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

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Arkansas Department of Education (S425B200038)
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	28
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	18
Sub Total	80	66
Total	80	66

Panel #5 - FY20 REM - 5: 84.425B

Reader #1: **********
Applicant: Arkansas Department of Education (S425B200038)

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 1: High coronavirus burden (20/20 points)

The applicant justifies they have a high coronavirus burden by stating that the number of coronavirus cases and deaths disproportionately affect families and parents from underserved communities. For instance: The Hispanic population only accounts for 7% of Arkansas's total population, but 21% of cases are within the Hispanic community. 29% of cases are within the African American community even though only 15.4% of Arkansas residents identify as African American. Nearly 237 Arkansans have died from complications due to COVID-19 with 31% of those being African American (e20).

The applicant also suggests that the 25-64 age group has been hit the hardest accounting for 67% of their COVID-19 cases, which means that the bulk of patients being guardians of current PK-12 students are bearing a high coronavirus burden and this in turn could impact the ability of the parents to help their school aged children with online school work (e20).

The applicant focuses on Arkansas being considered the sixth most poverty-stricken state in the United States, ranking 2nd in the overall food insecurity rate at 17.2% (515,000 people) and ranking 3rd in overall child food insecurity at 23.2% (164,000 children) (Johnston, 2018). The applicant also documents that parental education levels contribute to the challenges in social determinants with Arkansas ranking 43rd in adults 25 and older having a high school degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Due to low educational attainment in Arkansas, the ADH indicates 37% of the population has low health literacy which creates additional struggles during a health crisis (e20-21). It is feasible to determine from the evidence stated here by the applicant that when students and families are both hungry and uneducated the mixture added on to a health crisis like the coronavirus can make it extremely hard for students to be successful academically and participate successfully in something like remote and blended learning.

The applicant also gives a complete picture of the burden the state of Arkansas is under by saying they face a $353 million budget shortfall as a result of the economic fallout from the coronavirus outbreak and there are adverse inequities in access to broadband internet outside of classroom settings for many students in rural communities (e21).

The applicant and the state of Arkansas has not only acknowledged the high coronavirus burdens, but they have also begun to deal with them as follows:
For families and teachers needing extra support due to the coronavirus, the applicant established hotlines.
For students who needed therapy supports at home due to the coronavirus, the applicant has allowed therapy to be provided in the home of a student via telehealth and widened the technology options which may be used for this purpose.
For supporting student learning and addressing learning gaps when students return to school in the fall due to coronavirus, the applicant has been developing units through a playbook that will serve as a guide for developing digital learning modules in literacy and math. And the applicant acknowledges that for Arkansas to be "Ready for Learning" when school resumes, they will need blended learning, guaranteed and viable curriculum, and a student-focused

approach (e22-24).

Due to the high coronavirus burdens mentioned above, the applicant's proposed project and plan is qualified because it creates, develops, implements and takes to scale an educational model for blended and remote learning to mitigate the adverse impact of the coronavirus health crisis on teachers, students, and families in the state (e13).

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:

   Equal access and treatment for participants who have been underrepresented (5/5 points)

   The applicant intends to address underrepresented students they serve from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, especially minority, including those who have been traditionally under-represented based on race, color, national origin, gender, or disability by tailoring each component of the content creation and delivery process to include quality control measures that give access to these groups. For instance, in Phase 1 and 2, during the selection of subject matter and planning for the scope and content of the curriculum, the diversity of K-12 students will be kept in mind. The applicant also states the resources created will coincide with research-based approaches identified as effective for diverse learners. In Phases 3-6, the processes will be largely guided by the NSQ for Online Courses which target areas specifically directed toward content being accessible, culturally diverse, and bias free (e35-36).

   Specifically, in Strategy 4 of the project, the applicant states they will provide high-quality educational programming and supplemental videos to build background knowledge designed to support ELs, SWD, and students with limited

background knowledge, inclusive of vocabulary to address the significant gap in literacy acquisition of ELs and African American children entering kindergarten (e30-31).

