

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (S425B200037)

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	35
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	80
Total	80	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - FY20 REM - 8: 84.425B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (S425B200037)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Highest Coronavirus Burden

1. A: Highest Coronavirus Burden (up to 20 Points)

(2) The extent to which the applicant has a high coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors identified by the applicant in response to Application Requirement 3. (up to 20 points)

Strengths:

2. The application clearly addresses a high coronavirus burden and includes data that substantiates the need for their project. Because of the virus, there were statewide school closures and remote learning was mandated. Because of this several needs were identified. For example, according to a survey, needs regarding instruction include 1) 1:1 devices, 2) sufficient internet in terms of both availability and quality, 3) teacher readiness for remote learning, 4) student readiness for remote learning, 5) a learning management system (LMS), 6) quality content and lessons aligned to state academic standards, 7) instruction for special populations, and 8) other technology infrastructure issues (switches, inventory systems, security, single sign on, gradebook exchanges, class rostering, etc.). Page 21

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

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

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

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

In addition, the Secretary considers--

(1) The extent to which the proposed project is an exceptional approach to absolute priority being addressed and includes a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. (up to 10 points)

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project to respond to the needs of students. (up to 10 points)

(3) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. (up to 5 points)

(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant has clearly identified a plan to provide equal access and treatment for participants. Efforts that ensure that members of all groups are included have been noted. For example, all materials developed will be internally reviewed using built-in accessibility checkers with the inclusion of alternative text. In addition, materials developed will be made available in multiple forms to accommodate accessibility needs. Page 10

1.The applicant has clearly described approaches used to address the priorities for this competition. They will initiate services that will allow varying instructional methods that includes virtual, blended, hybrid, or brick-and-mortar classroom. This will facilitate varying learning styles among students as well as accommodate remote learning. Likewise, datacasting that allows file transmittal, videos etc. will be an efficient method for students and educators who do not have broadband internet access as it will provide them with the same instructional content and educational resources that would normally require an Internet connection. Pages 24-25

2. Technology gaps within the target area have been clearly identified. They have noted weaknesses in services and infrastructure, including lack of student and teacher access to broad bandtechnology, gaps in high quality SC standards-aligned digital materials and curriculum for PK–3 grades, and a lack of a specific location for teachers and students to obtain quality vetted content for use in a variety of instructional models. To address this, they will employ Learning Management Systems that effectively support distance learning as well as professional development. Likewise, to address the lack of broadband access, they will utilize datacasting which is a novel approach, that will allow file transmittal. videos, and other data to be transmitted to students in need. Also, to further demonstrate their commitment to provide access to technology, they will provide educational information via its statewide broadcast signal. Page 27

3.The applicant has sufficiently demonstrated how their project will expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. To address students' needs they will employ a variety of solutions to meet students as well as teachers' needs. Their strategies are encompassing and will facilitate learning within remote areas as well as among those who are underrepresented due to socioeconomic conditions. Strategies include datacasting, offering complete or partial online courses as well as hybrid or blended options which will allow a teacher to assign individual pieces of digital content to students in a physical classroom, so the teacher can provide individualized support and instruction which will undoubtedly assist students with educational gaps . Pages 33-34

4.The applicant has clearly addressed how their choice of services reflects up-to-date knowledge. For example, to substantiate their PK-3 remote learning model, they will utilize research from the Fred Rogers Center along with the Technology in Early Childhood Center. Research methods emphasize the effectiveness of intentional integration of developmentally appropriate practices, a balance of activities, consideration of screen time, and access for interactive technology. Additionally, their design meets this criterion as they offer teacher proficiency in remote learning, varying instructional designs to address diverse learning styles as well as increase digital resources. 37

Weaknesses:

None 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:

1. The applicant adequately addresses operational procedures of the management plan. The tasks and milestones are feasible as there is sufficient time allocated for start-up activities such as hiring of staff. Likewise, various milestones are established to assess progress on an incremental basis. There is a clear correlation between departmental responsibilities and tasks. This plan will allow the project to stay on task and ultimately accomplish its goals and objectives. Pages 38-40
2. The application proposes a complete budget to support the activities of the project. Proposed expenditures are outlined in areas of personnel (██████████), supplies (██████████) and travel (██████████). The total cost of the program is ██████████ which is reasonable considering the experience and duties of proposed staff as well as activities outlined. Pages 188-195
3. Their budget clearly provides a budget narrative that shows reasonable costs in relation to activities and services proposed such as travel, equipment as well as supplies. For example, they have requested funding for vendor(s) to provide video production, dissemination, promotion, and printing of family resources. This will be approximately 16 videos x \$1250 per production video in year 1; 32 videos in year 2; and 12 videos in year 3 for a total cost of \$75,000 which is a reasonable expense. Page 194
4. The applicant has provided relevant information regarding how costs are appropriate and reasonable in relation to persons served. For example, they will serve all public-school students (782,638) including more than 258,000 PK-3 public school students (33 percent of all students) in addition to an estimated 2,000-3,000 non-public school and home school students who will have access to digital learning resources. A budget narrative is included and shows reasonable costs as well as addresses the infrastructure and training needs identified. Pages 189-195

