

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/09/2020 02:03 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Harmony Public Schools (S374A200021)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	25	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	23
<b>Selection Criterion</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	30	30
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	20
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	25	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	45	45
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>		
<b>Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones</b>		
1. CPP 1	10	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #2</b>		
<b>Diverse and Effective Workforce</b>		
1. CPP 2	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	115	103

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - TSL - 3: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Harmony Public Schools (S374A200021)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining evidence of the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 23

#### Sub

1. (i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

#### General:

Overall Application Impression:

The applicant has presented a well-developed plan for multiple teacher and principal observations, building upon their already piloted evaluation system. The applicant has identified several weaknesses in services and infrastructure and provided evidence for several opportunities to address them (pg.17). The applicant plans to implement an approach that will allow for improving the goals by recruiting high-quality teachers and employees at each level of the organization, retaining high-quality teachers by providing opportunities for growth and advancement, and creating a framework for development and structure for support for each tier of the career pathway (pg.10). Additionally, the applicant has provided details on when both principal and teacher evaluation should take place, assuring that there will be a consistency with the evaluation system (pg. 50). Such methods help to refine implementation and support the likelihood of effective outcomes. The applicant needs to provide how the formative evaluation process, qualitative (surveys), and quantitative measures will be analyzed to determine project effectiveness, including the detailed rationale for their need in the budget justification. Without this information, the applicant did not sufficiently address the criterion.

Strengths: The applicant has provided evidence and description of the weaknesses in services, infrastructure, and opportunities for the identified 50 high need schools that meet the criteria for the TSL program. The gap includes students' grades; for example, only 40% of ED students met or exceeded grade-level standards on the state STAAR assessment, while 55% of their peers with financial resources achieved proficiency. Disaggregated data showed starker disparity: the five highest-performing schools (serving an average of 62% ED students) outperformed the five lowest-performing schools (serving 84% ED) by more than double (pg. e23). The applicant has identified three weaknesses in its talent structures that contributed to uneven, inequitable access to highly effective instructional leaders; this, in turn, resulted in inconsistent educator development, which is directly tied to lower student outcomes. For example, inexperienced school leadership team as there's a lot of rookie administrators and leaders and not all principals are comfortable with curriculum and instruction. Focus on operations over instruction and gaps in instructional professional development as there's nothing on supporting teachers with strengths and challenges. These challenges are in part due to the way the principal role has been defined and composition and expectations have been unclear and variably effective by campus. The applicant lacks a transparent, fair, reliable mechanism for matching effective leaders with high-need schools and then rewarding retention and excellence in those schools. This is a missed opportunity to adopt a research-based strategy for

**Sub**

improving equity in instructional leadership across large LEAs. (pg. e25).

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**

- 2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.**

**General:**

Strengths: The applicant presented evidence that the proposed project will implement existing funding streams from other programs supported by the community, State, and Federal resources. For example, three major federal awards- Race to the Top-District (RTT-D, focused on deepening project-based learning and differentiated student learning); Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) in (focused on educator retention and proficiency), and Education Innovation Research (EIR, focused on translating the network's STEM model from secondary to elementary grades; (pg. e28).

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**

- 3. (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.**

**General:**

Strengths: The applicant provides strong evidence that the proposed project is part of a significant comprehensive effort (five-year strategic plan, pg. e30) to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. For example, the initiative will involve hearing from all stakeholders, ensuring that they have a voice in determining the needs and design of this project, teachers' professional development, and best practices for retention.

Weaknesses: The applicant does not provide details on some of the activities, including how they plans to recruit the teachers, place them at the selected school system, and the needs their need at the targeted student population area.

**Reader's Score:**

- 4. (iv) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

**General:**

Strengths: The applicant provides substantial assessment/evidence, measurable performance activities, and approaches to identify the objectives for each activity in realistic and quantifiable and to solve the goals. The objectives are specific and measurable and well-presented in the proposal. For example, strong instructional leadership rallies teachers around a clear academic vision as the high-quality leaders establish high academic and culture expectations, and use data to track progress against goals. When these practices are not common (because they are not part of the school leader's role or because leadership turns over frequently), teachers' views on school conditions decline and staff experience a loss of shared purpose and trust -which is tied to lower educator effectiveness. Strong instructional leadership promotes teacher retention and strong instructional leadership fosters collective efficacy: Research also shows that collective efficacy—or a team's shared commitment and capacity to realize common goals—is the “new number one” driver of student outcomes with an effect size more than double that of a single, effective educator. (pg. e30).