Sub criterion 1: Exceptional approach with Detailed project plan (7/10 points)

The applicant provides an exceptional approach in that it can provide digital learning modules for K-8 English language arts, high school Critical Reading, K-8 mathematics, Algebra I, and Geometry with interventions and scaffolds for English learners (ELs), students with disabilities (SWD), and other learners in need of additional support (e13). The part that makes it exceptional is that the applicant realizes the importance of honing in on and designing and developing a digital curriculum for the core subjects of ELA and Math that can be used during this difficult coronavirus pandemic. The approach is laid out with details, a timeline and tracking devices as well.

The applicant includes a broad overview of some of the prospective partners needed to implement the project. For example, the applicant lists that Arkansas PBS, the State's free public broadcast system, and DESE currently work together to provide educational content and professional development. Virtual Arkansas, a state-supported virtual school provides access to high school courses and content (Virtual Arkansas, 2020). The State has 15 established education service cooperatives (ESCs) that offer regional assistance directly to school districts (e18-19).

The applicant presents 5 specific strategies to provide the foundation for a comprehensive plan to ensure blended and remote learning options, greater student and family access, and increased family satisfaction.

Sub criterion 2: Gaps identified and addressed to respond to needs of students (8/10 points)

The applicant states that each component of the content creation and delivery process will include quality control measures that require sufficient equitable access for underrepresented groups.

The applicant identifies a gap in internet connectivity and access to completing student work remotely. In Strategy 5, the applicant proposes to provide families a system for delivery, assessment, and management of student assignments and school work offline, and integrates results of offline student school work with a State-supported LMS. This includes a cloud-based LMS linked with a student laptop application and can also be supported with a "Concierge" System (Server + LAN Router and/or Hot Spot) easily transportable in a car or school bus (SmartBus) in order to better serve the many Arkansas students who do not have access at home to complete their school work (e32).

Sub criterion 3: Services will expand across remote learning and improve student outcomes (4/5 points)

The applicant provides some data to improve student outcomes (e114-118). The applicant states that the expansion of offerings of courses through Virtual Arkansas proved to be successful with over 40,000 students in 60% of school districts utilizing the online digital content (e37).

Sub criterion 4: Services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice (4/5 points)

The applicant provides curriculum services in Math and ELA that reflect some up-to-date knowledge from research. For instance, in Strategy 1, teachers, students, and families are provided quality, reading curriculum to support word recognition as indicated in Scarborough's Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001), through a supplemental curriculum created by Arkansas that promotes mastery-based learning using the principles of UDL (e26-27). In Strategy 3, the applicant provides curriculum for K-8 math, Algebra, and Geometry utilizing OER on a state supported LMS and lists the primary objective for ARMQ is to develop numerate students who reason, problem solve, and use mathematics to model real-world scenarios, all critical skills for the 21st Century and that effective mathematics curriculum and instruction must consider the components of mathematical proficiency (e29).

Weaknesses:

Equal access and treatment for participants who have been underrepresented (5/5 points)

No weaknesses noted.

Sub criterion 1: Exceptional approach with Detailed project plan (7/10 points)

The application lacked a variety of important things in the actual narrative part of the application to address important points sufficiently. For instance, the narrative did not discuss adequate details about the plan for teacher training and development on the new Math and ELA curriculum and how the teacher training is being monitored and measured. The narrative needed more details about training families on navigating digital content. The applicant did not discuss the data presented in (e98-103) extensively. It could be clearer where the data comes from and how it is being used to inform the project plan and services. The narrative did not have enough details about the groups providing expertise, participating in initiatives, and the organizations and their roles during all five of the strategies (e114-118).

The project plan is still a little incompatible because the applicant is discussing Strategies 1-4 in detail and those strategies all seem to include students accessing the internet for their work, yet the data states only 2% of the districts are prepared to provide connectivity to all students and, approximately one in five reported having a majority of students with no connectivity (e22). It is concerning, because even if the strategies are implemented well in the curriculum, it is still hard to understand how students will be using the curriculum. Strategy 5 seems to be a band aid of a sort for the lack of internet connectivity in the homes, but could be more clearly defined so that is evident exactly how that will look in Strategies 1-4. Perhaps the applicant could describe the state supported learning management systems and their role precisely in each strategy and open commons portal in terms of the project plan and services.

