

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/26/2022 12:52 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (S310A220031)

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	20
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	15	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Adequacy of Resources	20	19
Sub Total	80	79
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	88

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (S310A220031)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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

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

Strengths:

(1) The applicant describes a clear, thorough conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. For example, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network's (SPAN's) approach to family engagement is informed by dual capacity-building, including support for families, family-led and CBOs, and professionals to develop skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and connections to support student learning. The project's approaches are based on evidence-based practices (EBPs), and resources will be utilized to expand the practices through the evaluation. The applicant demonstrates the Family Engagement Hub (FE Hub) Conceptual Framework (CF) and Logic Model. This demonstrates that child and family outcomes are at the center of the conceptual framework. Outcome assessment is infused at all levels and it involves the systematic process of ongoing inquiry that uses multiple measures to assess efficacy. The achievement of these outcomes is supported by shared learning, coaching and mentoring, and collaboration and shared leadership. The framework includes core values of strengths-based empowerment (individual level), dual capacity-building (organization level), and equity and authentic, impactful engagement (all levels). The outcomes, approaches, and core value are achieved by the use of effective/EBPs, Improvement Science/continuous quality improvement (CQI), and Active Implementation (pgs. 2-4; e346-e358).

(2) The applicant describes comprehensive services to be provided by the proposed project that reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. The applicant demonstrates that the FE HUB will use SPAN's extensive and up-to-date knowledge of research and effective practices to attain the three goals aimed at increasing informed and effective family engagement and family-professional collaboration and partnerships in improving student learning and development. The project will use EBPs in outreach, dissemination, service delivery, continuous quality improvement (CQI), and evaluation. The project will use effective approaches in training, TA, and support. It will provide direct services to parents and families through evidence-based activities to engage families in supporting their children's learning and linking parent community involvement to learning. The training will reflect up-to-date knowledge on adult learning and on the importance of using multiple approaches as well as the realities imposed on families, youth, and professionals by COVID-19. The project, for individual workshops will use the following three models of learning: on Demand, virtual, and in-person. The FE Hub's more extensive training programs will use an evidence-based multi-state participatory process that builds on each participant's foundational information and will grow their knowledge over time (pgs. 4-5; e346-e358).

(3) The applicant clearly describes how the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend

beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. The FE Hub will build capacity of families, family leaders, family organizations, CBOs, schools, district, and state professionals. The applicant describes how the evaluation plan outline how the project will ensure that desired outcomes are being achieved among all participants across the three tiers of training, TA, and support. The thorough plan demonstrates that the results will extend beyond the period of funding. The project has developed a team of trained family leaders and professionals that will continue to use their knowledge for many years and the New Jersey Department of Education will have an approved family engagement policy that will be implemented statewide. The leaders in the communities identified for the most intensive support will have been trained and supported and will engage in needs assessment and prioritization and action plan development and implementation. All reports, tools, and materials, including information and resources for families and professionals and reports of better and promising practices will continue to be disseminated, including on the FE Hub website to ensure access to national, state, and local audiences. The partners will continue to engage in efforts to identify and utilize resources to sustain the work of the FE Hub (pgs. 5-19; e346-e358).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

Strengths:

- (1) The applicant describes a detailed management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The

proposed project is governed by a Board that majority composition includes parents of children ages birth to 26. The Board also includes representatives from diverse racial/ethnic, geographic, and professional backgrounds, and males and females. The Project Co-Directors will be responsible for goals and objectives, evaluation, supervision of the Regional FE Specialists, and communication with the Project Officer. The applicant will use the detailed logic model to monitor timely completion of activities. The Training Director will directly supervise trainers, update existing training curricula, and identify effective training curricula. The Director of Technical Assistance (TA) will directly supervise the Family Resource Specialists (FRSs) who will provide FE information and assistance to at least 2,500 families and professionals each year (pgs 20-21; e346-e358).