**Sub**

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**

**Selection Criterion - Quality of the Project Design**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Sub**

- 1. (i) The extent to which the proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

**General:**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a rationale for the proposed goal, and objectives are well situated in the literature. The objectives are specific and measurable and well-presented in the proposal. The applicant suggested goals are apparent and include a detailed discussion of the measurable activities, approaches, timetable, and responsibilities indicated for the proposed project activities and are highly likely to yield reliable information to guide possible replication of this project. For example, applicant will develop clear, codified role descriptions for principals and all ILT positions. This will include role competencies, performance expectations, and leadership responsibilities (with focus on instructional coaching).

The applicant does a great job of documenting their strategies for ensuring a well-developed project. The applicant provides a logic model that describes the resources, activities, outputs, short and long-term outcomes, and the impact that will assist the applicant in addressing unanticipated consequences. Additionally, role competencies, performance expectations, and leadership responsibilities (with focus on instructional coaching) will use the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) framework.

Weakness: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**

- 2. (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.**

**General:**

**Strengths:** The applicant provides sufficient evidence of a robust evaluation plan that outlines the timeline for collection, methods, and instruments to be used. The proposed design includes the use of qualitative and quantitative data measures that will yield formative and summative results (P.50-51). The applicant has designed an evaluation component that takes into consideration the inputs, activities, outputs, and short and long-term goals highlighted in the Logic Model, ensuring that a robust and detailed evaluation process is conducted. The applicant does address the details on how the applicant has planned to make programmatic changes based on the results of the project evaluation (pg. 39-45). For example, using a mixed-methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, CTAC carries out an ongoing formative evaluation to provide regular performance feedback and assessment for course adjustments and a summative evaluation to assess progress towards the intended and ultimate impacts. The multiple sources of data include: a) interviews and focus groups with educators,

**Sub**

parents, and students; b) survey responses from educators, parents and students; c) teacher, principal, and ILT member evaluation data; d) teacher and principal recruitment and retention data; e) financial incentive payout data; f) micro credentialing data; g) student achievement data; and h) artifacts. The following key Questions guide the evaluation of the project: To what extent is TILT being implemented with fidelity? What factors enhance or impede effective implementation of the project?, What is the impact of TILT on the instructional effectiveness of teachers, principals and ILT members?, and What is the impact of TILT on student achievement?

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

**General:**

Strengths:

The management plan is well documented and clearly shows time commitments with the qualifications, experience, and education required of the program to carry out the tasks by project leads, project directors, and project managers (pg. e46, and attached cv). For example, the management structure will facilitate day-to-day operational effectiveness and provide a means for the partner's schools to give input and guidance into operations and management. This structure ensures that the project will achieve its objectives on time and within budget.

The applicant does provide the actual time commitment and timeline of specific tasks, responsible person to meet objectives evaluating test results and make the changes in the program, to justify that all activities are realistic and attainable within the time frame. The proposed budget justification and allocate funds to support project activities, including personnel stipend for training, cost-effectiveness appears and distribution of funds across the programs is appropriate to achieve the objectives and its impact in the long-term. (pg. e50). For example, applicant has incorporated lessons learned from the plan, including the need for a: 1) seasoned executive team and experienced large-grant project director; 2) aligned organizational structure ready for long-term program implementation; and 3) ambitious yet achievable timelines with clear project milestones and objectives. The applicant seasoned executive team will be accountable for project outcomes outlined in the logic model. Implementation will be driven by two Project Co-Leads. Implementation will also be supported by a Project Advisor well-seasoned in federal grant management and other critical members of the network's leadership team. Each team member will hold specific oversight and responsibility for at least one project component. For example, Project Advisor, will serve as executive sponsor of the TILT, overseeing and providing guidance to Project Leads on implementation. He will manage budget tracking, analysis, and implementation with the support of the Academics, Talent, and Finance departments; these departments have previously worked together on grant management and understand the requirements of large-scale implementation. As Project Director, he has deep experience leading major federal grant projects. As a former STEM teacher and principal, he brings distinctive expertise in human capital (HCMS system), budgeting, stakeholder engagement, and grant reporting (pg. e46, and attached cv).

