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

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (S425B200041)
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	30
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	25	25
Sub Total	80	75
Total	80	75

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (S425B200041)

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 provided thorough evidence of the impact of the coronavirus in Alaska. (pgs. e.19-22)
   The applicant states: "The statewide struggle to recruit and retain teachers and administrators has become exacerbated by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. While breathtaking, Alaska's geography has led to significant inequity in access to broadband. This inequity became impossible to ignore when COVID-19 entered Alaska and schools were forced to close their doors to students."

   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 describes an innovative approach to education to include the use of digital badging (e29) and developing a virtual cultural warehouse (pg. e29) as apart of the statewide Learning Management System. The applicant plans to implement the digital badging project as follows:

"Through a partnership with Alaska Tribal organization(s), DEED seeks to recruit project contractors to work alongside existing DEED employees to begin expansion of a digital badging demonstration project by developing digital content aligned with State of Alaska Math and Science standards, introducing K-12 students to skills and technology that are currently not equally accessible, preparing K-12 students for career opportunities as they complete standard curricula, and establishing digital badging and micro-credentialing as an alternative postsecondary education pathway." (pg e30).

Sub-criterion 2: The applicant provides detailed description of gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure or opportunities specifically related to geography, (pg. 1), teacher retention (pg.2), and limited broadband access restricting access to online educational access for students (pg. 3). The applicant addresses one of these issues in the following manner:
The AKSVS Hub will provide statewide access not only to a statewide LMS, but to fully developed K-12 content ready for Alaska's teachers to customize to meet the individual and local needs of their students. (pg. e30).

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant presents evidence to support the likelihood of expanding remote learning based on established partnerships and the foundation of an existing framework. Theapplicant responds in this way, FLVS content will be imported into the AKSVS Hub, easing the burden on Alaskan educators and students to learn a variety of new systems. In addition, a common LMS can provide access to FLVS' customizable K-12 courses and educators across Alaska can build their own courses in a statewide LMS and use teacher-created or open education resources alongside fully-built digital curriculum available through FLVS.(pg. e31).

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 4: This application demonstrates sparse evidence of research-based inquiries or references as it relates to expanding, creating or developing a statewide virtual learning system, (pg. 6) or evidence of research implementing the use of digital badge process. (pg. e29) Evidence based inquiries used for guidance or reference should be cited.

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: Applicant provides evidence of a clearly defined task force, allocated responsibilities and duties demonstrating that the objectives will be accomplished within established time frames (pgs. 23-25). "Partnerships with local education agencies (LEAs), the Comprehensive Center, the REL, and Tribal organization(s) will compliment work that will be provided by the LMS vendor and contractors providing professional development" (pg. e38)

Sub-criterion 2: The Budget Narrative focuses a significant amount of funding only on the development of the AKSVS and the Badging project. Spreadsheet demonstrating program expenditure responsibilities amongst partners would be beneficial for better clarity. (Pgs. e86-e89)

Ex: Contract with Alaska Tribal Organization(s): $800,000 o Digital Badging program- ♣ Costs include staff to establish and develop a digital badging program to recruit and manage focus group(s), supplies for media equipment and other items needed to create and record digital badge material, and coordination with Tribal Organizations statewide.

Ex: Learning Management System: ▉▉▉▉ o ▉ per user x 130,000 users: ▉▉▉▉ o ▉▉▉▉ for 2 LMS implementation specialists: ▉▉▉▉ o Tier One Support: ▉▉▉▉ (30% of the total of users and implementation specialist costs) o On-Demand PD: ▉▉▉▉ (10% of the total of users and implementation specialist costs) o Vendor PD: $10,000A

Sub-criterion 3: The applicant presents clear and distinct costs associated with the project plan.

Sub-criterion 4: Appropriate cost values are exhibited in the Budget Narrative and are consistent with the number of students anticipated to be served.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (S425B200041)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Highest Coronavirus Burden			
1. Coronavirus Burden		20	20
Quality of Project Services and Project Plan			
1. Project Services/Plan		35	30
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources			
1. Management Plan/Resources		25	15
	Sub Total	80	65
	Total	80	65

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (S425B200041)

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 analysis of need based on Alaska's coronavirus burden and educational landscape (p. e18 - p. e19). This clearly addresses the need for fixed broadband access particularly in rural areas. (p. e21 - p. e22) In considering remote access to culturally relevant programming, online teaching and courses, as well as family/parent/student engagement, this proposal has included all the facets of a high-quality program despite the COVID-19 burden. (p. e26) COVID-19 introduced new dynamics in Alaska, that they have never needed to propose before as part of their project. The state of Alaska has the thirty-fifth highest percentage of population (tied with Rhode Island) 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:

Sub-criterion 1: Although the term "underrepresented groups" is not explicitly referenced in the proposal, p. e10 includes statements about equitable access to the program, as well as prohibiting discrimination based on gender, race, national origin, color or age. This is explicitly stated related to staff, hiring and training. (p. e10 – p. e11) Therefore, the quality of the project services and plan specifically addresses them. DEED's collaborative approach is an exceptional approach related to this proposal as it will develop a virtual cultural warehouse within its AKSVS Hub, while including digital badging and micro-credentialing, which are very relevant and innovative practices in education (p. e16 and e24) This connects very well to absolute priority two as it supports the needs related to a crisis like coronavirus and the need for communication and culturally relevant programming through their hub to all stakeholders. (p. e16 and p. e26) Because this program would serve as a model for other states related to integrating "Indigenous content and methods as a way of improving educational outcomes for all students," this also speaks to the exceptional approach the applicant is taking to reach all stakeholders.

Sub-criterion 2: Alaska's equity gaps include a lack of fixed broadband access as the applicant has reported, especially in its rural areas. (p. e21 – e22) Because the Principal of the Southwest Region School District has included a statement about web caching with accessible drives and other strategies, this begins to indicate how the gap will be addressed. (p. e73)

Sub-criterion 3: The proposed project includes a strategic plan focused on five specific goals that are most likely to improve student outcomes. (p. e25) These will most likely address the student needs of the project.

Sub-criterion 4: The project narrative includes applicable research in some areas of the project goals. (p. e26, e43-44) The proposal does share effective practices related to broadband access, equity, educator retention, Alaska's 1918 pandemic, education challenges, state policy, online teaching, student opportunities and quality online courses, so it partially addresses this sub criterion (p. e43 and p. e44)

Weaknesses:

Sub-criterion 2: Healthcare and education services are referenced as weaknesses, (p. e19) as well as broadband services (p. e21), with a statement about the services that would be provided related to professional development, but it is not clear what the specifics are (p. e39 – p. e40) . The project services section mentions the importance of ensuring "teaching and learning remain constant for our students, at a time when everything else is a variable," but it is difficult to assess the extent to which the gaps would be addressed through the LMS (p. e26) as the information in the application is generalized. Action steps would help improve the detail needed to assess this criterion. (p. e23) Therefore it is difficult to assess the extent to which the project would expand access to remote learning options and improve student learning outcomes.

Sub-criterion 2 and 3: It would be helpful to know how many students are eligible for free and reduced lunches, as this was not included. This would help to assess what population is most in need and to help target those students, along with a breakdown of COVID-19 cases as they relate to socioeconomic status in each of the communities. This could help to identify the communities most in need by ensuring that they have access and other supports.

Sub-criterion 3: Although there is a statement about the project including rigorous standards for equitable access to and participation in all state and federally assisted programs for students, and for those with special needs, it is not clear how this program specifically addresses them as a focal group. (p. e11 – p. e12) It is also not clear what the strategies are for ensuring equal access to the program related to students and families as this does not appear in the application. This would help to determine the quality of the plan in ensuring that traditionally underrepresented students would be involved

(and the focus).

Sub-criterion 4: The research cited does not include family/parent/student engagement or culturally relevant programming with regard to effective practices, which is important in this proposal, especially since these are project goals listed on p. e26.

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 is described starting on p. e37 and provides information about the project set up, building the LMS, data collection, and training and professional development, which helps to understand some of the objectives. It provides appropriate detail about the milestones, project tasks and who is responsible for carrying out those tasks (p. e40 – e42)

    Sub-criterion 2: The costs and budget summary information provided was clear and begins to demonstrate how it would address the management plan, (p. e6) along with the information in the budget narrative. (p. e86 – p. e89)

    Sub-criterion 3: The narrative clearly outlines costs and details for accomplishing the project tasks. The funds identified in the budget narrative (p. e86 – p. e89) are also comprehensive and encompass three years of the program.

    Weaknesses:

    Sub-criterion 1: A logic model would help to understand the flow of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes-impact, assumptions and external factors. SMART objectives were not included, which would also help assess to what extent the objectives would be implemented and measured. This is because detail is missing in the application. Specific timelines with more detail need to be included. Although there were a few dates included, it isn't clear what the other details would be tied to deadlines. This would help ensure there is accountability for more specific tasks. For example, linking the deadline steps for each of the project tasks in each of the sections it appears would help provide this information. (p. e40 – p. e42, p. E86 - e89) Without this information and targeted percentages of what exactly will be accomplished, it is difficult to assess to what extent the proposed project would achieve its objectives.