(2) The applicant describes clear procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. The applicant describes formative evaluation activities that will provide feedback on the project activities. The project will keep summary data on participants, activities, and timelines; assess participant feedback on the quality, relevance, usefulness, and impact of products and services; and assess progress towards achieving outcomes. The data collection will be ongoing, and the data will be entered into the Contact Management System (CMS) in which reports can be generated. The immediate and follow-up surveys will be used for TA and workshop evaluations and for assessing qualitative and quantitative outcomes of services, with the external evaluator (pgs. 21-22).

(3) The applicant describes clear mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. The project will use both active implementation and improvement science to ensure high quality products and services. Both SPAN and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) are working with the State implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-Based Practices (SISEP) national TA center. SPAN will use the Plan-Do-Study-Act model of improvement science to ensure Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). In years 2 and 4, the external evaluator will conduct an Implementation Evaluation to ensure that activities are implemented with fidelity (pg. 22).

(4) The applicant clearly describes time commitments of the Project Co-Directors/TA Coordinators and other key project personnel that are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant describes the following appropriate time commitments of key personnel: Co-Directors (1.00 FTE), Information Specialist (1.00 FTE), and Regional Family Engagement TA Coordinators (3.00 FTE). The project staffing for the project will total 7.15 FTE for a total of 1,710 workdays per year (pgs. 23; e332; e335).

(5) The applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, and recipients and beneficiaries of services. The applicant reports that all of the national and regional projects and the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) have advisory committees representing parents, professionals, and local, and state agencies. The project has letters of commitment from more than 30 state, local, and community agencies and family groups and leaders. More than half of the board are parents of children 0-26 and represent the perspectives of business, higher education, teacher preparation, health care, youth leadership, and community development. The participant data will be reviewed to inform project operation and the website will include a module where site visitors can provide feedback (pg, 23).

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses were noted.

(2) No weaknesses were noted.

(3) No weaknesses were noted.

(4) No weaknesses were noted.

(5) No weaknesses were noted.

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

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

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.
- (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.
- (3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates a quality plan for employing personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project's target population. For example, the applicant's personnel policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender/gender identification, race, ethnicity, national origin, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or language. The applicant encourages applications from diverse individual by posting job openings with CBOs that primarily serve underrepresented groups; advertising open positions in publications accessed by under-represented groups; and actively outreaching to parent leaders. The applicant's staffing demonstrates the commitment to employment from members of traditionally underrepresented groups. The staff is 27% Caucasian, 45% African-American, 22% Latina, 3% south Asian, and 3% Native American; the Management Team is 60% African-American; and its Executive Director is Native American (pgs. 23-24).

(1) The applicant clearly describes the qualifications of Co-Project Directors, including formal training and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project and experience in designing, managing, or implementing similar projects. The project will be managed by a team that includes Project Co-Directors, under the leadership of the Senior Director for State/Local Programs overseen by the SPAN Executive Director. One of the Co-Project-Directors holds a bachelor's degree in Economics/International Relations; is currently the Co-Project Director of START Engaging Parents of Students with Disabilities (EPSD); and is currently the Program Coordinator for the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) Early Reading (ER) Family Engagement. The other Co-Project Director currently directs SPAN's Special Education Volunteer Advocates (SEVA) project, funded by the NJ Department of Education; and currently on the Board of the Egenolf Early Childhood Learning Center, the first childcare center in NJ to gain National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation. The Senior Director for State/Local Programs holds the following qualifications: Master's degree in Public Health with a concentration in Urban Health Administration; experience serving as National Program Director at the What to Expect Foundation and developed strategic cross-sector partnerships, directed national professional development and curriculum development for practitioners, and oversaw efforts to integrate the prenatal health literacy program into evidence-based maternal-infant programs; currently the Co-Chair of the NJ Statewide Network on Cultural Competence and is on the Prevention Committee of the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (pgs. 25-26; e172-e180).

(2) The applicant describes the relevant qualifications required of each of the key project personnel to be used in the project, including formal training and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project. These staff members include the following: Regional Family Engagement Specialists (3.0 FTE), and Information Specialist (1.0 FTE). The key personnel have extensive relevant training and experience to fulfill project goals and objectives. All of the proposed personnel are currently on staff (pgs. 26-27; e163-e256).

