons, small groups, toolkits, and other outreach initiatives); and support comprehensive, data-based school counseling (page e32).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:
Ensuring Equal Access
None noted.

Exceptional Approach
The application provides no evidence that the described measures undertaken to ensure high enrollment from urban locations will actually result in higher enrollment from urban locations (page e35)

Loss of one point.

Specific Gaps or Weaknesses
No points lost.

Likelihood of Expanding Access/Lead to Improvements
No points lost.

Reflects Up-to-Date Knowledge
No points lost.

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:

Adequacy of the Plan
The cross-departmental team includes members who have the expertise and years of experience in delivering high quality instruction for all students and members who have the authority to ensure the proper use and accountability of grant funding. An especially important member of the team is The Office of College & Career Readiness because it created the ACN, has led the expanding use of ILP, creating the Unified Enrollment Platform, and most importantly in the time of COVID-19, overseeing CTE programming (page e46 and e47).

The applicant has provided a table that includes the Project Leadership Team and the Project Responsibilities which include personnel for all aspects of the project, from support to supervision, ensuring resources and programs are targeted to highest needs schools and aligned with improvement strategies, overall supervision, and oversight of the entire grant (page e47).

Funds will Support Project
As described in the application, the funds are dedicated to programs that will support each of the project's measures of success, including the 3 key student based outcomes. They will reach the first one, increase the rate of graduating students earning "Diploma Plus Industry Credentials" or "College Credits" because the projects spends money on ensuring that students will have better access to needed classes for graduation. They will reach the second one, cut the college remediation rate in half, because students will have access to remediation courses while they are in high school and will be better prepared for success in college. With monies focused on providing access to high-quality online

courses, students are given expanded understanding and opportunity to enroll in remote classes, the project will achieve the third outcome of increasing proficiency rates in virtual-served HQIM classes (pages e49 and e50).

Costs are Reasonable: Objectives, Design, and Significance
The project costs are reasonable because the project will result in a 27 fold increase in the number of students accessing high-quality courses and programs, which includes growth from 927 students to 5,000 annually accessing college credit and industry-credential bearing courses. In addition, middle and high school students will have access to 150 courses across four types, which reflects a doubling of courses offered. In addition, 35,000 students across all grades will gain virtual access to core curricula in math, ELA, and science, and 15,850 elementary students included for the first time. With the project's parent surveys and Tiers for ACN courses, parents have agency in the courses that are offered for their students, empowering their further involvement in their child's education. Ultimately, all of these steps will lead RIDE to meet its challenging 3 key student-based outcomes (page e49 and e50).

Costs are Reasonable: Number of Persons Served/Anticipated Results
Expanding the new remote ACN courses from 1,000 to 5,000 will cost ▬▬▬ per pupil along with a ▬▬▬ per pupil cost to offer previously developed courses in future years (page e48). These costs are reasonable given the impact that the access to ACN courses will provide the additional 4,000 students.

Weaknesses:

Adequacy of the Plan
No points lost.

Funds will Support Project
No points lost.

Costs are Reasonable: Objectives, Design, and Significance
No points lost.

Costs are Reasonable: Number of Persons Served/Anticipated Results
No points lost.

Reader's Score: 25

Status: Submitted
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