

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2023 03:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of South Florida (S422B230043)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	19
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	24
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	27
Sub Total	100	92
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	104

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - AHC-NA - 1: 84.422B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: University of South Florida (S422B230043)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

The University of Southern Florida, in cooperation with the University of South Florida's Center for Partnerships for Arts Integrated Teaching (PAInT), proposes the Bill of Writes Storytellers (BOWS) project for teachers and teaching artists. Participants, including 24 classroom teachers; 12 teaching artists, 24 community members across schools 12 schools, will learn and participate in an arts integration model for teaching students in 3rd-8th grade. Participants for the project will come from 12 low-income case study school sites in Chicago, Illinois, Detroit, Michigan, Washington DC, and Pomona, California. The project will be conducted over a three-year period. The project proposes evidenced based hands-on civic engagement activities that may include writing plays and creating animations with students on the U. S. Constitution, government, and the Bill of Rights. The activities will be designed using a number of learning models, including the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) approach to amplify diverse voices. The project also looks to a Social Emotional Learning curriculum to recognize and respect the experiences and strengths of diverse students. To further meet the needs of diverse learners, the project design incorporates a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. To achieve these goals, the applicant proposes significant professional development opportunities in integrating arts and civics. The applicant provides a strong rationale for the project, using evidence to cite the need for "improved American history, civics, and Government education in underserved high-poverty communities" and providing evidence for the importance of high caliber professional development. The applicant provides concrete deliverables, including evaluate several program components, such as Saturday Civics-Arts Symposiums, Summer Learning Tours, Arts Integrated teacher practices, and performance-based arts works.

The proposal justifies its rationale with significant research, demonstrating both the importance of an innovative approach to civics (integrated with arts), and also the importance of high caliber professional development (e18-21). The program establishes a framework for its content using (more than) six touchpoints and provides an innovative example of a civic and arts connection for each touchpoint. For example, under "Training for Collaborative Classroom Practice," an innovative approach calls for lessons on Freedom of Expression using stories on dress and hair while examining cultural identities (e22). The rationale also addresses media literacy, recognizing that an understanding of civics is grounded in the ability to evaluate sources for bias and accuracy (e24).

Weaknesses:

Some of the examples under the touchpoints are a bit overgeneralized. For example, the innovative example for Public Engagement and Presence calls for "Facilitating local fine and performing arts activities in a wide range of community contexts." To solidify the rationale, these examples could be more detailed (e23).

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - ii. **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. (7 points)**
 - iii. **The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)**

Strengths:

The University of Southern Florida's Bill of Writes Storytellers (BOWS) project has a lofty goal to "revolutionize the teaching of history, civics, and government in grades 3-8 at a consortium of low-socio-economic urban public charter schools" (e15). To do so, the project integrate civics education and the arts by providing cross-disciplinary lessons in areas such as creative writing, storytelling, media arts, fine arts, and performing arts. The proposal notes the lack of instructional time in the Social Studies (this is something that the proposal in and of itself cannot overcome), and also points out that the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) "introduced the role of arts in education" (e33). The 12 schools under three Public Charter School Consortia that have agreed to participate in the project represent schools with underserved populations. For example, the Distinctive Schools charter schools include 10 underserved schools from Chicago and Detroit. Eighty percent of the students attending these schools qualify for free and reduced lunch.

The applicant addresses areas with the greatest need. The 12 schools participating in the project have high minority enrollments and a high percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (see Table 1, e43). By including 12, teaching artists, 24 classroom teachers, 4 mentors, and 20 community hub members the proposal can impact approximately 4000 students across 12 schools. By using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework, a framework in which the effectiveness is data supported, the proposal works to ensure that the individual needs of the 4000 students impacted by the proposal are met (e28-e29).

Weaknesses:

While the program cites the lack of time on learning dedicated to civics as a gap or weakness in services, the proposal cannot provide a fix to the problem, and instead only offer innovations to the limited time that exists (e35).

