

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (S310A220042)

Reader #2: *****

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - SFEC Tier 1 Panel - 4: 84.310A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (S310A220042)

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 clearly demonstrated that the proposed project has developed and aligned the project with a research - based conceptual framework. For example, the project has aligned its services and activities with two frameworks: Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement (CT Framework) and the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnership. The Dual Capacity-Building Framework is aligned with services and programming promoting strong family-school partnerships that can significantly improve learning and long-term educational outcomes for students. The CT Framework is on that has been developed for the State of Connecticut that outlines seven guiding principles: (1) build collaborative, trusting relationships focused on learning; (2) listen to what families say about their children's interests and challenges; (3) model high-quality learning practices; (4) communicate about how children are doing in school; (5) talk with students about how they want teachers and families to support their learning; (6) co-develop cultural competence among staff and families; and (7) support parents to become effective leaders and advocates for children. The applicant indicated their model was selected because with both of its tiered approach to service delivery and operators at each level receive support, guidance, and resources that help create a systemic and responsive approach to family engagement. (pgs. 5-8)

(2) The applicant effectively demonstrated that the services to be provided are reflective of up-to-date knowledge evidence-based research and best practices. The applicant cited numerous evidence-based citations that guided the context for the services and activities. The multi-tiered project provides effective family engagement approaches throughout the state including (1) home visitation programs, (2) welcoming schools, (3) family engagement planning, and (4) parent leadership training. For example, the applicant will engage participants through the Parent Teacher Home Visiting (PTHV) which is an evidenced-based program that focuses on improving family-school relationships which has been proven to successfully lead to measurable benefits for all stakeholders: students, teachers, and the school. Another example is the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) that will implemented to address significantly declined school attendance and high rates of chronic absenteeism due to COVID-19. (pgs. 6-9)

(3) The applicant successfully demonstrated that the proposed project has been designed to build capacity among partners with the potential to yield results that will extend beyond the grant period. For example, the applicant indicated that the Connecticut State Department of Education's had before the grant developed a strategic plan and framework called the Full and Equitable Partnerships with Families: Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement.

The collaboration included the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, the Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, the Commissioner's Roundtable and Design Team, parent and community organizations, state agency staff, school district officials, teacher organizations, and advocacy groups. The statewide initiative shows that the state is committed to and has prepared pathways for building capacity for family engagement. The proposed regional services approach leverages Connecticut's existing regional infrastructure and has the potential means for replication and scalability. For example, five regional hubs will be developed, and districts and schools can be added as interest grows and the project demonstrates success. (pgs. 8-13)

Weaknesses:

- (1) No weaknesses noted.
- (2) No weaknesses noted.
- (3) No weaknesses 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 provided a detailed management plan that clearly outlined. The applicant documents a quality management plan, including a chart that provides a detailed list of the project goals, objectives, and key activities that are aligned to the conceptual framework. The application provides further evidence of the management plan that clearly details the key personnel, their defined responsibilities, project milestones that each person is responsible for, and timelines. (pgs. 13-15)
- (2) The applicant clearly aligned processes and procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. For

example, the applicant indicated that the project director will report biannually to both the advisory board and the leadership team on progress toward meeting performance measures, aligned with the submission of reports to the SFEC program office. The leadership team will design an implementation plan and begin to implement strategies. The leadership team will review reports and identify specific questions or issues to raise with the advisory council. The evaluator will provide quarterly reports including fidelity of implementation and progress data. At quarterly meetings, the advisory council will review evaluation reports and ask for observations, feedback, and ideas based on identified issues. (pgs. 15-18)

(3) The applicant reasonably provided some documentation that the proposed project will have in place some procedures for ensuring products and services implemented by the program will under-go scrutiny from the team during the grant period. The applicant indicated that during the project implementation the program will identify gaps in Leadership Team expertise and contract with expert consultants and providers. For example, the evaluator will provide user-friendly quarterly reports including fidelity of implementation and progress data. The project director, with the support of project staff, will identify actions that respond to evaluator and advisory council feedback and bring them to the leadership team. (pgs. 25-27)

