

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/26/2022 05:33 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Save the Children Federation, Inc. (S310A220034)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. CPP2	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. CPP3	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
1. CPP4	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SFEC Tier 1 Panel - 3: 84.310A

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

Applicant: Save the Children Federation, Inc. (S310A220034)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. A. Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 points).

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--

- (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.
- (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

#### Strengths:

(1) The applicant describes a clear conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. The applicant describes a comprehensive family and school partnership framework demonstrating a cradle-to-career continuum as illustrated in the logic model, which serves as the conceptual framework of the proposed project. The applicant demonstrates that the statewide training of parents and educators will include the following: Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships (Mapp, 2019); The National Network for Partnership Schools' model of six types of family involvement strategies (Epstein, 2019); Parent Nation mobilization training, peer-to-peer leadership development, and parents in service roles (Volunteers in Service to America -VISTA, AmeriCorps). The essential purpose of the Dual Capacity Framework is to help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and families is the shared responsibility that can result in positive outcomes for children, as demonstrated in the goals, objectives, and required Program Performance Measures (PPMs) (pgs. 4-8).

(2) The applicant describes comprehensive services to be provided by the proposed project that reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices. The research-based Dual Capacity-Building Framework is the foundation of the project, research, and effective practices inform the services and activities. Mapp has found that academic achievement increases if parents are involved and engaged in a child's learning (Mapp, 2002; Mapp & Hong, 2010; Warren, & Mapp, 2011). The project aligns to the complementary learning approach of the Global Family Research Project (formerly the Harvard Family Research Project), based on research demonstrating the effectiveness of integrated supports in promoting children's learning and contributing to their school success (Weiss, 2014). The applicant describes research that suggests the significance of the impacts of parent behaviors around learning activities; parent participation in school; and parent engagement through a community organization (National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). The project staff will work with parents to support the identification of systemic barriers to family engagement and the solutions to barriers. The project has adopted Parent Nation mobilization practices based on the research of the founder and co-director of the Thirty-Million Words Center (TMW) at the University of Chicago. Parent Nation is based on the science of early brain development and the vision and strategy are informed by neuroscience, political science, and the lived experiences of families (TMW, 2021) (pgs. 8-12).

(3) The applicant clearly describes how the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. The project demonstrates that the relationship with ADE will ensure that

the SEC informs and influences future ADE policy and funding decisions. The project will build capacity at multiple levels because of the key collaborative deliverables, including ADE and SFEC jointly highlighting evidence-based practices, the collaborative development of the framework for engaging families, and an online resource center to support all families. The SFEC outputs, as noted in the logic model lead to the outcomes and performance measures. The outputs include a statewide SFEC framework; the statewide family engagement center and its two regional sites; state events by ADE and Community-Based Organization (CBOs); curricula developed along a cradle-to-career framework; online tools and modules for parents and LEAs; train-the trainer models for LEAs, CBOs, and parents/families, and a peer-to-peer framework. The applicant describes how the project will build families' capacity to support their children in learning and how the project will build the capacity of teachers and school leaders statewide. The consortium approach ensures that the project will be sustained beyond federal funding (pgs. 12-14).

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) No weaknesses were noted.
- (2) No weaknesses were noted.
- (3) No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 25**

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

**1. B. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 20 points).**

**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 following factors:**

- (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.**
- (2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**
- (3) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.**
- (4) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**
- (5) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.**

**Strengths:**

- (1) The applicant describes a detailed 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. The applicant demonstrates that Save the Children (STC) and Partners for Rural Impact (PRI) have five decades of experience in the management of state and federal projects, working with LEAs, community-based organizations, and

partners. The applicant describes a thorough plan for developing, piloting, refining, and disseminating activities on time and within budget. The applicant has established policies and procedures in place for collecting data, managing finances, and tracking services. The objectives are achievable because of the strength of the Consortium, partnerships, and the dedicated staff. The applicant describes a Year 1 timeline and a five-year curriculum development timeline, including the activities and the personnel responsible (pg. 17-19).