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

- 1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following**

factors:

Reader's Score: 25

Sub

**1. (i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.**

**General:**

Strengths: The applicant presented a comprehensive description that the proposed project will result in district school community improvement. The proposed project plan is grounded in the district mission and vision. For example, an organizational commitment for continuous improvement, long-standing partnerships with research institutions, seasoned staff with a proven track record of designing and managing high-impact programs. Financial resources include grant-funded initiatives such as RTT-D, EIR, and TIF, dedicated support for research, evaluation, a full-time research scientist responsible for publishing research in peer-reviewed journals, presents at national conferences, a department, which disseminates successful best practices to public schools throughout the country (pg. e52).

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score:

**2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population.**

**General:**

Strengths: The applicant provided evidence of full commitment and input from schools, parents, and community stakeholders, included in application letters of support to build local capacity to improve and expand serves to the targeted population. For example, the applicant will create a leadership structure team to work together to sustainably build local capacity (i.e., the capacity of teachers and other staff), expertise shared best practices across the school and where educators work individually and collectively to improve outcomes (pg. e54). The applicant plans to contract with a proven, credible third party provider to develop and launch the PD component. The third party will lead implementation over the grant period to ensure fidelity of delivery and impact; they will also evaluate effectiveness and refine programming as needed, based on teacher feedback on school leaders. A sub-component of the PD scope and sequence will be a "train the trainer" module, which will build Harmony's capacity to deliver school leader training beyond the grant period and budget.

Weakness: No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score:

**3. (iii) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model, and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.**

**General:**

Strengths: The project shows great potential for the continued support of the project, financially and otherwise, after federal funding ends. For example, The applicant shows support from the Texas State sources (54% matching funds), House Bill 3 (HB3) anticipates to receive \$6-8M annually for the next five years via HB3's Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) to fund, already secured \$1.8M funding from individual donors and regional philanthropy, including the KLE Foundation, the Brown Foundation, Good Reason, and Fort Worth Education Partners (pg. e56). For

**Sub**

example, the applicant, has also developed a lean financial system supported by strict fiscal management over time. Together, these factors have resulted in schools that are sustainable on the public dollar. As with other major time-limited grants, applicant will align its teacher and principal PD system with TILT objectives. It will utilize state funds to continue the program after TSL funds expire.

Weakness: No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority #1 - Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones**

- 1. Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the area in which the applicant proposes to provide services overlaps with a Qualified Opportunity Zone, as designated by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 1400Z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code.**

**An applicant must--**

- a) Provide the census tract number of the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s) in which it proposes to provide services; (ED Panel monitor will verify the QOZ using this link.) and**
- b) Describe how the applicant will provide services in the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s).**

**General:**

The applicant provides strong evidence in the proposed project to (CPP 1, P.1) the Human Capital Management System as the program will serve all 50 high-need schools and many of the proposed project activities uses established multi-metric teacher evaluation system to focus instructional supports towards the teachers most in need. With a specific focus on Teacher Leadership Development and Pipeline, the applicant plan to leverage that same multi-metric teacher evaluation system as a foundational component and logic tool for the proposed career pathway plans as articulated in the intended application.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant need to provide the details on how many of the 50 high-need schools are in QOZs. Without this clarification, the applicant did not sufficiently address this criterion.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Competitive Preference Priority #2 - Diverse and Effective Workforce**

- 1. Applications from New Potential Grantees (0, 2, or 5 points).**

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate**

- a) The applicant has never received a grant, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, under the program from which it seeks funds (0 or 5 points); or**
- b) The applicant has not had an active discretionary grant under the program from which it seeks funds, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, in the five years before the deadline date for submission of applications under the program. (0 or 2 points)**