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **25**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (S425B200037)

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

Panel #8 - FY20 REM - 8: 84.425B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (S425B200037)

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 has clearly demonstrated the impact of coronavirus on student, parents, and schools in the state. For example, the applicant states that the state will lose more than half of its expected tourism revenue this year (one out of every ten jobs in the state is related to tourism). This loss will result in significant shortfalls to state LEAs (p. e19).

Students and families are also impacted by the downturn in the tourism economy. Hospitality and tourism workers and their families experience above average food insecurity resulting in a high demand at food banks (p. e19).

The applicant also identified the high and growing number of COVID-19 cases in the state (p. e19).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

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

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

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

In addition, the Secretary considers--

(1) The extent to which the proposed project is an exceptional approach to absolute priority being addressed and includes a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. (up to 10 points)

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project to respond to the needs of students. (up to 10 points)

(3) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will expand access

to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes. (up to 5 points)

(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant has shown that the proposed project ensures 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. For example, the applicant shows that resources created through this project will be available to all students, including those with disabilities, English language learners, students with economic disadvantages, and historically underserved students (p. e23).

(1) The applicant has provided clear evidence of a detailed project plan for addressing the absolute priority. The proposal calls for providing digital education to pre-K to 3 students in the state. For example, the detailed plan includes increasing the availability of remote learning resources to students and teachers in areas that lack broadband access (p. e22), improving education resources for specific, identified gaps by developing and curating content (p. e22), increasing teacher experience, confidence, and proficiency with remote learning (p. e23), and improving communication between families, teachers, and schools to support remote learning (p. e23).

In addition, the applicant provides a comprehensive program action-logic model to support the proposal (p. e24).

(2) The applicant identified gaps and weaknesses in remote instruction that were found after school closures due to the pandemic, including lack of student and teacher access to broadband technology, gaps in standards-aligned digital materials for pre-K to 3, and lack of a specific location for teachers and students to obtain quality content.

The proposal clearly shows how the applicant plans to close these gaps, including:

- Creating a depository to allow for easy distribution of high-quality online learning objects, resources, and courses. These can be imbedded into any learning management system (p. e25)
- Providing incentives to LEAs without a learning management system to acquire such a resource (p. e25-26)
- Extending a pilot program for datacasting of education content to more families who lack broadband connectivity (p. e27)
- Providing Learning Engagement Coaches to assist families with remote learning (p. e29)

(3) The proposal has a high likelihood of success in expanding remote learning options and supporting improved student outcomes. The applicant does this through developing high-quality content that is aligned to state and national academic standards and that can be embedded in a statewide digital system (p. e33), providing access to datacasting, a public resource web portal, and the state's virtual school program (p. e33), scaling up from 10 LEAs in year one to as many as 30 LEAs by year three of the grant (p. e33), and providing virtual, hybrid/blended, and flipped classroom approaches to meet the varying needs of students and teachers (p. e33-34).

(4) While the applicant has identified that research about pre-K to 3 remote learning is minimal, they do cite up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice from the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center to provide promising practices for early remote learning. For example, the applicant shows that it is important for a remote learning plan to provide parents with choices in meeting educational needs as well as strengthening teacher proficiency in remote learning for pre-K to 3 learners (p. e37).

Weaknesses:

None 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:

Strengths:

- (1) The applicant provides a clear management plan with defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones, including:
- The program will be housed in the state's Division of College and Career Readiness and overseen by one of its directors (p. e37)
 - Hiring and managing staff two work with datacasting partners (pp. e37-38)
 - Developing and approving pre-K to 3 curricula by the Office of Early Learning and Literacy (p. e38)

The applicant also provides a Grant Chart detailing key activities and responsible staff in three-month intervals (pp. e38-39). This chart shows a strong alignment between the project goals and objectives, timelines, and key staff responsible for specific milestones.

- (2) The applicant clearly identifies how the funds will adequately support the proposed project. For example, the applicant shows how funds will be used to expand access to remote learning opportunities through datacasting, a remote learning portal, and virtual courses. The grant will support three years of work (p. e39).

In addition, the state will provide professional development to teachers and support to students and families regarding the new resources available to them (p. e40).