(2) The applicant describes clear procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. The applicant provides a continuous improvement plan with procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. The applicant links each procedure to how it informs improvement. For example, the procedure (services to parents and educators continually evaluated using facilitated debriefings, surveys, pre/post test) lead to the following improvement (results compiled by Project Director (PD) and shared with the PRI and staff monthly; data used to refine services and delivery) (pgs. 19-20).

(3) The applicant describes clear mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. The STC and PRI will communicate the strategic direction and theory of change, facilitate partnerships, work with the evaluation team, and align the SFEC to other AR initiatives. The consortium will operate statewide with four main purposes: universal dissemination of what works; the development of online resource hub to connect parents/families and LEAs to resources state-wide; meetings to disseminate best practices; and asset mapping and needs assessment to identify barriers and the solutions. The applicant describes mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services. Each mechanism is aligned to high-quality products/services. For example, the mechanism (designing, piloting, refining curricula based on the Epstein model) is aligned to the high-quality products/services (Cradle-to-Career Curricula for Family Engagement suited for face-to-face, online, train-the-trainer delivery, and disseminated to LEAs statewide) (pgs. 22-23).

(4) The applicant clearly describes time commitments of the Project Director and the other key project personnel that are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant describes the following appropriate and adequate time commitments for the Project Director and the other key personnel: Project Director (100% FTE), two Site Coordinators (100% FTE each), Trainer (100% FTE), Instructional Designer (100% FTE), and two Program Associates (100% FTE each) (pgs. 23-24; e131-e133).

(5) The applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients and beneficiaries of services. For example, the proposed plan provides multiple opportunities for stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and students to provide input to influence project operation. The Consortium will establish an Advisory Council with parents from diverse backgrounds comprising the majority of the Council, as required. The executive director of the Arkansas Support Network, a statewide organization focused on supporting students with disabilities and their families, will participate on the Advisory Council. This membership will also include parent representatives of children with disabilities. The membership will also include representatives of the education, business, and non-profit sectors, including students of diverse backgrounds and abilities, early childhood care professionals; teachers; and community organizations that serve racially and ethnically diverse students and refugee students and families including non-English speaking populations. The Advisory Council will also include adult educators, postsecondary education representatives, college access outreach programs representatives, school administrators, business representatives, and representatives from Arkansas Department (ADE). The Advisory Council will meet quarterly to provide direction to grant planning and implementation (statewide, regional levels); to analyze project data and outcomes and provide feedback; and inform policy recommendations based on project outcomes and activities (pg. 24).

**Weaknesses:**

(1) No weaknesses were noted.

(2) No weaknesses were noted.

(3) No weaknesses were noted.

(4) No weaknesses were noted.

(5) No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

#### **1. C. Project Personnel (up to 15 points).**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors--**

**(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.**

**(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant clearly demonstrates a quality plan for employing personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project's target population. For example, the applicant states that, upon funding notification, steps will be taken to ensure nondiscriminatory employment practices are followed and applications will be encouraged from individuals traditionally underrepresented. The applicant will advertise broadly in Arkansas for all positions with an emphasis on the Delta and Outer Delta (regional sites). The position announcements will be placed on the STC, PRI, and partner website. The applicants will submit a detailed application and a PRI-appointed search committee will screen the applicants for professional staff positions. The selected applicants will be interviewed by the search committee. The final approval will be given by the PRI Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The applicant demonstrates that preference will be given to persons who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (pgs. 24-25).

(1) The applicant clearly describes the qualifications required of the full-time Project Director, including formal training and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project and experience in designing, managing, or implementing similar projects. For example, the Project Director will be required to have the following minimum qualifications: Master's degree in Educational Administration, or related field; a minimum of 10 years of experience in personnel, program and fiscal management; demonstrated experience with federal grant management, including budget responsibility; demonstrated knowledge and leadership in parent engagement; experience in training, including family engagement, familiarity with the Dual Capacity-Building Framework, as well as accounting and budgeting, project management, human resource management, and other similar training areas. The applicant includes a job description in Appendix A (pgs 25-26; e64-e65).