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 following factors:**
 - i. **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. (13 points)**
 - ii. **The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant presents a high-quality management plan, including roles for a Project Director and Project Manager. As evidence by the resumes included with the proposal, the Project Director and the Project Manager have the experience to oversee to completion a project of this scope. The responsibilities for these roles include reviewing timelines and milestones, coordinating and supervising project teams, overseeing the budget, and review and adapting project plans based on evaluation and feedback. The proposal further calls for a Communications Central Hub, accessible to all stakeholders, for coordination and cooperation. A detailed timeline connects the proposed activities and milestones to the program's objectives: 1. Enhance meaningful learning and engagement through consistent and sequential Civics-Arts experiences; 2. Enable hands-on-experiences for classroom teachers to integrate Civics consistently, sequentially, and continuously into arts classrooms and communities; 3. Increase Student Proficiency in Civics-Arts achievement, engagement, and social emotional learning. The proposal calls for formative and summative feedback, sometimes of a general nature.

The proposal includes a detailed three-year timeline with activities and milestones connected to the objective. The timeline includes opportunities for investigation and cooperation to make sure of ongoing review. The timeline includes measurable goals. For example, one milestone is for 80 percent of the classroom teachers and teaching artists to have participated in the professional development offerings, and for achieving certain professional development ratings (e48-e53).

Weaknesses:

Where the proposal can be strengthened is by identifying the measurable learning goals. For example, one of the student learning goals includes their increase their engagement and knowledge of civics. It is unclear as to how this will be measured, and against what benchmarks (e53-54). Does not include when the feedback will come in and how it will be collected.

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)**
 - ii. **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - 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 multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)**
 - iv. **The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant, the University of Southern Florida, has in the past managed more than \$500 million worth of federal and non-federal contracts and grants. The applicant, through the promise of the use of its resources toward managing the BOWS project, including the Conferencing and Special Events Center, the USF Library, and the USF Marshall Student Center (all spaces that are ADA accessible) demonstrates that it has the resources to manages the project. The overall cost of the budget, at \$2,599,356.16, seems reasonable to the scope of the project. The budget includes significant travel costs of \$955,878, with the greatest percentage of these costs coming from the annual Immersive Summer Learning Tour (\$454,920). The applicant has solicited and received the support of the Smithsonian Learning Lab to maintain its Digital

Platform, thereby guaranteeing that the project extends beyond the life of the grant. The applicant has solicited and received agreements of support from various partners who will either participant in (Distinctive schools, the School of Arts and Enterprise, Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools) or facilitate the goals of the project (including the Florida Council of History Education, the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and the Smithsonian Learning Lab, thereby demonstrating the commitment to implementation and success.

The applicant, as evidenced the resumes of the project team, has the experience and expertise to successfully carry out the project to a successful conclusion (e65-e235). The applicant has provided written commitment of the team members for support of and participation in the project (249-254). The applicant has obtained the support and commitment of partners, including the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage for professional development workshops and the Smithsonian Learning Lab as the host for the BOWS Digital Platform and the School of Arts and Enterprise and the Distinctive Schools as participants (e242-248). The project team has significant experience in project management, curriculum design, and pedagogical development (e65-e171).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include support letters from all participants (Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy) (e242-248). The high travel costs put in doubt the long term sustainability of the project (e272).

Reader's Score: 27

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

The BOWS project provides an innovative model for civics and government learning and instruction. The project provides professional development opportunities for educators in charter schools benefitting underserved populations. The program incorporates evidenced based models, including the Gradual Release of Responsibility approach, a Social Emotional Learning framework, and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to integrate arts and civics teaching about Constitutional principles.

The proposal includes evidence-based learning models and provides research evidence of these models (e28-29). The program utilizes resources such as the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage to teach about US History and the Constitution (e245).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant 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-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) Rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) 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, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The incorporating evidenced based models, including a Social Emotional Learning framework, and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), the proposal promotes educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in Grades 3-8. By integrating arts and civics, the project is inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status. The program, through its Community Hubs, elevates the roles of community member to create civic partnerships.

The BOWS project establishes community hubs in order to “empower low-income communities to bring Civics-Arts into the project schools' neighborhoods.” Based on the proposal, community hubs engage the community through events such as Curriculum Nights, Parent and Community Forums, Document Studies Learning Tours, and other activities (e17).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 7

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of South Florida (S422B230043)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	27
Sub Total	100	94
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	106

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - AHC-NA - 1: 84.422B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: University of South Florida (S422B230043)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

There is a clear rationale for this project proposal that utilizes a collaboration between teachers and teaching artists to develop an arts-infused civics and history curriculum for students between 3rd and 8th grade. The approach, which recruits teachers and teaching artists from specific under-resourced communities and schools and gives them the training and the tools to develop curriculum for their students, represents an exceptional approach to developing innovative PD and instruction in history and civics.