(3) The applicant describes the qualifications, including the relevant training and experience, of project consultants. For example, two consultants, who both hold a Ph.D., bring expertise in the areas of literacy and positive SEL to the proposed project. One of the consultants is the Co-Author of Book Smart: How to Support and Develop Successful, Motivated Readers; currently an Associate Professor of Psychology at Fairleigh Dickinson University; and has research that focuses on the interaction between early reading skills and behavioral development. The other consultant is currently the Director for the Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) Lab and the Co-Director of SEL4NJ, Co-Leader of SEK4US, and Co-Director of the Academy for SEL in Schools (pgs. e215-e241).

Weaknesses:

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

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

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

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

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

Strengths:

(1) The applicant demonstrates the relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. The applicant, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and the NJ Department of Educator (NJDOE) are partners to establish the NJ Family Engagement Hub, a Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC). Other partners are districts, professional associations, CBOs, and civil rights groups. SPAN houses the National Parent TA Center and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA_-funded National RSA Transition TA Center, and co-directs the MCHB-funded TA center, Leadership in Family Professional Partnerships. SPAN provides TA to 26 Region A Parent Center via 3 USED-funded projects. SPAN has office in Newark and on the joint military base and staff in 20 other locations of the state. The applicant describes a demonstrated commitment to the proposed project. SPAN describes its demonstrated experience in State and LEA Capacity Building and its demonstrated experience in Diverse Parent Leadership Development (pgs. 28-33).

(2) The applicant describes costs that are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. The budget was developed using information and experience gained through SPAN's 35 years of operating a statewide Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), 32 years of providing information and support to families, and 18 years of working with districts to develop local Parent Advisory groups. The budget includes the following

federal funds: \$999,389 (Year 1), \$999,389 (Year 2), \$999,520 (Year 3), \$999,520 (Year 4), and \$999,967 (Year 5) for a total 5-year cost of \$4,997,785 (pgs. 34-36; e332-e344).

(3) The applicant describes costs that are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. The proposed budget of \$4,997,785 is reasonable to provide support to the SEA and 75 LEAs serving over 650 schools (538 in years 1-3) and 450,000 students (355,358 in years 1-3). The project staff will develop and support the implementation of a system framework and provide intensive and targeted TA to support Primary LEAs to develop systemic services for family engagement that is focused on helping children meet challenging state standards, especially literacy and SEL. The project staff will develop and maintain a website and develop and disseminate resources via 50,000 contacts. The project staff will facilitate one statewide conference/yearly (350 participants), 24 regional workshops/year (500 participants/year in years 1-2, with an additional 700/year in years 3-5). The project staff will provide webinars (12/year for 1,200 participants), for a total of 12,350 to be trained over 5 years. The project will serve 1,875-2250 underserved parents with intensive supportive leadership development by Parents, Inc. over 5 years, and 50,000 to be reached with information and resources over 5 years. Therefore, the costs are reasonable both in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits (pgs. 34-36; e332-e344).

Weaknesses:

(1) No weaknesses were noted.

(2) The applicant discusses the following two positions in the narrative but does not include a line item in the budget for the Family Resource Specialists and the Web Content Manager (pg. 27).

(3) No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 19

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

(a)(b)(c) The applicant provides a clear description of how the project will address Competitive Preference Priority 2: Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty. For example, the project will provide evidence-based practices to increase informed and effective family engagement (FE) in improving student learning and development via supports to remove barriers for FE in education and support parent involvement policies via three tiers of information, training, assistance, and support. The three tiers (universal, targeted, and intensive) will address the impact of COVID-19 on students, families, communities, and educators, including the impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic. The project staff will work with communities most negatively impacted by the pandemic via needs/asset-mapping, schools to re-engage and support disengaged students and families, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide resources and supports to meet the basic, fundamental health and safety needs of students, families and educators, and the social, emotional mental health, an academic needs of student through inclusive and culturally/linguistically appropriate methods. The project staff will work with the NJ Office of Resilience and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Collaborative to implement the education areas of NJ's ACEs Action Plan (training on SEL, Mental Health First Aid, and trauma-informed practices) (pg. 10).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices**

and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives)).