(2) The applicant describes the relevant qualifications required of each of the key project personnel to serve in the project, including formal training and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project. The applicant includes job descriptions in Appendix A. The key personnel include an Instructional Designer, Trainer, and two Site Coordinators. The

Instructional Designer will be required to hold the following minimum qualifications: Master's degree in education, or a related field; five years of experience as a curriculum developer related to the training of adult learners; ten years of experience in education, family engagement, outreach/wrap-around services, or a similar field; demonstrated work with federal/state grant projects; and training on adult learning strategies, curriculum design for adults and content training connected to family engagement. The Trainer will be required to hold the following minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree in education, or related field; five years of experience as a trainer of educators and/or parents focused on improving educational outcomes, event planning, and working collaboratively with stakeholders, AR educators, and/or AR families; and training on facilitation and adult learning frameworks (Results Based Facilitation), project management, and virtual learning best practices. The two Site Coordinators will be required to hold the following minimum qualifications: Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree preferred; five years of experience in program management; three years of supervision of staff, and documented experience working in communities, with schools, with residents, and with CBOs; and training in community organizing, resident engagement, partnership building, or similar professional learning (pgs. 26-28; e60-e69).

(3) The applicant describes the qualifications, including the relevant training and experience, of subcontractors and consultants. For example, the applicant describes the qualifications, including relevant training and experience of the following contracted positions: Partners for Rural Impact, Bellwether Education Partners, and additional consultants from the partner organizations including the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) and the Parent Nation's lead motivator. The bios for each of these consultants are attached. The Partners for Rural Impact founder and CEO holds a Juris Doctor degree and has relevant experience to provide oversight and management to the SFEC. The applicant includes a Memorandum of Understanding with Partners for Rural Impact. Bellwether Education Partners will conduct the evaluation and each lead evaluator holds a Ph.D., with relative qualifications and experience included in their vitae in the attachments (pgs. 40-42; e70-e96).

**Weaknesses:**

- (1) No weaknesses were noted.
- (2) No weaknesses were noted.
- (3) No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score:** 15

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**1. D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 20 points).**

**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--**

- (1) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**
- (3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The applicant demonstrates the relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. The applicant lists each partner and describes how it will help maximize resources to reach the largest number of families and school professionals. The partners include the following: Partners for Rural Impact (PRI), Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), Arkansas Heat Start/Head Start State Collaborative Office (HSSCO), Arkansas Support Network (ASN), and Curricula Concepts, Inc. The applicant provides a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Save the Children and Partners for Rural Impact (pgs. 29-31; e109-e115).

(2) The applicant describes costs that are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The budget is reasonable and includes the following federal funds: \$1,000,000 (Year 1), \$1,000,000 (Year 2), \$1,000,000 (Year 3), \$1,000,000 (Year 4), \$1,000,000 (Year 5), for a total 5-year cost of \$5,000,000. The project design includes an approach for building a statewide infrastructure, including the creation of a statewide center with two regional centers and an online resource hub that will impact all parents and students in Arkansas and will focus on high-need populations (rural youth, students of color, refugees). The project will create an Advisory Committee to expand policy and advocacy to decrease barriers to family engagement and to increase the number of parents participating in education policy and systems development (pg. 32-33).

(3) The applicant describes costs that are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. For example, the proposed project will have an impact on 704,268 children and students in the state, their schools, and their families. The project will build the knowledge base of teachers, school administrators, community-based organizations, and families. The costs of the project are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits and is expected to cost less than \$1.42 per student per year (pg. 33).

**Weaknesses:**

(1) No weaknesses were noted.

(2) No weaknesses were noted.

(3) No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Priority Questions****Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2****1. Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).**

**Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) and the educators who serve them, through one or more of the following priority areas:**

**(a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families.**

**(b) Providing resources and supports to meet the basic, fundamental, health and safety needs**



of students and educators.