The applicant lays out a clear rationale for this project. The applicant proposes to create a professional development project for teachers and teaching artists to learn from each other and participate in arts integration curriculum development for 3rd through 8th grade, which they would then bring to their students (e14). One purpose of the project is to provide a professional learning environment for teachers and teaching artists to create innovative civics and arts learning infrastructure for their students (e18). The applicant does this by exposing participants to integrated frameworks, bringing in experts in historical and constitutional matters, showcasing exemplars of such work, and providing a venue for collaboration between teachers and teaching artists. As a result, educators will have the tools and the expertise to make critical concepts in history and civics come to life for their students, thereby improving tangible learning outcomes and engagement by their students. Additionally, the project is rooted in research-based theories about curricular and instructional approaches that promote positive student outcomes for a diverse, multicultural student body. For example, the project's theory of action is rooted in research highlighting "the positive impact of sustained and intensive professional development on student achievement" (e 20). Having peer-reviewed research undergirding the project's theory of action increases its effectiveness and likelihood of improving student outcomes.

The applicant's proposed approach represents an exceptional to the grant priorities. The project enables unique collaboration opportunities between teachers and teaching artists and results in lessons that are engaging and reflective of the diversity of the students in these teachers' classrooms (e21). Moreover, these collaborations are enhanced by a myriad of resources and support to stimulate creative and effective curriculum development (e22). Providing these opportunities of collaboration replete with useful support will create the optimal environment for educators to create high-quality learning experiences for their students, enhancing both their understanding of civics and engagement in school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)
 - ii. 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. (7 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant lays out a clear need for this project, describing the underperformance of students in civics and the proliferation of mandates and policy decisions encouraging or requiring arts education in schools without the requisite professional support for educators. The applicant details how they are uniquely positioned to fill these needs with their target population and beyond. Finally, the applicant has a specific target population representing students with some of the greatest needs.

The applicant describes a national landscape in which many states have passed policies promoting arts education in public schools, which has created a real need for targeted professional development in the arts for educators (e33). One specific issue described by the applicant is the difficulty that educators have in evaluating the reliability of evidence purporting to show gains in student achievement by specific Arts Integration interventions (e33). As a result, educators and schools across the country committed to arts integration either spend precious time trying to discern the effectiveness of various programs or interventions, or take a chance on them, hoping they will improve student outcomes.

One specific gap highlighted by the applicant is the endemic de-prioritization of civics and social studies instruction. Specifically, the applicant notes that a 2021 NCSS study found that only 28 minutes per day are spent on social studies in the average elementary school classroom (e35). With less and less time being spent on social studies, students have less exposure to the content and are less likely to have a strong grasp of basic civic and historical concepts. The applicant proposes to maximize the time that educators have to focus on social studies, by making the learning more impactful as a result of the professional development they provide to educators and by promoting the integration of arts and civics in creative ways (e37). This approach will result in high-quality civics and arts instruction for impacted students.

Finally, this project's target population is "organizations serving disadvantaged populations" (e41). The applicant has a partnership with Distinctive Schools, The School of Arts and Enterprise, and Cesar Chavez Charter, which represent 12 schools in various geographies that have minority enrollments between 85% and 99% and FRL percentages between 61% and 91% (e43). The applicant notes that its "overarching goal" is to "establish a sustainable and innovative infrastructure that enhances civic literacy knowledge acquisition in low-income communities" (e32). Given the applicant's commitment to serving underserved students and its close collaboration with schools rooted in these communities, the project is very likely to achieve positive academic and non-academic outcomes for students with the greatest needs.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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 following factors:

- i. 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. (13 points)
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents a highly detailed and thorough management plan likely to achieve the stated objectives. Moreover, the applicant includes a plan for ongoing evaluation and feedback, although elements of this plan lack specificity and detail to ensure they will lead to sustained continuous improvement.