- (3) The applicant clearly shows evidence of how the costs of the project are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance. For example, the grant will enable the state to create high-quality content that can be accessed on any learning management system or personal device. The project will also address the digital equity gap by providing standards-aligned lessons to all students, regardless of the poverty level of the LEA in which the student lives (p. e40).

- (4) The applicant strongly shows how the costs of the project are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. For example, the proposal will expand digital delivery methods to all 258,000 pre-K to 3 students in the state through this project – 33 percent of all students in the state (p. e41). The datacasting technology in this proposal will address the most significant barrier in equal access to digital learning opportunities – lack of broadband access, particularly in rural areas of the state. Datacasting will help bridge that gap for LEAs with remote schools, their students, and their families for whom broadband access is thought to be up to five years away (p. e42).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (S425B200037)

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	25
Sub Total	80	80
Total	80	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #8 - FY20 REM - 8: 84.425B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (S425B200037)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Highest Coronavirus Burden

1. A: Highest Coronavirus Burden (up to 20 Points)

(2) The extent to which the applicant has a high coronavirus burden based on indicators and information factors identified by the applicant in response to Application Requirement 3. (up to 20 points)

Strengths:

The application includes specific and compelling evidence of the impact that coronavirus has had on the economic health of South Carolina due in part to its reliance on the tourism industry and causing amongst other consequences a potential reduction in state funding for public education (pages 18-20).

The applicant further illustrates the negative impact of coronavirus with specific evidence that many (over 20%) of South Carolina districts have been unable to deliver effective online instruction due to the coronavirus closures (pages 19-21). The applicant identifies a number of needs including 1:1 devices, internet access, and a learning management system.

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

CRITERIA 0

The strategies put forth by the applicant are specifically connected to ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have been traditionally under-represented according to the terms of this grant (pages 21-27). Furthermore, these strategies appear to be directly responsive to the specific gaps and weaknesses identified and the applicant puts forth clear and specific outcomes aligned to a coherent theory of change. The applicant notes specific weaknesses in services and infrastructure including gaps related to broadband access, digital materials, and teacher training.

CRITERIA 1

The applicant's proposed approach is an exceptionally clear and specifically responds to the absolute priority and includes a detailed project plan (pages 21-27) with relevant and appropriate local stakeholders and a clear and compelling explanation of roles and responsibilities for both internal and external staff. The specificity of the applicant's approach is notable. Considering the novel use of technology (e.g. datacasting), the applicant's approach appears to be truly exceptional relative to the absolute priority. Additionally, the proposed project appears to be very likely to expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes (pages 21-27).

Criteria 2

The strategies put forth by the applicant are specifically connected to ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have been traditionally under-represented according to the terms of this grant (pages 21-27). Furthermore, these strategies appear to be directly responsive to the specific gaps and weaknesses identified and the applicant puts forth clear and specific outcomes aligned to a coherent theory of change. The applicant notes specific weaknesses in services and infrastructure including gaps related to broadband access, digital materials, and teacher training.

Criteria 3

The applicant's proposed approach is an exceptionally clear and specifically responds to the absolute priority and includes a detailed project plan (pages 21-27) with relevant and appropriate local stakeholders and a clear and compelling explanation of roles and responsibilities for both internal and external staff. The specificity of the applicant's approach is notable. Considering the novel use of technology (e.g. datacasting), the applicant's approach appears to be truly exceptional relative to the absolute priority. Additionally, the proposed project appears to be very likely to expand access to remote learning options and lead to improvements in student outcomes (pages 21-27).

CRITERIA 4

The applicant's proposed services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices (pages 7-11). Additionally, the application provides evidence that the applicant's plan will meaningfully increase access to remote learning and boost student achievement if executed effectively (pages 21-37). The applicant intends to make use of research from the Fred Rogers Center and the Technology in Early Childhood Center.

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

CRITERIA 1 and 2

The application is remarkable for its specificity, clarity, and coherence. The applicant's proposed project is supported by a detailed and specific management plan with clear ownership, activities, and timelines (pages 37-39) all of which seem to align accurately to the budget (pages 5-7, 40-42). Moreover, the budget is clear and coherent with a proposed use of funds that will adequately support the proposed project.

CRITERIA 3 and 4

The applicant's project costs appear to be reasonable in relation to the proposed project, and costs that appear to be appropriate relative to the number of persons to be served (the applicant notes all public school students or almost 800,000 students plus non-public and homeschool students) and to the anticipated results and objectives (pages 40-42, pages 5-7).

The application includes approximately \$2 million of proposed expenditures related to staffing and a total cost of approximately [REDACTED] which is reasonable considering the experience and duties of proposed staff as well as activities outlined. Taken as a whole, the management plan appears to satisfy all necessary criteria and the project appears to be well supported by both financial and human resources as needed.

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 25

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