**(c) Addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic need through approaches that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status.**

**Strengths:**

a)(b)(c) The applicant provides a clear description of how the project will address Competitive Preference Priority 2: Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) indicates more than 10 percent decline across all core content areas (December 2021). The proposed project staff will work with ADE and the evaluators (Bellwether) to design and conduct a statewide needs assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on educators, students, and their families. The needs assessment will consider multiple populations, including rural and urban, ethnicity/race/color, English learners, and low income residents. As the needs are identified the project staff will conduct an asset mapping of resources available to meet the identified needs. The asset mapping will include mapping of resources to meet students' fundamental food, health, and safety needs, as well as their academic and social emotional needs. The findings will inform the work of the proposed project at all levels (pg. 15).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3--Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources, and Opportunities (up to 3 points).**

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students--**

**(a) In one or more of the following educational settings:**

- (1) Early learning programs.**
- (2) Elementary school.**
- (3) Middle school.**
- (4) High school.**
- (5) Career and technical education programs.**
- (6) Out-of-school-time settings.**
- (7) Alternative schools and programs.**
- (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities; and**
- (9) Adult learning.**

**(b) That is designed to examine the sources of inequities related to, and implement responses through, one or more of the following:**

- (1) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community**

members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives)).

(2) Increasing student racial or socioeconomic diversity, through developing or implementing evidence-based policies or strategies that include one or more of the following:

- (i) Ongoing, robust family and community involvement.
- (ii) Intra- or inter-district or regional coordination.
- (iii) Cross-agency collaboration, such as with housing or transportation authorities.
- (iv) Alignment with an existing public diversity plan or diversity needs assessment.

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a comprehensive description of how the project will address Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, and opportunities. (a)(1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(9) The proposed project is designed to promote equity in all elements of the project design center, including the composition of the Advisory Council to the inclusion of regional centers and to the focus on parents as leaders and professionals. The project will develop, implement, and disseminate family engagement curricula for schools and families addressing five levels of student learning: early learning (0-K), grades 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, and postsecondary (college, career) (pgs. 15-16).

(b)(1) The project is designed to examine inequities related to establishing, expanding, and improving the engagement of underserved community members, including underserved students and families. The project will support parents in identifying barriers to equitable access to opportunities, connecting with their peers, and brainstorming solutions. The Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) will connect parents to evidence-based practices and to peer leaders and partners who will assist in reducing the identified barriers to equitable access (pgs 15-16).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score:** 3

**Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4--Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change (up to 3 points).**

**Projects that are designed to take a systemic approach to improving outcomes for underserved students in the following priority area:**

**(a) Establishing cross-agency partnerships, or community-based partnerships with local nonprofit organizations, businesses, philanthropic organizations, or others, to meet family well-being needs.**

**Strengths:**

(a) The applicant provides a plan to address Competitive Preference Priority 4: Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change. The project demonstrates the cross-agency coordination of the Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC), including the structure and power-sharing, between Save the Children (STC) and Partners for Rural Impact (PRI) model to the partners. The project is designed to align partners around

strengthening family engagement with the goal of improving student outcomes statewide (Logic Model, page 4). The project is evidence-based and grounded in empirical research that demonstrates that creating connections between family, school, and community maximizes the impact on the students' learning development. The Advisory Council will include the voices of a diverse group of individuals and partners. A key role of the Advisory Council will be to continually engage with the stakeholders to ensure that the voices are influencing the operation of SFEC (pgs 16-17).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

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**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   04/26/2022 05:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/26/2022 06:03 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Save the Children Federation, Inc. (S310A220034)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	25
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	20	20
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Adequacy of Resources	20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. CPP2	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. CPP3	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
1. CPP4	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - SFEC Tier 1 Panel - 3: 84.310A

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

Applicant: Save the Children Federation, Inc. (S310A220034)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. A. Quality of the Project Design (up to 25 points).

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--

- (1) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.
- (2) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

#### Strengths:

(1) To a great extent, the applicant discusses its conceptual framework providing the underpinning of this project. For example, a thorough Project Logic Model and a Consortium Approach/Statewide Impact Logic Model were provided (pp. 21, e119). Evidence is well-provided that the conceptual framework is based on the research of effective family engagement approaches of Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement (Epstein, et. Al., 2019). In addition, a foundation for this project is Dr. Karen's Mapp's Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships (2019), which provides a "picture" of what effective engagement should be (p. e22). The concepts are well-described for their essential conditions necessary for a quality family and school engagement plan, including developing culturally responsive processes, enhancing the capacity of educators in capabilities, skills, and knowledge, and developing cross-cultural networks based on trust and respect (p. e23). The quality of the Logic Model, the Consortium's Approach, and the two frameworks (Epstein's and Mapp's) well-ground this project's design and emphasis on serving disadvantaged students to improve student academic achievement and engagement of the communities, parents, and educators.