**General:**

Strengths: N/A

Weaknesses: The applicant has received a grant. The applicant has no active discretionary grant under the TSL program in the last five years.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/09/2020 02:03 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/10/2020 01:58 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Harmony Public Schools (S374A200021)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	25	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	23
<b>Selection Criterion</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	30	30
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	20
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	25	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	45	45
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>		
<b>Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones</b>		
1. CPP 1	10	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #2</b>		
<b>Diverse and Effective Workforce</b>		
1. CPP 2	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	115	103

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - TSL - 3: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Harmony Public Schools (S374A200021)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining evidence of the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 23

#### Sub

1. (i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

#### General:

The applicant provided evidence of a comprehensive strategic planning process, including feedback from the stakeholders, to evaluate the analysis of student and educator performance (pg. 24). From the information gained, the applicant focused on the need for long-term instructional vision focused on excellence and equity and the need to develop exceptional school leaders in efforts to address the weaknesses in services and infrastructure (pg. 24). Which included, but are not limited to, inexperienced leadership teams, gaps in operations, undefined roles and lack in accountability and system protocols, and other acute challenges (pg. 26). The applicant's concern with the persistent educational gap, i.e. the number of ED students that met or exceeded grade-level standard on the state STAAR assessment, provides reasonable cause for concern of the disparity in student performance and weaknesses in the talent structure within the LEA (pg. 24).

#### Reader's Score:

2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.

#### General:

The applicant's success requires the need for a fair reliable evaluation system, based on a reliable research-based strategy, which is outlined in the project design (pg. 15). To achieve the intended impact, the applicant's "2.0" model will be developed on the foundation of the "1.0" model, implemented in 2016, with the focus on expanding and rewarding school leaders through the TILT initiative (pg. 29). This strategy will require a model shift that will build upon the effective strategies detailed on Appendix D4. This will be accomplished through a series of research and data informed processes to regularly evaluate efforts (pg. 30).

#### Reader's Score:

3. (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

**Sub**

**General:**

The applicant emphasizes the need for strong instructional leadership in the plan proposal. High-quality leaders provide vision which articulated the academic and cultural expectations (pg. 31). High Quality Leadership also promotes teacher retention and fosters an environment for collective efficacy (pg. 31). The applicant proposed a new instructional leadership plan, including one-on-one support and evaluation for school leaders, selectively placing school leaders in the appropriate good-fit teams, that will provide school leaders with the skills to update and implement a more rigorous academic model (pg. 10) based on the collective results ensuring that they have the tools needed for best practices which will promote overall success (pg. 14).

**Reader's Score:**

- 4. (iv) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

**General:**

**Strengths:** The applicant provides evidence of substantial assessment, measurable performance goals, along with appropriate activities and approaches to identify the objectives for each component of the plan in a realistic and quantifiable way in efforts to solve the goals of increasing the number of Highly Effective Teachers and Principals in the District and improving the current Human Capital System. The objectives are specific and quantifiable and well-presented in the proposal.

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant provides a narrative that prioritizes to implement the plan on the campuses of each of the Qualified Opportunity Zones in the district, the specific plan for this implementation is lacking. The applicant does address the need for improving teacher and school leader effectiveness, however, the narrative does not include how the plan will specifically be implemented to address the needs of the students to help to increase academic achievement and reduce those significant performance gaps.

**Reader's Score:**

**Selection Criterion - Quality of the Project Design**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Sub**

- 1. (i) The extent to which the proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

**General:**

The applicant proposes a rationale that will help to meet the need for a strong instructional leadership (pg. 34). Through the logic model demonstrated in Figure 4 on page 34, the applicant underpins the project components that will directly reflect the needed development and retention of school leadership strategies needed to yield the most effective outcome (pg. 34). In alignment to the descriptions, the applicant will design and implement an ongoing PD scope and sequence for the targeted professional learning on instructional leadership (pg. 35). This will ensure that the school leaders will be proficient based on the updated academic model and training provided by a third-party provider (pg. 35). With the implementation of the applicant's newly developed mentorship program, mentors will work with mentees to establish their problems of practice, then intentionally partner with leaders to develop and

**Sub**

design solutions to address the problems (pg. 35). These findings will be documented in a practice-based evidence portfolio that will qualify the school leaders for micro-credentials based on the principles outlined in the Get Better Fast or Growth Coaching Framework (pg. 35). Effective school leaders will be rewarded, both financially and non-financially, based on evidence of leader excellence evaluated based on an algorithm which measures trends in student growth, educator effectiveness, culture, climate, etc. (pg. 37).