(4) The applicant effectively demonstrated that the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. For example, the Project Manager is 1.0 FTE, and the Professional Learning Manager is 0.5 FTE Communications Coordinator is 1.0 FTE and the Administrative Assistant is 0.5 FTE. (pgs. 20-21)

(5) The applicant effectively demonstrated that diverse perspectives will be sought throughout the planning and implementation of the project. For example, the project will assemble an Advisory Council. The primary role of the Advisory Council is to advise the Project Director, Project Manager, and the Leadership Team on project activities and hold project personnel accountable for implementation of strategies that are truly responsive to the needs of Connecticut families, schools, and communities. The project will build upon the existing Advisory Council to provide the same function for a new SFEC grant. The Council will include parents, students, community members, educators, and partner agency representatives. For example, twenty-four parents residing in urban, suburban, and rural districts across the state of Connecticut, one student, three school districts, leadership team members, and representatives from statewide and local organizations will serve on the Advisory Council. (pgs. 22-24)

Weaknesses:

- (1) No weaknesses noted.
- (2) No weaknesses noted.
- (3) No weaknesses noted.
- (4) No weaknesses noted.
- (5) No weaknesses 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:

(1) The applicant clearly describes the qualifications training and experiences of the current project director, and she has the relevant experience to implement the grants goals. For example, she is the Director of CREC's Grants and Special Projects unit and has more than twenty years of experience awarding and receiving state, federal and foundation grants. She has been the district level Title I family engagement coordinator at CREC and supported the development of a family and community education specialist network for schools participating in CREC's federal magnet schools grant. (pg. 28)

(2) The applicant provided adequate descriptions of the qualifications, relevant training and experience of the key project personnel that are already in place. For example, the project manager of Connecticut Family School Partnerships at CREC has been the Director of Family Engagement at several school districts. Prior to her work in school districts, she was with Connecticut's State Education Resource Center (SERC), providing training and technical assistance in family engagement and equity. She was also the Co-Coordinator of the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) grant funded by the US Department of Education. The applicant will hire a full-time Communications Coordinator and a Professional Learning Manager. Both positions will require at least a Bachelor's degree and five years of experience. (Appendix 5 and 6)

(3) The applicant indicated in the budget narrative that they will contract with several partners through an RFP for project services. The proposed contracts will be with partner organizations and service providers that demonstrate qualifications to provide services, experience in training and support to public education stakeholders related to effective policies and practices for parents and families, particularly those from underserved populations. For example, a contract will be solicited for a National Expert in Family Engagement and a Project Evaluator. Other subcontractors will be solicited for Professional Learning Partners, such as Parent Teacher Home Visitation (PTHV), the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) and Guiding Partnerships for Schools (GPS). (Budget Narrative)

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses noted.

(2) No weaknesses noted.

(3) No weaknesses 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 effectively demonstrated that they have accumulated numerous partners that are committed to the proposed project. Several of the partners have been onboard since 2018 and all have a demonstrated record of success in developing relationships, providing networks of support, and increasing access to educational opportunities for historically marginalized and disadvantaged populations, including families of students with special needs, English language learners, families with low-income and diverse racial and ethnic communities. The applicant provided numerous letters of support and MOUs in the Appendices to document the levels of support. For example, AFCAMP operates a federally sponsored Community Parent Resource Center, CPAC administers a federally sponsored Parent Information and Training Center, and SERC maintains a Parent Information and Training Center and provided supports in a previous grant and will continue in the SFEC project. (pgs. 28-29)

(2) The applicant adequately demonstrated that the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives and significance of the proposed project. For example, the applicant indicated that at least 65% of the funds each year will be devoted to serve communities with high concentrations of underserved families through regional hubs. Through the regional hubs the project will be able to work numerous schools and districts and to maximize the utilization of technology (local media outlets, websites, and social media platforms) to reduce costs while systematically and comprehensively informing constituents on a statewide basis. The applicant further indicated that much of the management of the project and many of the project activities will be implemented, in part, through in-kind contributions from collaborating agencies including CREC, SERC, the CSDE, and others. Through a combination of direct financial support and the contribution of in-kind services, including support for project evaluation and administrative oversight, CREC anticipates obtaining 15% matching support for the project in years 2-5. (pgs. 34-38)

