

**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: Iowa Department of Education (S425B200036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Highest Coronavirus Burden</b>		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Services and Project Plan</b>		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	30
<b>Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	73
<b>Total</b>	80	73

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - FY20 REM - 3: 84.425B

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

Applicant: Iowa Department of Education (S425B200036)

## 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:

Applicant provides sufficient description of indicators and information factors related to the impact of the coronavirus burden in Iowa. (pgs e21-e22) For example, the applicant addresses the health care burden, stating, Iowa has tested 259,002 individuals, of which 26,051 were positive (10%). Of these cases, a total of 686 people have died and a total of 16,240 recovered; the educational burden: Only five districts (1.5%) and 43 accredited nonpublic schools (25.0%) chose to require that all students participate in continuous learning for the remainder of the school year. Regardless, Iowa's students suffered from extended time without access to educational opportunities stretching from March 16, 2020 through the summer months and up to the start of the 2020-21 year.

#### Weaknesses:

There are 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:**

Sub-criterion 1: The applicant presents a unique proposal with the creation of the Family Central Team (pg. e27). The Applicant describes a collaborative effort leveraging the expertise of existing partnerships with the state educational agencies including state/local agencies that work with underrepresented populations (pg.3).

Sub-criterion 2: The plan to develop e learning Central is an appropriate demonstration of the response to addressing the gaps to virtual learning. (pg. e30).

"We will establish Iowa e-Learning Central in order to not only sustain student progress, but to accelerate student learning by expanding rigorous instructional opportunities for students regardless of crisis events. ILC will partner with educators across the state to attain this primary goal by instituting the following objectives supported by grant funds (pg. e14)

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant effectively describes a statewide virtual learning environment that expands access and accelerates learning (pg.e31) According to the applicant "One of the primary outcomes of this grant is to secure a state support Learning Management Platform so that every district in the state has a free virtual learning option from which to choose."

Sub-criterion 4: The applicant shows evidence of utilizing current knowledge and resources related to such issues as parent involvement and the impact of student achievement. The applicant states, "For example, parental involvement that supports a partnership with the school (e.g., shared understanding of the goal/purpose of their child's education and access to effective strategies to help their child) has a significant and meaningful impact on student achievement (Jeynes, 2012). (pg. e32)

**Weaknesses:**

Criterion B: The applicant demonstrates little evidence that there will be strategies to address equal access and treatment for eligible project participants other than collaborations leveraging Family Central and ILC. Developing a Student Selection process identifying ways in which under-represented students are included and/or prioritized would be beneficial to this application.

**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 applicant has successfully developed strategic leadership teams using existing partnerships, in-kind support to address the implementation of and design of a statewide virtual learning platform. (pgs. e34 - e35) There are weaknesses noted in this criterion.

Sub-criterion 2: Applicant has provided an extensive Budget Narrative that includes the number of students anticipated to be served with associated costs. For example, the applicant provides an estimate of costs as follows:

“Based on an environmental scan of average platform costs, it is anticipated costs will be [REDACTED]/access point. This translates to: 242,610 students + 242,610 households + 37,386 educators + 3000 AEA support staff + 100 DE support staff = [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] on an annual basis.” (pg. e130)

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant sufficiently provides justification and alignment for each cost item related to the objectives. For example, the Budget Narrative reflects justification of 3.0 FTE for the Family Central Team which plays a critical role in relation to program design and implementation as follows:

“Family Central Team (3.0 FTE, [REDACTED]). To ensure family, students, and community members have input on all aspects of the project, ILC will tap the expertise of the Bureau of Learner Strategies and Supports (LSS). The role of LSS within DLR at the IDE is to ensure equity, access and free appropriate public education for all students, with a focus on special 2 The Iowa Academic Standards include: Iowa Core Standards, Iowa Early Learning Standards, Iowa Core Essential Elements for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities that participate in alternate assessment, and Iowa’s English Language Proficiency Standards.” (e34-e37)

**Weaknesses:**

Sub-criterion 1: Applicant does not demonstrate that the duties and responsibilities and the time allotted to each position correlates with the number of students to be served, or the anticipated benefits or results i.e. (2) .5 Project Co-Directors, pg. 15