**Reader's Score:**

- 2. (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.**

**General:**

The applicant provides sufficient evidence that consist of the use of a two-fold evaluation strategy to support the plan (pg. 39). Part 1 consists a comprehensive analysis of both formative and summative evaluation on the overall project (pg. 39). This mixed-methods approach will be both qualitative and quantitative, including interviews and focus groups, survey responses, member evaluation data which will be measured to fidelity, to provide the applicant with regular performance feedback for course adjustments (pg. 39). Part 2 will target and focus on the HCMS as it relates specifically to principals and members. This will provide the applicant with performance feedback and information needed for mid-course improvements (pg. 39).

**Reader's Score:**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

**General:**

Strengths:

The management plan focuses on the need for a well-qualified and seasoned executive team who is accountable from the project outcomes outlined in the logic model (Appendix A) (pg. 46). The plan will include a project director who has experience in large-grant facilitation (pg. 46). Two qualified project co-leads will work alongside the project director to ensure that the proposed plan is achieved (pg. 47). The Chief Academic Officer will oversee all academic activities including curriculum development and implementation and assessment and accountability (pg. 47). The Central office will work with the applicant's District offices and campuses as an extra lining of accountability for student outcomes (pg. 49). Other pertinent roles and responsibilities have been adequately identified in the management plan pg. 48-49).

Weaknesses:

N/A

**Reader's Score: 20**

## Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 25

Sub

1. **(i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.**

### General:

The applicant presented evidence of the growth of 58 schools over the last 20 years (pg. 52). This is sufficient proof that the applicant already has a sustainable, proven system in place. The applicant will build upon previous investments to further continuous improvement-based data-driven initiatives and feedback loops embedded in existing processes and protocols (pg. 53). Through the connections made from the applicant's long-standing partnerships with research institutions, like CTAC, and findings from the full-time research scientist and established Innovation Department, the applicant will continue to measure the quality of the current programming and use the data to continue to provide on-demand PD, like the STEM curriculum PDs offered by teachers in the LEA (pg. 53).

Reader's Score:

2. **(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population.**

### General:

The applicant provided evidence of full commitment from the schools and stakeholders. For example, the applicant will continue to seek input from stakeholders and schools to develop programs that will result in long term implementation programs like the "Train the Trainer" initiative that will also be cost effective (pg. 57).

Reader's Score:

3. **(iii) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model, and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.**

### General:

The project shows great potential for the continued financial support needed after the federal funding (50% matching funds) ends. The school-based leaders and teachers, including community stakeholders will also play an active role in the various project initiatives (pg. 57). The applicant has already secured \$1.8M in funding and recently received the HB3 Teacher Incentive allotment which also ensures that the applicant will be received \$6-8M annually for the next 5 years (pg. E56). Regulations mandated that the majority of the HB3 TIA funds to support bonuses for members of the ILT for teachers (pg. 56).

Reader's Score:

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority #1 - Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones

1. Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the area in which the applicant proposes to provide services overlaps with a Qualified Opportunity Zone, as designated by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 1400Z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code.

An applicant must--

- a) Provide the census tract number of the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s) in which it proposes to provide services; (ED Panel monitor will verify the QOZ using this link.) and
- b) Describe how the applicant will provide services in the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s).

**General:**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes that the program will serve all 50 high-need schools within the LEA (pg. 22). The applicant's plan to reinforce the project through partnership with the non-Harmony campuses by strengthening the instructional leadership in the high-need schools, through the qualitative implementation of its academic model across all campuses (pg. 23). This will lead to a broader, adequate pipeline of the proven methods across the region, as well as, job creation for career ready graduates (pg. 23). Through a series of effective leadership initiatives such as COPs, the applicant will focus on building effective campus leadership teams that will continue to promote educational competency (pg. 24)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant identifies the 50 high-need schools in the LEAS, it is not clear how many of the 50 high-need schools are in QOZs. Without this clarification, the applicant did not sufficiently address this criterion.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Competitive Preference Priority #2 - Diverse and Effective Workforce**