(3) The applicant effectively demonstrated that the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served. For example, the applicant indicated that over the five-year period of the project 30 percent of the overall budget, each year, will be spent on establishing or expanding technical assistance for evidence-based parent education programs, such as home visitation, parent leadership training, Welcoming Schools, and family engagement planning. A review of the budget narrative documents these contracts. The applicant also plans to leverage Connecticut's system of RESCs to support its service delivery. In Years 2 and 3, 25 school districts, 100 schools and a minimum of 500 parents, educators and community partners will be served through NNPS. In Years 4 and 5, five (5) additional school districts will be added with at least two (2) schools participating in each district, meaning an additional ten (10) schools will be served. (pgs. 39-41)

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses noted.

(2) No weaknesses noted.

(3) No weaknesses 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:

The applicant clearly demonstrated the proposed project will address the impact of COVID19 on students, educators, and faculty by directing appropriate services and programs to schools and students, especially those in Connecticut's Alliance Districts state's lowest-performing schools. The services will address the unique challenges generated by COVID-19, such as academic lost and the social and emotional effects of COVID on families. For example, Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) will be implemented to address significantly declined school attendance and high rates of chronic absenteeism due to COVID-19. (pgs. 3-4)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 indicated that the proposed partner will promote equity in student access to educational resources by targeting Connecticut's Alliance Districts, by providing training to empower stakeholders from all backgrounds, and by partnering with organizations that prioritize equity. For example, the CT Welcoming Schools Initiative was born out of a desire to improve family involvement in schools and afterschool programs. The Initiative aims to make parents feel welcomed, to celebrate the diversity of the school community, and set unique goals to improve how inviting the school appears to its community. The applicant indicated that schools that take the time to develop relationships with their families and create a welcoming environment have successfully increased parent participation. (pgs. 4-5)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The applicant clearly demonstrated that the proposed project will strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change by adopting a regional approach to coordination and collaboration. The applicant will partner with Connecticut's state agencies, regional educational service centers, and community-based organizations in multiple aspects of program delivery, from the delivery of trainings to the management of the program through participation in the Advisory Board or other governing bodies. (pgs. 8-13)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (S310A220042)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	18
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	20	20
Sub Total	80	78
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Total	89	87

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - SFEC Tier 1 Panel - 4: 84.310A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Capitol Region Education Council (S310A220042)

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 application clearly demonstrates that the program design is grounded in two research-based frameworks—Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement (CT Framework) and the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships. Both frameworks emphasize the building of trusting and collaborative relationships between families and schools and communities and the importance of cultural competency and equity that are built into decision-making processes and program activities. The applicant is proposing an expansion of the current statewide family engagement center (SFEC) to Connecticut's Family-School Partnerships, A Network for Education Plus (CFSP+), which will provide for a regionalized approach to family engagement and allow for greater capacity-building. (pp. 1-11)
- 2) The application provides adequate research to confirm that the proposed project includes sufficient evidence-based and evidence-informed programming and activities. For example, the project will utilize the following evidence-based family engagement approaches: home visitation, welcoming schools, family engagement planning, and parent leadership training. The home visitation component of the program design will employ the Parent Teacher Home Visiting (PTHV) program and Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) to address to build family-school supportive relationships and to address school attendance and chronic absenteeism. The welcoming schools component of the project will implement The CT Welcoming School Initiative, which would include learning sessions on Developing Awareness, Building Knowledge, and Onsite Technical Assistance and Reflection to support family engagement initiatives in schools. The family engagement planning component of the project would include The Guiding Partnerships with Schools (GPS), which will serve as an online family engagement resource hub for educators. Additionally, Friday Café would serve as a networking discussion for people who want to support family engagement efforts. The fourth component of the program design emphasizes parent leadership training, and will provide evidence-based programming to parents to encourage parent leadership in schools. (pp. 11-19)
- 3) The application adequately documents that family engagement is a priority issue in Connecticut and across multiple agencies, organizations, and stakeholders. Thus, the high number of collaborators increases the likelihood of ongoing commitment and resources after the grant ends. The innovative regionalized infrastructure will lend itself to replicability and scalability, which will allow for expansion to additional districts and schools. (pp. 19-20)