    Sub-criterion 2: A rationale should accompany all of the budget totals, which would provide evidence that the proposal

would adequately support the proposed project. That way, the outlined funds would have grounding and a context/explanation of how they are reasonable considering the scope of the work.

Sub-criterion 3: The fringe benefits seemed high for this application. (p. e6)

Sub-criterion 4: They did not specify how many students would be served. This rationale should include how the students and others served would benefit, as they are not mentioned in the budget narrative. (p. e86 – p. e89) This would help to determine the extent to which the costs would be reasonable and beneficial to those served. Also, an estimated projection of the
number of students, districts, and/or schools served should be included to help assess the extent to which proposed use of funds would support the project, along with the anticipated results and benefits.

Reader's Score: **15**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (S425B200041)
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	30
Quality of Management Plan / Adequacy of Resources			
1. Management Plan/Resources		25	22
	Sub Total	80	72
	Total	80	72

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (S425B200041)

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:

   Burden clearly demonstrated, exacerbated by unique geographic dispersal of population (pg. e18) and a history of being hard hit by pandemics (pg. e20).

   Additionally, the challenge presented by a "(digital divide) between areas that have access versus those that do not—is actually widening, as robust fiber and 5G gigabit wireless access are deployed in urban areas, while rural and remote areas of the country struggle to keep up with even basic levels of access" (pg. e21) is evidence of an enhanced burden. [20 pts]

   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:

Clear focus on the improving access culturally responsive/inclusive initiatives for Indigenous students/educators (pg. e29) is articulated. [5 pts]

B1: Featuring the caching of content is a unique approach (pg. e28). [5 pts]

B2: By developing the ability cache content ameliorates some of broadband access gaps, likewise the initiative to improve parental involvement addresses a gap (pg. e28), Features of the Education Challenge also address weaknesses, such as raising reading grade levels, increasing career and tech ed offerings, and addressing recruitment/retention of teachers (pg. 25). and offers specific detail how additional funding addresses both current burden and existing issues, specifically with a robust plan at developing a statewide course delivery LMS (pg. e27). [10 pts]

B3: The digital badging initiative can capitalize on initial momentum (pg. e29). [5 pts]

B4: Evidence based approaches, like improving parental involvement and focusing on equitable access to resources (e25), are included. [5 pts]

Weaknesses:

Overall, the proposal's narrative is not indexed to the applications specific rubric categories making assessment of those specifics difficult.

B2-Although admirably linked to the proposal goals, Alaska's Education Challenge is already 3 years old (pg. e25) suggesting deeper change to approaching challenges is needed. For example, while the problem of broadband access is richly discussed (pgs. e20-22), how it is to be addressed is not. Furthermore, the assertion that Alaska will not have enough teachers to support their students (pg. e19,) speaks to an endemic issue the current proposal cannot address.

B3-Beyond describing the history of significant inequity in access to broadband (pg. e20) and the reference of caching educational content, little details are provided as to how this long-standing barrier will be addressed. While describing the benefit of a statewide system, the application reports Alaska's 54 districts revealed that 12 different commonly-used Learning Management System (LMS) platforms had been deployed in the various districts, often multiple platforms in same school (pg. e22) which appears counter to the benefit of an integrated delivery system.

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: The proposal does include a thorough timeline   for implementation of stated goals, detailing a reasonable pace to develop an enhanced statewide LMS and merging existing and intended content, across three years (e40-e42). [5 pts]

C2: With a focus of data collection via existing agencies – DEED, partnering with LEAs, the Comprehensive Center, REL, and Tribal organizations – capitalizes on existing infrastructure, supports the applicant being able to achieve goals within the requested funding (pg. e37-38). [4 pts]

C3: There is a demonstrated continuing effort. DEED received CARES Act money in order to procure a LMS for one year (pg. e37, C4) indicative that not every challenge needs to be met by these funds. [5 pts]

C4: Costs appear appropriate to fund intended results and outcomes, as detailed in the budget narrative (e86 – 89). [8 pts]

Weaknesses:

C2: Overall, the proposal represents a heavy lift with limited existing infrastructure. The proposal presents a vague description on how it   the improved LMS can be delivered given the existing challenges of limited broadband access.

C4: Students are not specifically mentioned in budget narrative. It is unclear if the intention is for these programs are to serve all 132,000 students across Alaska or how appropriate the funding is to provide benefits to those to be served. The reported cost of fringe benefits appears high (50% of salary; pg. e6).

Reader's Score: 22

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