The applicant includes a very strong management plan in their grant application. The plan includes clear objectives, activities and milestones and all elements of the plan have dates and personnel owners (e48). For example, the plan lists its first objective, “enhance meaningful learning and engagement through consistent and sequential Civics-Arts experiences,” and then describes the series of activities and milestones required to achieve this objective (e35). They provide additional time and personnel-specific details – in this case, the first activity will be a quarterly project each year and there are nine specific individuals tasked with carrying it out (e35). This level of detail ensures that there is execution and accountability in the proposed activities, making it likelier that there will be positive outcomes for participating teachers and their students, as well as the beneficiaries of the curriculum and materials following the process.

The applicant also includes a solid framework for feedback and evaluation. The applicant describes a process of regular review of milestones, objectives, and timelines by the management team (e53). Ensuring time for regular oversight and review of the key project details will result in a strong and efficient process.

Weaknesses:

The description of the evaluation and feedback process lack some key details needed to determine their effectiveness. Specifically, the applicants have not included what they plan to measure and how whatever data they collect will be used to determine progress towards benchmarks. Having a clear set of measures to assess progress is a crucial part of any continuous improvement plan. Additionally, the applicant lacks details of the actual processes used to gather feedback and how this will inform regular change and improvement. For example, the applicant states, “the Management Team will work closely in collaboration with the project’s teaching artists, classroom teachers, and School Community Coordinators (SCC) to achieve the following objectives...” without giving details on exactly how they plan to work closely to get this work done and hear regular feedback about how the implementation is going and how it can be improved (e54). A lack of specificity around such processes leaves to chance whether they happen well and truly drive performance. 22

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

- i. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)
- ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)

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 multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)**

iv. **The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that it has adequate support to execute this project. Moreover, the applicant shows that the costs of the project are mostly reasonable and that the project is mostly sustainable, although the large proportion of project resources devoted to travel and trips raises some questions about cost reasonableness and project sustainability. Finally, the proposal demonstrates the commitment of each partner that is a part of the broader project.

The University of South Florida is clearly an institution with the infrastructure and resources to support this project. The University recently joined the prestigious Association of American Universities and employs more than 5,000 full-time staff with a \$2 billion annual budget (e55). They have a strong track record of effectively management millions in federal and non-federal grants (e55).

The applicant proposes a \$2.6 million budget over three years (e272). Personnel costs represent \$760k and indirect costs represent \$192k (e272). Given the anticipated impact and engagement of 12 teaching artists, 24 classroom teachers, 4 mentors, and 20 community hub members with a direct impact of 4,000 students across 12 schools (e45), the costs are mostly reasonable to achieve the objectives of the proposed project.

The applicant includes various plans to ensure the sustainability of the project over time, leveraging the roles of key partners. Specifically, the applicant proposes a consortium of various practitioners to serve as a repository of lessons learned and resources gained through the process of creating community hubs for arts-civics integration (e59). Creating such a structure increases the likelihood that the project will be sustained beyond the grant period.

Finally, the applicant has clear roles, responsibilities and rationale for the various project partners and they have a demonstrated commitment in supporting this project. In addition to the school partners, whose role has been extensively documented throughout the application, the applicant also includes specific experts with whom they have commitments to play key roles in the project, including Dr. Denise Davis-Cotton of the University of South Florida and Dr. Kenneth Wong of Brown University, among others (e61). These specific collaborations demonstrate the planning that went into this plan and increases the likelihood of quality collaboration that benefits participants.

Weaknesses:

The project devotes significant resources to travel/experiences for teachers, adding up to nearly \$1 million over the life of the grant. The two largest expenditures are the immersive summer learning tour and the Smithsonian learning labs, which are likely to be significant draws for participating teachers. Given that the project directly impacts 36 teachers, these specific costs are high relative to the number of individuals participating. Moreover, the exciting nature of the experiences raises the question of how the project will continue to draw active participation after the grant term, when the funding for these types of experiences is no longer available.

Reader's Score: 27

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates the widespread use of innovative, hands-on learning strategies for teachers and students.

The entire premise of the proposed project is to infuse hands-on arts disciplines in civics instruction for elementary students. The proposal lays out plans to use storytelling, video, photography, installation, dance, among others disciplines to bring to life historical and civic concepts for elementary students (e25). Such an approach will improve the experiences and learning outcomes for students in impacted classrooms.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant 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-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) Rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) 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, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant describes a rigorous, engaging and well-rounded approach to learning about civics and their project is committed to improving engagement of underserved community members.