(2) Up-to-date knowledge from research of best practices for parental involvement, student achievement, cultural diversity, and training parents as teachers of other parents' learning, is evident in the project design and foundation. For example, the parental involvement process is based on the Global Family Research (Weiss, 2014), the Henderson and Mapp 2002 research for parents' behaviors around learning activities, parent participation in school and parent engagement through community organizing, and Mapp's Dual Capacity Framework (2019) (pp. e26-27). Other up-to-date research forming the foundation of this project is well-detailed, i.e., parent mobilization practices will be based on the research of Dr. Dana Suskin (Parent Nation, 2021) (p. e28). To a significant extent, the applicant well-forms its project design upon high quality research evidence for effective parental, community, and school engagement processes to increase student achievement and enhance parents' voices in the processes.

(3) To a considerable extent, the applicant describes how its project will build capacity and yield results after the conclusion of this project. Examples of quality capacity building include viable elements such as developing curricula along the cradle-to-career framework for longevity of activities; online tools and modules for parents that have measure of sustainability; and train-the-trainer models for parents, LEAs, and Community-Based-Organizations (pp. e29-e31). In addition, other quality capacity-building activities include establishing peer-to-peer frameworks for families/parents; building of teacher's capacities with newly developed and widely disseminating curricula for removing family barriers to

home-school engagement; and developing statewide Arkansas and LEA policies to minimize barriers to engagement (pp. e29-e31). The applicant also demonstrates that financial resources by the Parents for Impact, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Save the Children Federation will monetarily or via in-kind resources sustain the key project elements beyond the five-year grant cycle (p. e31).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score:** 25

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

**1. B. Quality of the Management Plan (up to 20 points).**

**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 following factors:**

- (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.**
- (2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**
- (3) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.**
- (4) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**
- (5) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.**

**Strengths:**

(1) The applicant provides a clear and comprehensive management work plan for Project Year 1 which contains project goals/objectives, project activities, personnel/entities to implement each activity, and a logical frequency of the activities (pp. e35-e36). For example, in Project Year 1, on weekly ongoing basis, the Project Director, the Regional Center Coordinators, the Instructional Designer, and the Community-Based Organizations will assess best practices for removing family engagement barriers in schools and develop/deliver educational options training (p. e35). This activity is well-explained to align with Project Goals 2-4 and all the Project Objectives 2. 1 through 4.3, i.e., Objective 3.3 Increase the number and percentage of LEAs shifting their thinking from "teaching students" to "partnering with families to support children in learning" (p. e25).

A full discussion is presented to demonstrate that the applicant has fiscal controls in place to constantly monitor the project's budget and implement the program with fiscal confidence, i.e., accounting systems in place for managing finances, tracking services, managing budgets, compliance with the Uniform Administrative Guidelines (2 CFR 200), and tracking/monitoring/reconciling expenditures with the Budget by the Save The Children's Finance Office (p. e34). The workplan is well-designed and complete with activities to achieve all the stated project goals and cause the project to be

implemented on time and within budget (pp. e35-e36).

(2) A convincing discussion is presented for the adequacy of the feedback and how it will lead to continuous improvement. Quality processes include the families, project staff, school personnel, and all partners annually giving feedback on program and services via focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Those types of feedback will lead to continuous improvements with the stakeholders recommending new services, project service modifications, and/or services that may no longer be needed (p. e37). Of importance, is that the applicant includes both parents and students in the cycle of feedback and improvement recommendations as they serve on the Advisory Council (pp. e33, e36-e37). These strategies will ensure a complete feedback loop for continuous project improvement.

(3) Several methods to ensure that the project's activities are of high quality are provided. Key products and services that have a design to ensure high quality for the recipients include development of Parent Nation and the designing, piloting, and refining the cradle-to-career curricula aligned to the stages of families' lives which is based on the National Network of Partnership Schools and the Epstein Model for effective family engagement practices (p. e38). In addition, as a well-designed measure to ensure high-quality, the applicant plan includes developing a statewide mapping of COVID-19 impacts and other barriers to family engagement which will produce a higher quality of statewide resources for families and schools (p. e38).