Sub criterion 2: Gaps identified and addressed to respond to needs of students (8/10 points)

The gap of students not having internet connectivity and access to online learning could be addressed more extensively in the application. The applicant does not present enough ways other than making and showing videos to address gaps. The applicant is relying heavily on videos to teach and it is not entirely clear who is making those videos. The applicant includes sparse details about how they are using Arkansas' educators to support, implement, and provide coaching to ensure buy-in and high-quality work (e33).

Sub criterion 3: Services will expand across remote learning and improve student outcomes (4/5 points)

The application states that all content addressed in strategies (1-4) will be available to all Arkansans and placed on a public webpage, state-supported LMS, or available through public broadcasting and streaming options. Funds will be used to support the variety of access points. Family resources will be created to support each strategy for full implementation (e32). The applicant includes little detail about how they are available to all of the people in Arkansas, how the funds being used to support the access points, how the family resources will be created and how the resources will improve student outcomes directly.

The applicant relies heavily on vendor made curriculum as opposed to training teachers on creating and using the curriculum so that the district can sustain the project plan over time and transfer what they know and learn to future projects.

Sub criterion 4: Services reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice (4/5 points)

The application lacked discussion on how students have performed so far with Math and ELA curriculum and could include data and research about student performance in the districts. The applicant included inadequate details about effective practice as it pertains to videos and online learning.

Reader's Score: 28

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: Plan is on time, within budget with defined responsibilities, timelines, milestones for accomplishing tasks (4/5 points)

The applicant includes the Gantt chart and the layout of the plan including the timeline, milestones, and overall people involved in accomplishing tasks (e119-126 and e147-149).

Sub criterion 2: Proposed funds will support project (3/5 points)

Overall, the budget seems to mostly support the project because the budget is aligned to the 5 strategies presented in the project services and plan, and the budget accounts for 4% in administrative costs which is reasonable to support this project (e152-153).

Sub criterion 3: Costs are reasonable in relation to objectives, design, and significance of project (4/5 points)

The applicant provides a few reasonable costs in relation to the objectives, design and significant of the project. For instance, the project includes personnel and fringe benefits along with costs to pay vendors and contractors and some educators for curriculum work. The budget also accounts for some internet connectivity costs.

Sub criterion 4: Costs are reasonable in relation to number of people served and anticipated results (7/10 points)

The applicant is proposing a project plan to serve nearly 240,000 students (half of the total number of students in Arkansas) as well as numerous teachers and families. The plan creates a model for blended and remote learning for Math and ELA and offers some internet connectivity and online access to students.

Weaknesses:

Sub criterion 1: Plan is on time, within budget with defined responsibilities, timelines, milestones for accomplishing tasks (4/5 points)

The application did not include convincing and comprehensive details about the responsibilities and tasks for educators along with a variety of milestones and timelines for accomplishing them during the three-year plan. The application

provided limited details about exactly who is responsible for doing what because it appears there are numerous people and organizations listed for the tasks.

Sub criterion 2: Proposed funds will support project (3/5 points)

The application lacked adequate details about the approximate ███ of the budget that is being spent on contractual items so that it is clear that the project is being entirely supported by the funds. It is difficult to tell how much is being spent on vendors and paid partners to build the curriculum and therefore difficult to say if it's reasonable. It is not clear in the project plan exactly how the majority of the teachers in the district will be trained on the curriculum so it is not clear what portion of this is being spent on their teacher training. It is also unclear if the amount for the Learning Management Systems is reasonable at about $6M because there is no detailed breakdown of what that system entails and the components of implementing the system are not listed. It is hard to determine if in fact the funds support the project entirely.