The project represents a rigorous and well-rounded approach to learning about civics. The approach embeds core competencies of social-emotional learning, including self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills, among others (e17). The project also emphasizes the inclusion of rigorous content, with a specific focus on participatory democracy in a diverse society (e19). Moreover, the principles of the community hubs embody the expansion of engagement from people in underserved communities. Community hubs bring together school and community resources to elevate voices, empower individuals, and support the success of all students (e42). Such an approach is likely to lead to the empowerment and success of key stakeholders in this project, including teachers and students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **7**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/04/2023 10:20 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/04/2023 09:15 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University of South Florida (S422B230043)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	20
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	25	22
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	30	26
Sub Total	100	93
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement		
1. Civic Engagement	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Student Access to Resources and Opportunities		
1. Promoting Equity	7	7
Sub Total	7	7
Total	112	105

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - AHC-NA - 1: 84.422B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: University of South Florida (S422B230043)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of 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:

(i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale. (10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (10 points)

Strengths:

Overview:

The proposed project will provide educators and teaching artists with innovative instruction and professional development in American history, civics and government, and geography. The project components represent a rationale supported with relevant literature. The approach is considered exceptional based upon project components (SEL, community hubs, teaching through the arts and touch points).

Supporting Statements:

(i) The narrative includes a strong rationale supported by many studies. For example, the applicant will enhance professional development by incorporating content-rich arts activities, supported by studies (Hardiman et al., 2014; Cunningham et al., 2014; Carney et al., 2016). For example, professional development opportunities are provided to foster deeper engagement and integrated experiences for both teaching artists and classroom teachers. The impact is to subsequently equip students with essential skills to actively participate in civic engagement. The Theory of Action is further supported by a comprehensive Logic Model. This is considered a strength as it clearly describes how the project components will result in the intended outcomes (page e62) (10 points).

(ii) There are several aspects of the proposed project that are exceptional (pages e21-e26). One example is the focus on "training touchpoints". The touchpoints foster community connectedness and personal development among participants (i.e., training for collaborative classroom practice; civics arts mentors and curriculum models (page e22); Civics/Arts Themed-Based Teaching Quarterly Workshops and community collaborations; public engagement and presence and assessment and evaluation (page e24). These touchpoints are considered exceptional because they are interactive and interspersed within the arts so that educators and students, particularly disadvantaged students, can better understand history, civics, geography and government (pages e21-e24). (10 points)

Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses were noted.-

(ii) No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - i. The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (8 points)
 - ii. 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. (7 points)
 - iii. The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. (10 points)

Strengths:

Overview:

The applicant sufficiently delineated and addresses the need for the proposed project, to improve American history, civics, and Government education in underserved high-poverty communities (page e19). Areas of weaknesses were identified such as the lack of national priorities dedicated to social studies/civics instruction and lack of educator preparation are prime areas of weakness. The proposed project has identified the severity of the weaknesses and strategies to address them including focused professional development integrating a multi-tiered system of supports to address students social and emotional development. In addition, the applicant has provided sufficient information to ensure that they are serving students with the greatest needs.

Supporting Statements:

- i. The applicant satisfactorily outlines the need for the proposed project. Educators need the knowledge and tools necessary to impact civic education for students. The proposed project will provide civics literacy professional development in the arts for educators who are developing curricula students from underserved communities and provide a range of resources such as coaching, summer learning tour and team-taught units which will adequately prepare educators for engaging civics instruction (pages e33-34).
- ii. The applicant well explains that the gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified will be addressed by the proposed project, which include the lack of skills of educators to adequately teach social studies in an interdisciplinary fashion. To address the need, the applicant will build a community hub for civic engagement (page e36). The hub will offer combinations of continual professional development for educators. The PD will equip educators with the necessary tools to integrate research into their existing practices. Teachers will become more prepared to provide civics education interspersed with the arts for under-achieving students (pages e 32-37). (7 points)
- iii. The applicant has created a plan to ensure that the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with greatest needs. For example, the applicant will actively engage with low-income schools, collaborate with established organizations serving disadvantaged populations and use their expertise to broaden the project's scope and impact. Examples of partnerships include Distinctive Schools, The School of Arts and Enterprise, and the Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy (pages e41-e44). This is considered a strength in that they are positioning themselves through interagency collaboration and referrals to ensure they serve those with the greatest need. (10 points)