Quality assessments and mapping of resources, peer-to-peer networks, and effective family engagements delivery systems are essential to maintain a high-quality program of best practices in increasing family and community engagement in the education systems in the state.

(4) The applicant well-details appropriate project time allocation for all its full time (1.0 FTE) key personnel, including the Project Director, the Instructional Designer, the Trainer, and the two Site Coordinators (pp. e40-e44). The allotment of time well-aligns to the assigned roles for each of the positions. For example, the Project Director's duties include collaborating with the school districts and partners about the project activities and services, leading the team to design and implement activities and services to ensure students' academic successes, emphasizing students' career pathways and college opportunities, and managing the overall project and program to ensure objectives and grant guidelines are met (p. e42). The applicant's thorough description of the key personnel's roles and project time commitments will lead to a sequential and well-organized project to meet the project's objectives.

(5) A diversity of measures is presented to demonstrate that the applicant will utilize a variety of methods in achieving a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of this project, i.e., quarterly meetings of the Advisory Council (p. e41). Quality measures include establishing the Arkansas Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) Advisory Council with a broad representation of voices joining the applicant. The board will be comprised of more than 50% parents, the Executive Director of the Arkansas Support Network (focused on students with disabilities), educational experts in the field of parent engagement/training, refugee students and families, non-English speaking family members, adult education professionals, early childhood care professionals, students of diverse backgrounds, business and non-profit sector representatives, university representatives, school administrators and representatives from the Arkansas Department of Education, and the Partners for Rural Impact (p. e41).

The applicant's attention to including a wide diversity of voices will create project strategies and products that will better meet the needs of the families, schools, educators, students, and community organizations to increase effective family engagement activities.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 20**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

### 1. C. Project Personnel (up to 15 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, in determining the quality of the management plan and project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors--

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

#### Strengths:

The applicant provides clear details of how it will actively recruit persons from underrepresented populations to apply for the project's job vacancies. Viable strategies to gain greater equity of candidates includes posting the job openings on the applicants' and partner's (Save the Children and Partners for Rural Impact) websites which will be commonly viewed by community members in the targeted areas. Also, the job postings will be more widely advertised on Indeed.com (p. e42). The selection of candidates to interview will be accomplished with equity in mind by a Search Committee and the Chief Operating Officer (CEO) of Partners for Rural Impact, who is an attorney (p. e42). The applicant clearly states that preference for employment will be given to persons who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups, based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (p. e42). These intentional strategies will encourage applicants who are representative of the Arkansas regions' marginalized populations.

(1) The qualifications, relevant training, and expected career experiences of the Project Director are well-detailed in a job description (pp. e42-e43, e64-e65). The quality job qualifications include a minimum level of education of a master's degree in Educational Administration or related field, training in family engagement, the Dual Capacity-Building Framework, project management, human resource management, and accounting/budgeting of projects (p. e43). Expected relevant experiences include a minimum of ten years of experience with personnel, programming, fiscal management and demonstrated experience in federal grant management (p. e43). Such high quality and project-relevant education and career experiences will ensure the project will be implemented with fidelity to the grant initiative's purpose and the goals of the project.

(2) The applicant demonstrates high-quality education and career experiences for the other key project personnel that include the Instructional Designer, Trainer, and Site Coordinators (pp. e43-e45). Well-stated job descriptions are presented for each of these new positions and those descriptions have quality expected education levels, career experiences, and required skills (pp. e60-e69). All these positions require a university degree, i.e., Instructional Designer requires a master's degree, Trainer requires a bachelor's degree, and the Site Coordinator positions require a bachelor's degree with a preference of a master's degree (pp. e43-e45, pp. e60-e69). Expected career experiences are directly related to the type of project job/position, such as the Instructional Designer position requiring at least five years of experiences as a curriculum developer as related to the training of adult learners; 10 years in education, family engagement and wrap-around services; and demonstrated work with federal/state grant projects (pp. e43-e44). The applicant has established high-quality expectations for its new project employees which will be added value in implementing this project with fidelity to the project goals.