Sub criterion 3: Costs are reasonable in relation to objectives, design, and significance of project (4/5 points)

The applicant does not include enough information about how budget line 4, which is $16K in equipment and budget line 5, $8K in supplies relates to the objectives of the project.   The applicant does not include enough detail about budget line 8, which is nearly $1.5M in other spend. For instance, limited information is given about what this spend is actually for and it is listed as being spent in all 5 of the strategies in the project plan. The application lacked details about what percentage of the curriculum spend is for Math, ELA, elementary and high school so it is clear that the costs are reasonable.

Sub criterion 4: Costs are reasonable in relation to number of people served and anticipated results (7/10 points)

The cost of serving students under this plan is a bit high because it is about ███ per student and still does not account for very specific training for the majority of teachers or families on the curriculum. The applicant does not state exactly how many teachers and families will be impacted by this project which would have made the people served much higher and would have made the anticipated results stronger. The applicant lacked adequate details about what internet connectivity is being provided and to whom and including that information also would have made the number of people served and anticipated results stronger in relation to the cost.

Reader's Score: 18

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Arkansas Department of Education (S425B200038)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Highest Coronavirus Burden			
1. Coronavirus Burden		20	18
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan			
1. Project Services/Plan		35	25
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources			
1. Management Plan/Resources		25	19
	Sub Total	80	62
	Total	80	62

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - FY20 REM - 5: 84.425B

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

Applicant: Arkansas Department of Education (S425B200038)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Highest Coronavirus Burden

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant was data driven and provided a number of data points throughout this section of the application. Some of the key data points included:

•   "479,432 students in the 1,054 K-12 public schools, consisting of 238
regular school districts and 25 open enrollment charter schools. Of those students, 60.15% qualified for free and reduced lunches due to family income levels." (Page e18)

•   "Arkansas has a 0.61% share of confirmed COVID-19 cases per capita and falls in the 81st to 100th percentile based on four coronavirus burden factors weighted equally in the OESE Coronavirus Burden Table." (Page e19)

•   "As of June 23, 2020, Arkansas is one of 29 states with upward trending data and currently has one of the fastest ascending trend lines in the country. According to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, around the end of May, Arkansas reported approximately 180-300 new cases daily (Johns Hopkins University, 2020). (Page e19)

The applicant highlighted the disparities and burdens affecting different populations of race and income (Page e20).

The applicant highlighted the inequities in lack of broadband service for the state's most vulnerable populations (Page e21). The data points regarding the effect of the Coronavirus by race, income, access to broadband service and other key factors are critical in anticipating learning loss and the lack of student achievement. Further, minority and low-income populations, who often trail their peers in academic outcomes, are again affected the most by this global pandemic. These data points further highlight the inequities faced by these communities and also clarifies the need for additional support as the new school year approaches.

The applicant provided survey data from the districts across the state regarding their ability to support remote learning moving into the next school year (Page e22).

Weaknesses:

The applicant lacked specific information regarding how the Coronavirus affected underrepresented student groups. Addressing this information would allow the applicant to create more specific plans to support students of color, English Language Learners, students with learning disabilities, and other underrepresented communities.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services and Project Plan

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

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

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

In addition, the Secretary considers--

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

Equal access and treatment/Quality of project services and project – The applicant outlined 5 major strategies with an accompanied logic model to guide their actions in response to the Coronavirus. These strategies provide assurance that the applicant has a clear idea of they plan to support students and families (Page e26) - 3 points

(1)   The applicant provided innovative ideas such as partnering with public television networks to reach scale and support families that may not have internet access (Page e26). The applicant also provided a detailed logic model, and a GANTT Chart (including performance measures) to track the progress and efficacy of the initiative (Page e119). – 7 points
(2)   The applicant provided key survey data from districts within the state regarding their needs, abilities, and other critical information to determine gaps in services. This information will allow the applicant to best serve the students and families within these districts (Page e96) - 8 points
(3)   The applicant provided adequate information regarding the lack of phonemic awareness and phonics in many district's AMI plans and included details on how they would address this gap moving forward (Page e27) – 3 points
(4)   The applicant provided information on how they plan to use supplemental curriculum, PD, and videos to close gaps with content and mastery (Page e28). The applicant plans to use AR Math Quest and a Reading based curriculum to increase digital access to high-quality content for all students and families (Page e29). Additionally, up to date research was cited throughout the plan. – 4 points

Weaknesses:

Equal access and treatment/Quality of project services and project
The applicant did not specifically speak to how it was going to ensure equal access and treatment to members of groups that are historically underrepresented, students of color, ELLs. This level of support was not consistently addressed specifically throughout the application. The applicant did not mention how key stakeholders would work with or seek input from families or parents regarding the efficacy of this plan.