Weaknesses:

- i) No weaknesses were noted.
- ii) No weaknesses were noted.
- iii) No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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 following factors:

- i. 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. (13 points)**
- ii. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (12 points)**

Strengths:

Overview:

The applicant presents a well-thought-out coherent management plan that incorporates all of the required components (responsibilities, procedures, timelines, mechanisms for feedback, etc.). The plan provides a roadmap to guide project operations and may ensure successful implementation.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

- i. The narrative presents a strong 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. Objectives, activities, milestones, timelines and personnel responsible are clearly described. As an example, beginning December 2023, teams will meet weekly to begin assessment of teacher training (pages e. 48). The plan is a highly effective tool to implement, monitor and maintain project progress (pages e47-e53). (13 points)
- ii. procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project are adequate and shown to be a part of the evaluation procedures and in assigned responsibilities of the management team. For example, one of the responsibilities of the management team is to adapt project activities based on staff feedback and to adjust project activities based on valuable feedback from the project's staff and participants. The applicant demonstrates that methods to ensure feedback are integrated into the project activities which may ensure appropriate implementation (page e47). (12 points)

Weaknesses:

- i) No weaknesses were noted.
- ii) Procedures for ensuring feedback do not include a schedule of sufficient frequency which makes it difficult to determine if they will occur in a timely manner. The applicant indicates feedback will be elicited at various times throughout the project; however, this does not constitute a sequential plan of action which may mitigate timely correction and ensure successful project implementation.

Weaknesses:

Overview:

The applicant presents a well-thought-out coherent management plan that incorporates all of the required components (responsibilities, procedures, timelines, mechanisms for feedback, etc.). The plan provides a roadmap to guide project operations and may ensure successful implementation.

Supporting Statements:

- i. The narrative presents a strong 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. Objectives, activities, milestones, timelines and personnel responsible are clearly described. As an example, beginning December 2023, teams will meet weekly to begin assessment of teacher training (pages e. 48). The plan is a highly effective tool to implement, monitor and maintain project progress (pages e47-e53). (13 points)
- ii. procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project are adequate and shown to be a part of the evaluation procedures and in assigned responsibilities of the management team. For example, one of the responsibilities of the management team is to adapt project activities based on staff feedback and to adjust project activities based on valuable feedback from the project's staff and participants. The applicant demonstrates that methods to ensure feedback are integrated into the project activities which may ensure appropriate implementation (page e47). (12 points)

Reader's Score: 22

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - i. **The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (6 points)**
 - ii. **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (8 points)**
 - 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 multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence. (8 points)**
 - iv. **The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (8 points)**

Strengths:

Overview:

The narrative provides clear evidence of the availability and employability of resources to support the project. For example, costs are adequate and aligned to project objectives, thereby, enhancing the probability of successful

implementation. The applicant is well-positioned to sustain the project beyond the life of the grant, with the exception of a financial plan. It is unclear how the project will incentivize future participants. Partner commitment rests in the organizational infrastructure which is good, but external support is also highly relevant for fully impacting the project.
Supporting Statements:

i. The applicant provides a plethora of resources. Academic resources include library journals, databases, tutoring, writing support; facilities for study and classroom spaces, lecture halls and laboratories. Librarians, IT professionals and lab technicians and administrators provide needed support for project activities. Facilities are ADA accessible with Wi-Fi and Internet. The project has more than sufficient resources to appropriately implement the project (page e43). (6 points)

ii. The narrative clearly explains that the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. For example, incentives and stipends are budgeted to encourage teacher preparation. Educators receive stipends for classroom teachers, teaching artists and mentors. Additional budgeted items are field trips, online resources and access to specialized museums. The costs adequately support project activities and facilitate implementation of the project objectives (page e57). (8 points)