**Reader's Score:** 23

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iowa Department of Education (S425B200036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Highest Coronavirus Burden</b>		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Services and Project Plan</b>		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	30
<b>Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	22
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	72
<b>Total</b>	80	72

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - FY20 REM - 3: 84.425B

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

Applicant: Iowa Department of Education (S425B200036)

## 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: The application provides a very clear and focused overview of the focus on addressing inequity by expanding broadband and internet access, as well as improve access to technology resources, through the development of an Iowa e-Learning Central system. (p. e10) In addressing the highest coronavirus burden, the applicant successfully addressed the statistics of how many students live in poverty, along with the correlation with COVID-19 cases and the percentages of those that attend rural LEAs. This, in addition to --including the health care, economic and educational burdens, make a compelling case for the need for this program in creating a state-supported high-quality virtual learning environment (p. e20 – p. e22) The state of Iowa has the twenty-fourth highest percentage of population (tied with Pennsylvania) 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:

None

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:

Sub-criterion 1 : By focusing on traditionally underrepresented groups in articulating one of the goals, the applicant clearly shows this as a priority area in the bullet points on p. e23 and p. e24. Focusing on a state-supported Learning Management Platform in conjunction with Content Central that includes educators makes this an innovative and exceptional approach as it develops and supports them.

Sub-criterion 2: The gaps and weaknesses were explained in the proposal (p. e28 - p. e29). By articulating the likelihood that the project would expand to remote options is appropriately addressed, while leading to student learning outcomes, provides evidence of this applicant's future success (in this project). They have included data concerning the offerings, as well as other data points that provides further evidence of the success of this proposal. (p. e30 – p. e33) Gaps are addressed on p. e28 and the applicant included a strong rationale concerning the need for a hub to connect families, teachers and students, as it pertains to a virtualized environment of support and partnership. (p. e28 – p. e29)

Sub-criterion 4: The applicant included comprehensive research findings concerning access to technology and remote learning, (p. e22) as well as meta-analysis concerning how online learning may be more effective, and details about delivery systems. (p. e31 – p. e33) This helped to provide a context and grounding for how they propose to offer services and improve on student outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

Sub-criterion 3: In order for the proposed plan to be successful, they need a state system of broadband access. A comprehensive solution is not provided in the application.

**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 management plan begins on p. e33 and provides appropriate detail about the responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing tasks. The information provided was clear and begins to demonstrate how it would address the management plan, along with the program objectives. Positions, along with the details of their responsibilities, help to ascertain the extent to which the objectives would be accomplished with this proposal. (p. e122 – p. e123). The table starting on p. e38 fully articulates the milestones, objectives, the timeline and the team responsible for completing the tasks. This is clear and articulated in a way that is easy to connect to the objectives of the proposed project. One of the strongest components of this section was the inclusion of their project performance measures, targets and method/evidence (p. e41 – p. e43) and data collection and reporting were mentioned in the application, which is an important part of the management plan. (p. e41) They also help to substantiate the claims about the management plan and the objectives to be accomplished. By including these specifics, the applicants are accountable for this proposal.

Sub-criterion 2: The funds identified in the budget narrative (p. e44 and p. e122) is clear and encompass three years of the program. The outlined funds therefore appear to be reasonable considering the scope of the work.

Sub-criterion 3: Both the management plan and resources are developed to the extent that they demonstrate the costs that are reasonable for this program.

Sub-criterion 4: The number of students served are included on p. e130 which is clear and concise.