(1)   The proposed project outlines some strategies to address the absolute priority but they lacked specificity.

•   It was unclear how the "teams" would be comprised or led through the process of supporting grade-level specific curriculum and tools (Page e34)

•   It was also unclear how educators and schools would connect with families and students to ensure learning is effectively happening at home (Page e35)

(2)   Gaps or Weaknesses – The applicant provided insufficient evidence and information as it pertains to strategy 3 and strategy 5 within their plan. It is not clear how the applicant will provide access to high-quality digital curriculum if so many residents are lacking internet/broadband access (Page e29). Further, it is not clear how the curriculum or related information would be broadcasted on the public television stations nor how students and families are expected to engage with such content (Page e32).

(3)   Expand Access – The applicant cites the plan to use public television and a customized learning platform; however, the information lacks specificity regarding how they will work with each district to identify the unique needs of families (Page e32). Further, the applicant does not provide sufficient information regarding how they will measure success of expanding internet access and academc achievement.

(4)   Research and effective practice – The applicant cited the use of mastery-based reading but didn't provide additional information on how this content would specifically be leveraged. Also, it was not clear how the planned use of videos and related content would be measured in relation to academic achievement.

Reader's Score: **25**

Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources

1. C: Quality of the Management Plan and Adequacy of Resources (up to 25 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers--

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 5 points)

(2) The extent to which the proposed use of funds will adequately support the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

(3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

(4) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 10 points)

Strengths:

(1) – The applicant provided adequate information regarding a clear and reasonable management plan. The Gantt chart provided on page e19 provided a timeline and additional information to drive the actions of the plan. - 4 points
(2) – The proposed funds and overall budget presented on page e6 appear to be adequate to support the proposed project. – 4 points
(3) - The costs are reasonable for the proposed project. – 3 points
(4) – The applicant provides reasonable costs regarding the number of persons to be served for the anticipated results – 8 points

Weaknesses:

(1)   The applicant lacked specifics regarding clearly defined responsibilities to ensure the success of this program. Additional information about the responsible parties and key stakeholders would be helpful to understand who is accountable for certain individual actions. Further, there were not defined goals for teachers and related outcomes.

(2)   The applicant has ▮▮▮▮ allotted for curriculum but very little funds allocated for teacher training or PD. Further, the costs associated with the LMS is not included. Additional information would be helpful to better assess the feasibility of the proposed budget (Page e6)..

(3)   It would be helpful for the applicant to provide more detailed information regarding how funds listed under the "Contractual" line item will be used (Page e6). It may be helpful for the applicant to submit additional information about the total cost reduction from Y2 to Y3. Currently, costs drop from $7.6M to $2.9M (Page e6). The applicant also mentions unique services such as augmented reality, buses with hotspots, etc. but costs breakdowns are not provided (Page e153).

(4)   It would be helpful for the applicant to provide additional information regarding costs and the number of persons to be served. Specifically, the current budget states that it will cost ▮▮▮ /student for a vendor to build curriculum. It would be helpful to know how this figure compares with options to develop curriculum. Also, the applicant does not clearly explain how the remaining 250,000 students across the state will be served (Page e152).