(3) The qualifications, relevant training, and career experiences of the selected evaluation consultant firm, the Bellwether Education Partners, are well-detailed to demonstrate that a quality project evaluation will be accomplished. The educational backgrounds of the two evaluators with this firm are of high quality, i.e., Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) or Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degrees in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and Education, Human Development,



and Psychology (p. e87, e94). Both consultants have vast experiences in evaluating large federal projects, including the Collegiate Academies' Charter School Program Grant, the Crescent City Schools' Charter School Program Grant for the U.S. Department of Education, and a Federal Comprehensive Center Program Grant (p. e94). The prior experiences in effectively evaluating federal educational projects by these two contractors will provide a great assurance of a well-designed and implemented project evaluation.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**1. D. Adequacy of Resources (up to 20 points).**

**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--**

**(1) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

**(3) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits.**

**Strengths:**

(1) Both the relevance and level of project commitment are fully discussed for each of the 5 project partners across the state, including community agencies, state-level early childhood agency, non-profit network developed by a renowned leader in family engagement strategies, and statewide educational governmental agency (pp. e48-e49). The applicant demonstrates in Project Letters of Support and a Memorandum of Understanding (pp. e108-e115, e121-e129) the roles and commitment of the partners which are diversified to blend the varied resources of those entities to positively impact the success of the project's implementation and outreach to low-income students and families, early childhood learners, migrant families and learners, and English Language Learners (pp. e48-e49). Partners include the Arkansas Department of Education, the National Network of Partnership School (founded by educational expert Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.), the Arkansas Head Start Association, the Arkansas Support Network (parent information center for educational resources for individuals with disabilities), and Curricula Concepts, Inc. (technical assistance and professional development provider) (pp. e48-e49, e121-e129). The quality of experiences that each partner will bring to this project will ensure successful outcomes for this project.

(2) Reasonableness is demonstrated in all the proposed costs for the project, and the Budget contains clear identification of the item(s), categories of expenses, cost estimates for all five project years aligning to the project's significance, and summary of calculation methodology. An example of reasonableness is the cost for the personnel being defined by employee title, appropriate salary level, FTE unit appropriate to assigned roles, and a reasonable 27.58% fringe benefit (p. e133).

The applicant's Budget shows it plans to devote the obligatory 65% of the Budget to serve schools and community agencies that serve disadvantaged students and also has allocated 30% of the project funds for activities for evidence-based parent education (p. e49). The applicant provides comprehensive details in its Budget to indicate which line items will meet the thresholds for the services to disadvantaged students and evidence-based education, i.e., Contractual Costs

of the English-Language Learner Services of a total of \$37,500 are linked to both serving disadvantaged students and expanding evidence-based programming (p. e135). These allocations of funds indicate the applicant has an emphasis upon serving disadvantaged students and their parents in increasing academic achievement.

The project's matching funds of \$100,000 annually for each of the five project years are well-defined and demonstrate a potential positive significance of the project's ownership by the applicant and other private entities. For example, Partners for Rural Impact will be providing an in-kind donation of \$29,000 (in employee time) in Year 1 for the purpose of providing leadership and direction to the SFEC program to ensure resources and personnel are available for project success (p. e139). This large matching funding demonstrates the strong partner commitment to this proposed project and increased parental engagement in education.

(3) Project costs (less than \$1.42 per student per year) are well-explained to be reasonable in relation to the 704,268 children and students to be served via policy development and advocacy activities in the entire state, in their schools, and for their families (p. e50). The applicant also well-describes that the costs are reasonable in relation to anticipated results and benefits. The results and benefits include reduction of barriers to family engagement through policy development, increased parent leadership in educational roles, and refined educational practices within LEAs practices that support family engagement (p. e50). With the large numbers of parents, community agency personnel, and educators being impacted with this project, the costs are well-documented to be appropriate and reasonable. To a great extent, the applicant well-details that the reasonableness of the project costs and the relationship of the costs to create and implement family engagement processes which will benefit the students, educators, and parents.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score:** 20

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (up to 3 points).**

**Projects that are designed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students (as defined in the notice inviting applications, NIA) and the educators who serve them, through one or more of the following priority areas:**

**(a) Conducting community asset-mapping and needs assessments that may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families.**