Weaknesses:

- 1) No weaknesses noted.
- 2) No weaknesses noted.
- 3) No weaknesses 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 application provides a detailed narrative and timeline of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the project. The timeline presents a breakdown of program activities that are aligned to corresponding objectives, dates of occurrence, and the persons responsible for the tasks. For example, Objective 1 focuses on the implementation of a regional approach to family engagement, which will be supported by the identification and recruitment of districts and specific schools, the identification of regional partners, the identification of regional partner professional learning needs, district facilitator coaching meetings, district facilitator share and collaborate sessions, and a project communications plan. (pp. 20-27)

2) The application clearly documents that CFSP+ will ensure feedback and continuous improvement throughout the duration of the proposed project. Specifically, CFSP+ will contract with an external evaluator to provide ongoing process evaluation. The evaluator will share this information with the leadership team in order to aid informed decision-making and make changes moving forward. The project director will report to the advisory board and the leadership team to discuss performance measures and ensure alignment with the grant requirements. Furthermore, the advisory council will consider evaluation reports and ask for feedback on issues and concerns. This will occur on a quarterly basis. (pp. 23-24)

3) The application describes one mechanism to support the development of high-quality products and services from the proposed project. The mechanism in place is the reliance on quality staff and clarity of job roles; thus, ensuring that staff have the appropriate qualifications to provide high-quality trainings and expertise to make decisions that support the

project goals and objectives. (p. 25)

4) The time commitments for the project director, project manager, and other key project staff are adequate for the proposed project goals and objectives. The project director will allocate 0.3 FTE, and will be responsible for project leadership, budget management, and collaboration with the program evaluator to monitor project progress. The project will employ a project manager at 1.0 FTE. This position will convene the Advisory Council, provide trainings, serve as the primary point of contact for the evaluator, and lead Welcoming Schools revision. The professional learning manager will contribute 0.5 FTE to the project. The website and communications coordinator will contribute 1.0 FTE to the project. The administrative assistant will contribute 0.5 FTE to the project. (pp. 27-28)

5) The application documents the expansion of an in-place Advisory Council from CFSP to increase the diversity of members and perspectives that are included in the project. The Advisory Council will solicit membership from parents, students, community members, educators, and collaborating agencies. The Advisory Council will advise the leadership team on project activities. Of note, the Advisory Council employs a rotating membership, which allows for diversity in leadership roles and perspectives. The application also indicates that a diverse group of partners and collaborators will provide insight to the project. (pp. 29-31)

Weaknesses:

- 1) No weaknesses noted.
- 2) No weaknesses noted.
- 3) The application provides limited information regarding how the project will ensure high-quality projects and services throughout the duration of the grant. The application identifies one mechanism that supports this criterion.
- 4) No weaknesses noted.
- 5) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

1) The application thoroughly documents the project director's and project manager's qualifications. The project director has more than 20 years of experience managing state and federal grants, and has served as a family engagement coordinator supporting training and programmatic efforts for schools. The project manager holds a doctorate and currently serves as the project manager for the family school partnership at CREC. They have more than 23 years of relevant

professional experience working with students, families, and educators. (pp. 31-32)

2) The application provides clear descriptions of the required education and/or experience requirements for each of the other key personnel positions. For example, the professional learning manager position requires a bachelor's degree and a minimum of five years of experience in a related field, as well as the ability to communicate with a diverse group of stakeholders and to facilitate productive teams. The website and communications specialist position requires a bachelor's degree in communications, website development, or a related field, or a minimum of three years of experience in a related field. Furthermore, the position requires advanced knowledge of website development tools and graphic design and video production skills. (pp. 31-32, Appendix 6)