1. Applications from New Potential Grantees (0, 2, or 5 points).

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate

- a) The applicant has never received a grant, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, under the program from which it seeks funds (0 or 5 points); or
- b) The applicant has not had an active discretionary grant under the program from which it seeks funds, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, in the five years before the deadline date for submission of applications under the program. (0 or 2 points)

**General:**

Strengths: No strengths identified

Weaknesses: The applicant has had a TIF or TSL grant within the last 5 years.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/10/2020 01:58 PM





Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/10/2020 02:50 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Harmony Public Schools (S374A200021)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Need for Project</b>		
1. Need for Project	25	23
<b>Sub Total</b>	25	23
<b>Selection Criterion</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	30	30
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	20
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	25	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	45	45
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #1</b>		
<b>Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones</b>		
1. CPP 1	10	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	10	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority #2</b>		
<b>Diverse and Effective Workforce</b>		
1. CPP 2	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	115	103

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - TSL - 3: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Harmony Public Schools (S374A200021)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining evidence of the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 23

#### Sub

1. (i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

#### General:

Of Harmony's 50 high-need campuses to be served by this grant, all are within a 10-mile radius of a qualified opportunity zones (p. 22). Harmony will prioritize implementation on campuses near these OZs (p. 23). They will also partner with other school districts in and around these OZs, to create a community of practice (p.23).

Overall, Harmony schools have performed well academically. In 2018-19, 100% of Harmony districts and 75% of its schools earned an A or B rating, compared to 43% of schools statewide, but disparities continue to exist between the LEA's subgroups. Between students with greater and lesser financial need, there is a 14-24 percentage point differences in student proficiency on state assessments (p. 21). Among students with special needs, 40% met or exceeded grade-level standards on the state STAAR assessment, while 55% of their peers with financial resources achieved proficiency (p.24).

Reader's Score:

2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.

#### General:

This project will be an expansion of their current HCMS, which focused on teacher development, and their overall strategic planning to improve academic performance. The focus on high needs schools is also an expansion of the current HCMS (p.22). Because the HCMS is specifically linked to student performance, it is believed that the proposed project will help improve student academic performance through teacher and leader development and retention.

Reader's Score:

3. (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

**Sub**

**General:**

This project will be an expansion of their current HCMS, which focused on teacher development, and their overall strategic planning to improve academic performance. The focus on high needs schools is also an expansion of the current HCMS (p.22).

**Reader's Score:**

- 4. (iv) **The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

**General:**

Because the HCMS is specifically linked to student performance, it is believed that the proposed project will help improve student academic performance through teacher and leader development and retention. However, the applicant has stated that they will prioritize implementation of the project on campuses in opportunity zones, but the narrative did not detail how this would be done. Beyond working to ensure high-needs schools have strong instructional leadership, it is also not clear how else the project will focus on ensuring the students most in need receive the specific supports needed to reduce the noted performance gaps.

**Reader's Score:**

**Selection Criterion - Quality of the Project Design**

- 1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 30**

**Sub**

- 1. (i) **The extent to which the proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

**General:**

Harmony’s rationale for the project is that establishing strong instructional leadership will grow educator effectiveness, and resultantly improve student outcomes. As part of this project, Harmony will redefine include role competencies, performance expectations, and leadership responsibilities (with focus on instructional coaching). These descriptions will map to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS).

Harmony has committed to defining clear leadership standards and providing ongoing, role-specific support to leaders. This includes designing and implementing a formal, PD scope and sequence that is role-specific and provides targeted professional learning on instructional leadership (p. 35). This PD will be offered centrally as well as school-based, to address campus-specific needs. Principals will also be provided a mentor to support further development (p. 26).

**Reader's Score:**

- 2. (ii) **The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.**

## Sub

### General:

Leader performance metrics will be gathered and used to inform a "skills profile" for each leader. Similarly, a "needs profile" will be developed for each campus, based on school performance and characteristics (e.g., trends in student growth, educator effectiveness, culture/climate, etc.). Using an algorithm, this system will allow leaders with relevant skills and strengths to be paired with a school in need (p. 37). Leaders who choose to transfer to the schools in need will be rewarded with a financial incentive.