Reader's Score: **19**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Arkansas Department of Education (S425B200038)
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	22
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	17
Sub Total	80	59
Total	80	59

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Arkansas Department of Education (S425B200038)

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 stated that Arkansas has a 0.61% share of confirmed COVID-19 cases per capita and falls in the 81st to 100th percentile based on four coronavirus burden factors weighted equally in the OESE Coronavirus Burden Table (p. e 19). Response includes additional information about the impact of coronavirus on Arkansas related to health. Hispanic and African American Arkansans are overrepresented in COVID-19 cases. Many Arkansans face barriers with health literacy, medical resources, and transportation. The provided data points broken down by demographics are insightful in understanding the needs of guardians and parents who during the past few months have become "co-teachers" to their children. The inclusion of adult literacy rates and economic impact are helpful for informational planning. Consideration of the outside factors that families are facing will strengthen project plan. Arkansas currently has 19.2% of the population without broadband internet access and a national ranking of 51/52. Students served in rural local education agencies (LEAs) account for 30.44% of all students (p. e. 21). 21.55% of students ages 5-17 live in poverty. Data about the economic impact and inequities in access to broadband and internet access demonstrated a response that is holistic and convincing.

   Weaknesses:

   No weakness 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:

(Equal access and treatment)
Response addresses some strategies to provide equal access and opportunity. For example, the plan addresses how they will provide interventions and scaffolds for Els and SWD (p. e. 18). The plan also mentions supports for diverse learners in the Quality Matters (p. e. 27) through the use of supplemental videos to that address the significant gap in literacy for ELs and African American students (p. e 31) This exemplifies equal access and treatment, but is not convincing of a comprehensive equity approach throughout the plan.
(2 points)

(1)
The application outlines 5 novel strategies that will ensure remote learning options while taking into account student and family access and engagement.
Strategy 1 - The provided reading curriculum directly connects with the lack of phonemic awareness and other foundational reading skills that families could not provide during the pandemic school closures.
Strategy 2 – Plan demonstrates insightful perspective to ensure a standardization of curriculum so that students in varying locations receive same quality of instruction and to facilitate scope and sequencing for teachers.
Strategy 3 – The plan specifies which subject areas are to be prioritized through the model lessons.
Strategy 5 – Plan outlines the important part of connectivity and access that is necessary for the first 4 strategies.
(6 points)

(2) The application identifies a need in rural access to remote learning and infrastructure. The response addresses the need through the creation of a customized learning platform. Another identified need is educator's capacity to teach in remote learning environments.

One strategy focuses on providing essential foundational skills with tired supports for SWDs and ELS, this aligns with the need for a customized learning platform. The plan is extensive in that it addressed not only student needs, but will also provide resources for teachers and families so that they can facilitate student engagement (p.e29). The need for remote infrastructure is addressed in Strategy 5 (p.e32).

(3) If only 2% of the districts are prepared to provide connectivity to all, almost all districts can provide students with remote learning device, and a large percentage of districts will use state provided digital content then the proposed plan of building curriculum through hot spots and public tv aligns with creating more access to remote learning opportunities (p. e. 22). The 5 outlined strategies demonstrate strong alignment to the plan with the first 4 strategies related to curriculum and the last strategy related to access. (3 points)
(4)
The plan somewhat addressed the research for curriculum such as Scarborough's Reading Rope and Math Quest. The plan somewhat addresses best practice that it will incorporate through selecting a diverse group of teachers. (3 points)

Weaknesses:

(Equal access and treatment)
Application does not include a GEPA statement. There are mentions throughout the application that name supports or services to address diverse needs; however, the application lacks a strong, united and detailed lens that ensures a true dedication to creating equal access and treatment.

(1) Strategy 1 – The plan proposes an aligned solution to reading through foundational literacy skills. The plan describes that most of the instruction will come through high quality videos. The plan does not provide additional justification that the videos will ensure high levels of engagement and lead to high quality instruction. For all students, particularly for younger students the plan would be strengthened if it detailed how the videos will directly tie to student engagement. If videos will be produced through outside vendors, there should be a level of continuity to ensure that the content produced is appropriate for the specific student population that will be engaging with it.

Strategy 2 – Plan claims that there will be embedded professional learning for educators and parents. The plan lacks a strong connection for ensure that the provided videos will be accessible so that families will easily navigate the learning management system, particularly if they do not have prior experience doing so.