**Weaknesses:**

Sub-criterion 4: There are two budget directors listed and no justification in the budget narrative for why both are needed on p. e44 and e122. The fringe benefits seemed high for this application (p. e7)

**Reader's Score: 22**

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Applicant: Iowa Department of Education (S425B200036)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Highest Coronavirus Burden</b>		
1. Coronavirus Burden	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Services and Project Plan</b>		
1. Project Services/Plan	35	30
<b>Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	21
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	71
<b>Total</b>	80	71

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - FY20 REM - 3: 84.425B

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

Applicant: Iowa Department of Education (S425B200036)

## 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:

Significant burden represented by reported 26,051 COVID-19 including 686 deaths, including two cities ranked high on national indices for impact (Sioux City) and increasing contagion (Ames; pg. e20)

The burden was furthered by significant rise in unemployment (pg. e21) and limited requirement to continue school participation after shut-down. Only five districts (1.5%) and 43 accredited nonpublic schools (25.0%) chose to require that all students participate in continuous learning for the remainder of the school year. (pg. e22).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

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

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

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

In addition, the Secretary considers--

(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:**

Incorporating input from traditionally underserved populations is explicitly referenced in the proposal, largely in the context of improved outreach (pgs. e22, e27). [4 pts]

B1: The ultimate goal of Iowa e-Learning Central (ILC) is to positively affect the following performance measures: (1) the number of students served by the project, (2) the percentage of parents who report satisfaction with remote learning options available (as defined as the number and type of course access options available in the platform), and (3) the number and different types of new remote learning options provided, giving specific detail (pg. e23). The application articulates the expansion of existing programs and collaborations with other agencies suggesting a sustainable change to the infrastructure of remote learning. [9 pts]

B2: Teachers are empowered to develop content and families to provide input on new/revised courses; statewide access (e23-24) provides support to expanded access and improved outcomes. Involving these two stakeholders suggests the needs of students will be given appropriate focus.

The existing issue of “the state lack(ing) a critical resource: A state-supported virtual learning environment with equitable access to high-quality course programs” (pg. e22), is receiving current support demonstrated through legislative action (The Platform) which this funding will launch (pg. e23). [9 pts]

B3: Additionally, the existing challenge of limited broadband access is being addressed through other avenues (Governor’s Emergency Education Relief, GEER) addressing both meeting goals within requested funding and expanding access (pg. e22). [4 pts]

B4: Application provides a specific summary of the best practices and current research that underlies their proposal (pgs. e32 - e33) [4 pts]

**Weaknesses:**

Overall, the application is vague about how “input” from traditionally underrepresented groups (pg. e23) addresses equal access and treatment.

B1: Given the reported existing infrastructure limitations, it is unclear why the application declares it critical to ILC is a virtual learning environment to support remote learning for students only during school closures due to inclement weather, epidemic, or any unanticipated crisis event (pg. e23). As the proposal is supposed to ameliorate existing deficiencies to remote learning, the limitation to only application in emergent situation is puzzling.

B2: While the existing issue, access to the technology needed to adequately participate in remote learning (pg. e22) is addressed, it is unclear how the goal of continuous learning via remote options is to be achieved, lacking a statewide standard.

B3: Similarly, vague response to identified disparities in reach of distance learning (currently 50.1%) and scope of offerings (nearly 2,000 courses, only about 300 in core courses, only 3 approved online schools (pg. e30).

B4: Finally, ILC Theory of Action predicated on a lot of “ifs” – “if they build it, they will come”? – without substantive empirical support. (pg. e31)

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: Having leadership personnel already in place, this supports both keeping costs within budget and with already established roles (pg. e35). Additionally, a logical timeline as presented in Table 1 clearly illustrates the likelihood of proposal success.(pgs. e38 – e41). [5 pts]

C2: The planned expenditures are well organized, clearly described, and seem appropriate to support stated goals (pgs. e34 – 37). [3 pts]

C3: Expenditures also appear generally reasonable given scope of the proposal (pgs. e33 – e37). [3 pts]

C4: The funds requested do appear aligned with the number of stakeholders served as reported in Table 2 (pg. e42 – 43). [10 pts]

#### Weaknesses:

C2: ██████████ in-kind contributions are expected to provide expert content, family/student voice, special education, and evaluation personnel within an ILC Leadership Team to lead this work. This appears a heavy lift and the commitment of in-kind cooperation isn't clear or the practicality of the grant sustaining outcomes if cooperation is lost (e33, C2 & C3).

C3: There is vagueness for plans for grant funded staff, post grant and the rationale for two budget directors is not clear (e36).

Reader's Score: 21

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