Using a mixed-methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the evaluator will execute ongoing formative evaluations to provide regular performance feedback and assessments for course adjustments and a summative evaluation to assess progress towards the intended and ultimate impacts of the project. At the beginning of the first project year, the evaluator will conduct school-level analysis to identify the comparison group for Harmony schools, using Propensity Score Matching (PSM) techniques (p.43). This will allow for control of observable and measurable student teacher characteristics that may have contributed to student growth, as well as time-invariant, unobservable, and immeasurable factors such as a student's innate ability. Comparing the "treatment" and "control" schools before and after project implementation will help support the validity of findings, by minimizing the likelihood that confounding factors (i.e. something other than the treatment) are impacting project outcomes.

In summer of each project year, the evaluator will provide a report of interim analyses and findings. In winter of each project year, the evaluator will provide a formative evaluation report with complete analyses and findings, as to that date. At the end of the project, the evaluator will provide a summative evaluation report (p.45).

### Reader's Score:

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

### General:

Implementation of the project will be driven by two Project Co-Leads. The Project Advisor will also oversee and provide guidance to Project Leads on implementation. He will also manage budget tracking, analysis, and implementation, in conjunction with the Academics, Talent, and Finance departments. The Chief Academic Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Chief Development Officer will all support specific aspects of the project. The applicant has divided responsibilities of the core project components between the 2 co-leaders. Co-leader 1 will be responsible for components two, three and four (i.e. leader evaluation, leader-school matching system, financial incentives for leaders in high needs schools) of the project, while co-leader 2 will be responsible for components one and five (i.e. community of practice ongoing PD) (p.47). The management plan dissected each component of the project and provided clear deliverables and milestones, down to the specific month. With the team in place and the project plan established, it is highly probable that Harmony can execute the plan on time and on budget.

**Reader's Score: 20**

#### Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 1. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 25**

**Sub**

- 1. (i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.**

**General:**

Several key leadership roles at Harmony have committed to the execution of this project (e.g. Chief Academic Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Development Officer). Furthermore, this project proposes to build upon previous investments in the school's curriculum, human capital, and data management systems, meaning that many conditions for system-wide implementation of this project are already in place.

**Reader's Score:**

- 2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population.**

**General:**

The project is likely to build capacity beyond the scope of this project, in that it brings additional on-the-ground support to campuses, provides content and grade specific coaching and evaluation, and also facilitates a train-the-trainer model, which will help perpetuate lessons learned on campuses and throughout the network (p. 54).

**Reader's Score:**

- 3. (iii) The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model, and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.**

**General:**

The Harmony network has newly established a Development Department. Funds raised via the department will support special initiatives and more equitable budgeting across regions (p. 56). With House Bill 3 (HB3) passed by the Texas state legislature in July 2019, Harmony will also have access to new state revenue to support continuation of this project.

**Reader's Score:**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority #1 - Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones**

- 1. Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the area in which the applicant proposes to provide services overlaps with a Qualified Opportunity Zone, as designated by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 1400Z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code.**

**An applicant must--**

- a) Provide the census tract number of the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s) in which it proposes to provide services; (ED Panel monitor will verify the QOZ using this link.) and**
- b) Describe how the applicant will provide services in the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s).**

**General:**

All of Harmony's 50 high-need campuses to be served are within a 10-mile radius of a qualified opportunity zone. The applicant plans to reinforce their project and build further capacity through partnership and collaboration with non-Harmony Campuses Through a series of effective leadership initiatives such as COPs, the applicant will focus on building effective campus leadership teams that will continue to promote educational competency (pg. 24). It is not clear how many of Harmony's schools are actually in opportunity zones.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Competitive Preference Priority #2 - Diverse and Effective Workforce**

**1. Applications from New Potential Grantees (0, 2, or 5 points).**

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate

- a) The applicant has never received a grant, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, under the program from which it seeks funds (0 or 5 points); or
- b) The applicant has not had an active discretionary grant under the program from which it seeks funds, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, in the five years before the deadline date for submission of applications under the program. (0 or 2 points)

**General:**

No strengths identified. The applicant has had a TIF or TSL grant within the last 5 years.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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