Strategy 3 – Plan mentions the creation of AR Math Quest but it is not clear how this relates to the new creation of math content. The overall strategy is to focus on K-8 math, Algebra, and Geometry but there is little evidence that detail how these different categories will approach curriculum creation.

Strategy 4 – It is not evident whether the provided supplemental videos to build background are subject specific or comprehensive to support learning for all ages and subject topics. Literacy was mentioned as an example, but there was not a specific connection that supplemental videos will be solely literacy or not. It mentions connections to science, social studies, and fine arts, but it is unclear if this support will only be provided for ELA. The plan would be strengthened if it justified stronger connection between the supplemental videos within the scope and sequence of other subject matter curricula.

(2) The plan details the solution to address connectivity by providing hot spots and using statewide public television; however, the details for implementation of this phase in unclear. The plan could further explain how many hot spots will be provided, how families will encounter hot spots, and how use of tv programming will ensure rigor in student learning.

(3) The plan is limited in its description of how teachers will be trained to implement the curriculum. Plan would be strengthened with added details about how teachers will be trained of the different curriculum and supplemental videos or the different platforms that they might have to instruct through.

(4) The reading and math approaches are limited in connecting the research and best practices that they are driven from. Reading addressed only Scarborough and Math vaguely addressed AR Math Quest. It is not evident what the current data and student achievement outcomes are for the approaches that the plan is outlining. Similarly, the response did not connect evidence based best practices and research with the use of supplemental videos to provide additional support and increase understanding.

Reader's Score: 22

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) Application includes a Logic Model (Appendix 8). Attachments demonstrate clear and detailed timeline. Objectives are matched to a responsible party.
The project plans to utilize a culturally diverse group of Arkansas's exemplar educators to support, implement, and provide coaching will ensure buy-in and high-quality work (p. e. 33)
Application states that the project leadership team will provide quarterly review of goals and outcomes, there is a system in place to address improvements should defined goals not be met. (p. e119) (4 points)

(2) The projected budget costs for personnel, fringe, travel, equipment and supplies is reasonable based on the extent of information provided and aligned with the project plan. (3 points).

(3) The provided budget narrative includes subcategories that are aligned with the larger budget categories.
Created supplemental curriculum - Budget Categories for: Contracts, Training Stipends, and
Other; and make up approximately 23%   of the total budget.
High quality digital curriculum - Budget Categories for: Contracts, Training Stipends, and Other; and make up approximately 21%   of the total budget.
Building background videos and programming - Budget Categories for: Contracts, Training Stipends, and Other; and make up approximately 20%   of the total budget.
Learning management system - Contracts, and Other; and make up approximately 32%   of the total budget.
(3 points)

(4) The plan included an approach that addressed organizational stability, financial sustainability, and political sustainability (e40). It acknowledges that programs will be made free and accessible to all students in the state, and strong communication systems with families and stakeholders.
If survey results have found that 85% of the state plan on using state provide virtual instruction, then the plan is reasonable in relation to the number of people it will serve.
(7 points)

Weaknesses:

(1) In the milestones and project task the table defines which responsible parties will engage with the objectives; however, there are several objectives and several parties and it's not specific what the individual ownership will be.

(2) It is not evident what designated funds will be allocated to the varying subject areas within K-8 English language arts, high school Critical Reading, K-8 mathematics, Algebra I, and Geometry. The line item for contractual services and line item for "other" fluctuates from year to year without a clear explanation defined in the budget narrative. It is not clear what the estimated salaries for the different FTEs will be.

(3) The budget narrative breaks up the cost for each strategy. Within each strategy there are multiple objectives. With only an overall cost it is limiting to ensure that costs are reasonable for the different objectives.

(4) The plan states that 240,000 students will be served by the plan, but states that 85% would use statewide provided instruction. The two data sets seem to be contradictory. The lack of specificity of the budget results in insufficient conclusion that the proposed plan will lead to improved student outcomes aligned with objectives.

Reader's Score: **17**

Status: Submitted
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