**(b) Providing resources and supports to meet the basic, fundamental, health and safety needs of students and educators.**

**(c) Addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic need through approaches that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status.**

**Strengths:**

(a) The applicant well-explains that it will work in the first project year with its partner, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and its project evaluators (Bellwether) in designing and conducting a statewide needs assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on Arkansas educators, students, and their urban, suburban, and rural families (pp. e32-e33). The needs assessment is well described to consider multiple and diverse populations, including diverse ethnicities and races, English Language Learners, and low socio-economic (p. e32). The asset mapping will also map resources to mediate the identified needs, i.e., organizations to provide students/families with food, health, safety needs, as well as academic and social-emotional needs (pp. e15, e32).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3****1. Competitive Preference Priority 3--Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources, and Opportunities (up to 3 points).**

**Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it proposes a project designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students--**

**(a) In one or more of the following educational settings:**

- (1) Early learning programs.**
- (2) Elementary school.**
- (3) Middle school.**
- (4) High school.**
- (5) Career and technical education programs.**
- (6) Out-of-school-time settings.**
- (7) Alternative schools and programs.**
- (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities; and**
- (9) Adult learning.**

**(b) That is designed to examine the sources of inequities related to, and implement responses through, one or more of the following:**

**(1) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives)).**

**(2) Increasing student racial or socioeconomic diversity, through developing or implementing evidence-based policies or strategies that include one or more of the following:**

**(i) Ongoing, robust family and community involvement.**

**(ii) Intra- or inter-district or regional coordination.**

**(iii) Cross-agency collaboration, such as with housing or transportation authorities.**

**(iv) Alignment with an existing public diversity plan or diversity needs assessment.**

**Strengths:**

(a) The applicant provides some details that its project will promote equity and adequacy of resources for targeted students/families. These opportunities will be given to underserved diverse students who represent 15 Arkansas counties with high poverty (11 of 14 counties exceed the state average of poverty levels and have 30% of their populations living in poverty), with 100 school districts serving 201,835 students (pp. e20, e26). Some quality details are provided to demonstrate that the applicant plans to provide activities for underserved students in all grade levels in schools and for families at home, i.e., K-grade 12 and postsecondary (college and career) (p. e32).

(b)(1) (i and iv) The applicant provides evidence that a coordination of efforts between the applicant and the Arkansas Department of Education will design and implement a statewide family engagement planning document to include issues of equity for the schools, educators, and students, which show the intent of a larger collaboration to adequately address students' equity in accessing educational programs and activities (pp. e32-e33). In addition, the applicant will disaggregate the needs assessment data and resource availability data by geography to better address equitable services to the communities most in need and the underserved students with the greatest learning gaps, which greatly vary by levels of poverty in the state, i.e., gaps of 6% to 12% for students in grades 3, 6, and 8 in English Language Arts from the total student population in the state (p. e20). Equity plans also are well-explained to include robust strategies of family involvement as parents will become leaders on the Project Advisory Councils and inclusion of decisions and input on the regional centers formed in this project (p. e32). It is important to intentionally plan for equity of educational, social, and emotional services to provide more services to areas and schools which have the greater needs.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4--Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change (up to 3 points).**

**Projects that are designed to take a systemic approach to improving outcomes for underserved students in the following priority area:**

**(a) Establishing cross-agency partnerships, or community-based partnerships with local nonprofit organizations, businesses, philanthropic organizations, or others, to meet family well-being needs.**

**Strengths:**

To a great extent, the applicant demonstrates plans to establish cross-agency partnerships with other agencies and to form community-based partnerships to meet the needs of the families. The formation of this power-sharing Advisory Council is well-designed to have a strong parent voice in decision-making. The composition of the group includes 40+ parent members, 10 educational experts, 5 students, 2 State Education Agency (SEA) representatives, 10 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) representatives, 3 businesspeople, and representatives of Community-Based Organizations that provide wellbeing needs for the children/families (pp. e33-e34). These extended project partnerships will provide

valuable and meaningful collaborations for both providing services to the project and families as well as for insight into effective practices to involve more community members to strengthen the educational engagement activities in the communities.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

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**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   04/26/2022 06:03 PM