iii. The applicant provides strong evidence of resources and strategies to support sustainability. Teachers will inform new participants on how to effectively document their arts units and educational arts action plans. Continued application of the project, via the transfer of knowledge, will be ongoing. In addition to the availability of resource materials. For example, at projects end, 80% of teachers will have the knowledge base to be able to be able to replicate and disseminate the model on a national level and 60 be informed on how to integrate civics curricula, instruction, and assessments in multidisciplinary art forms, impacting 24 classroom teachers. These efforts are essential in scaling the project (page e45-46). (8 points)

iv. The applicant satisfactorily describes the relevance of partners and their commitment to project success. For example, its partners, the management Team, the Community Hub Council, the School-Based Collaboration Team, and the Teaching Artist Professional Development Team will work collaboratively to ensure project resources such as manuals, resource binders, toolkits, and case studies are accessible; and will provide their expertise to assist schools and educators to adapting the project components. This level of support constitutes essential components toward the success of the project (pages e60-e62). (8 points)

Weaknesses:

Overview:

The narrative provides clear evidence of the availability and employability of resources to support the project. For example, costs are adequate and aligned to project objectives, thereby, enhancing the probability of successful implementation. The applicant is well-positioned to sustain the project beyond the life of the grant, with the exception of a financial plan. It is unclear how the project will incentivize future participants. Partner commitment rests in the organizational infrastructure which is good, but external support is also highly relevant for fully impacting the project.
Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

i. The applicant provides a plethora of resources. Academic resources include library journals, databases, tutoring, writing support; facilities for study and classroom spaces, lecture halls and laboratories. Librarians, IT professionals and lab technicians and administrators provide needed support for project activities. Facilities are ADA accessible with Wi-Fi and Internet. The project has more than sufficient resources to appropriately implement the project (page e43). (6 points)

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I) No weaknesses were noted.

II) No weaknesses were noted.

III) The applicant did not provide information regarding the development of a multiyear financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e. g., SEAs, LEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success. The transfer of knowledge from current participants may not be sufficient without other necessary supports, such as by-in from LEA's.

IV) No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 26

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Innovative Activities for Civic Engagement (up to 5 points)

Under this priority, we provide funding to promote new and existing evidence-based strategies to encourage innovative civics and government learning strategies and professional development activities and programs for teachers, principals, or other school leaders, particularly such instruction, strategies, activities, and programs that benefit low income students and underserved populations. To meet this priority, a project must include one or both of the following-- a) Hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students; or b) Programs that educate students about the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

Strengths:

Overview:

The narrative delineates strategies the applicant will use to demonstrate implementation of the Competitive Preference Priority. The proposed project examines the Bill of Rights through hands on act immersed activities for students and comprehensive professional development for educators. The impact will enhance educator knowledge, skills and instructional practices to create educational practices conducive to student learning and engagement in civic activities.

Supporting Statements:

The applicant will provide innovative activities for civic engagement that include professional development and hands-on civic engagement activities for teachers and students.
Innovative. Examples include story-time, videos, arts integration, etc. provide opportunities for teachers and artists to work together.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Student Access to Resources and Opportunities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (up to 7 points)

Under this priority, and applicant must demonstrate that the applicant 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-schooltime settings (7) Alternative schools and programs (8) Juvenile justice system or correctional facilities

b) That examines the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses, and that may include one or both of the following:

c) Rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life, including civics programs that support students in understanding and engaging in American democratic practices (up to 3 points).

d) 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, through their participation and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing partnerships between civic student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives) (up to 4 points).

Strengths:

Overview:

The applicant has provided meaningful strategies to ensure equity. Participants engage in workshops, intense professional development, curricula implementation with experts in the field. Teachers have opportunity to broaden and

deepen their knowledge, practices and understanding to inform instructional practices.

Supporting Statements:

To address any inequities in student representation, BOWS participants will integrate Big Ideas and integrate curriculum models that specifically address historical omissions, underrepresented narratives, messages, and deficiencies observed in curriculum and instruction to enhance teaching practices and promote equitable access to education. In so doing, participants will enhance their own teaching practices, deepen their knowledge, beliefs, and aspirations, and use their findings to inform their instruction (page e27). The applicant will establish community hubs to provide additional community-based support. Organizations such as the Smithsonian Museum have indicated support of the project for educators and students and organizations will provide digital platforms. Partner support is more than sufficient to implement the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 7

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