3) The application provides a Request for Qualifications form from partner organizations and service providers to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of providing training, information, and support to the CT State Department of Education, schools, educators, parents, and diverse families and students and that they can demonstrate experience assisting families with participating in their children's education. Signed letters of commitment from partnering agencies are included. (Appendix 7, Letters of Support)

Weaknesses:

- 1) No weaknesses noted.
- 2) No weaknesses noted.
- 3) No weaknesses 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 application provides appropriate documentation to demonstrate the commitment of the identified partners. Letters of support from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), Connecticut Regional Education Service Center(RES-C) Alliance, Parent Teacher Home Visits, University of Connecticut Extension People Empowering People (PEP) Program, Connecticut Children's Alliance, a parent that currently serves as a co-chair for the Connecticut SFEC Advisory Council, Danbury Public School's Office of Family, Schools, and Community Partnerships, Danbury Family Learning Center, Inc., Transformative Solutions in Education, and The National Network of Partnering Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University are included. (Appendix Letters of Support)

2) The application provides a detailed budget narrative that breaks down costs according to personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, contractual, other, and indirect costs. The costs appear reasonable, with five personnel accounting for

\$295,625 in year 1 and contractual costs accounting for \$498,000 in year 1. The application specifies that 65% of the funds each year will be utilized to serve communities with high concentrations of underserved families. In addition, in-kind donations from several collaborating agencies are included. (pp. 34-35, Budget Narrative)

3) The costs presented in the application appear reasonable in relation to the expected number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. CREC will dedicate 30% of grant funds across five years to establishing and expanding technical assistance for evidence-based parent education programs. The project will support 25 school districts, 100 schools, and 500 parents, educators, and community partners in years 2 and 3. Additionally, the grant will serve five school districts with a minimum of two participating schools in years 4 and 5. (p. 35)

Weaknesses:

- 1) No weaknesses noted.
- 2) No weaknesses noted.
- 3) No weaknesses 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:

c) The application indicates that CFSP+ will address the impact of Covid-19 on students, educators, and faculty by focusing on schools and students from Connecticut's Alliance Districts and through the implementation of the LEAP program. By focusing on the Alliance Districts, CFSP+ will ensure that the lowest performing districts, which includes 200,000 students, will receive priority with regard to family engagement programming and outreach. This is critical because Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted disadvantaged and underserved families and students. Furthermore, the LEAP program will be implemented to address the decline in school attendance and the increase in chronic absenteeism due to Covid-19. The application clearly notes that LEAP will allow for coordination between Regional Educational Service Centers and local organizations in order to address student needs, such as broadband services, academic supports, tutoring, and social service needs. (pp. 3, 10-13)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

a) The application clearly indicates that CFSP+ will focus their programming on Connecticut's Alliance Districts, as they report as the lowest performing districts. The project will support K-12 students across multiple districts, schools, and communities. The Learner Engagement and Attendance Program (LEAP) will address school attendance and chronic absenteeism issues due to Covid-19. LEAP will also provide access to basic and social service needs through cross-coordination between the state's RESCs) an CREC. (pp. 3, 10-13)

b) An Advisory Council will encourage family members to participate and serve in leadership roles. The Advisory Council will review and provide feedback and recommendations regarding project activities. Parent Leadership Training will be implemented to provide parents and families with information and skills to be able to engage with schools and take on leadership roles. (pp. 3, 18-19)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 application documents that CFSP+ will strengthen and increase cross-agency coordination and community engagement through the adoption of a regional design approach that encourages collaboration across state agencies, regional education service centers (RESCs), and community-based organizations. The Advisory Council will serve as a communal space for the project and will include representation from a variety of stakeholders. Examples of parent leadership collaborative efforts include LEAP, Parent Leadership Training Institute, Parents Supporting Educational Excellence, People Empowering People, and ASPIRA Parents for Excellence. (pp. 3-4, 12-19, 29-31)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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