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive description of how the project will address Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting equity in student access to educational resources, and opportunities. (a)(1) The proposed project is designed to promote equity in access to educational resources and opportunities focused on evidence-based family engagement in literacy. The proposed project will provide intensive and targeted Technical Assistance (TA) to support Primary Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop systemic services for family engagement (15/year, for a total of 75 districts) (pgs. 10-11).

(b)(1) The project is designed to examine inequities related to increasing student racial or socioeconomic diversity. The staff will work with districts to identify parent leaders who are representative of student demographic diversity with targeted outreach to parents representing under-performing student groups, such as members of Special Education, Bilingual, Title I, and Early Childhood Advisory Groups to serve on local majority-parent FE ACs (pgs. 10-11).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

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

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

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

Strengths:

(a) The applicant provides a clear plan to address Competitive Preference Priority 4: Strengthening cross-agency coordination and community engagement. For example, this Priority is addressed in Goal 3: Enhance cross-agency coordination at the state and local levels and community engagement to advance systemic change aimed at improving outcomes for students and meet family well-being needs in underserved communities. This will be achieved through the implementation of Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WS/WC/WC) approaches; community collaboratives that will bring together partners for shared learning and action; and state and local Family Engagement Advisory Committees (FE AC) efforts. The project will engage a variety of partners concerned with child development and family

well-being in communities receiving intensive technical assistance in community collaboratives to support family engagement, academic and social-emotional development, and family well-being (pgs. 18-19).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (S310A220031)

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	18
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 #3 - SFEC Tier 1 Panel - 3: 84.310A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (S310A220031)

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 well-describes the design of its New Jersey Family Engagement Hub Project (NJFE Hub) to address providing professional development to educational professionals, and parents to impact the academic learning for high needs and disadvantaged students in the settings of homes, early childhood centers, and elementary and secondary schools (p. e15). The project description provides a complete plan design to disseminate effective family engagement practices to reach large numbers of parents, students and educators in 75 high needs local school districts (urban, suburban, and rural), develop services for family engagement that assist children in meeting New Jersey's State Academic Standards, and work with families, community agencies, communities, educators, throughout the state in facilitating statewide workshops, webinars, and conferences (12,350 participants over the five project years), (pp. e8, e15).

The conceptual framework for this project provides is well-detailed and includes a complete, cohesive, aligned to project goals/objectives/outcomes Logic Project Model with interrelated resources and inputs, outputs and expected outcomes leading to improved educational, social, and emotional outcomes for student for family well-being (pp. e22, e347-e358). The applicant clearly shows core values of strengths-based empowerment (individual level), dual capacity-building of organizations (among community, family, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and State Education Agency (SEA) levels), and equity and authentic and impactful engagement (students, communities, LEA, SEA, and families) as it will engage in on-demand, virtual, and in-person learning modes (pp. e21-e23).

(2) Numerous effective up-to-date research knowledge from effective educational/organization research for effective practices gives a firm foundation to the strategies for this project. Evidence bases are well described for their relationship to the project strategies and citations of the quality researchers/research organizations conducting/collecting the best practices. Research for this project includes The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model; Group Alchemy: Six Elements of Highly Successful Collaboration; Cashman's (2014) Leading by Convening Model for Engagement; Adult Learning Theory; J. Ziobulsky's research for Parents as Champions for literacy; Creating Collaborative Action Team: Working Together for Student Success Model; Early Childhood Recommended Practices; Tucker's (2011) Differential Family Practices; Developing Early Literacy research of van Bysterveldt, A. K., Gillon, G. T., & Moran, C. (2006); and Tiered Systems of Supports for Social-Emotional Learning (pp. e22,e25; e152, e154, e156-e161).

(3) To a great extent, the applicant's project is designed with several effective strategies that will build capacity during the project to sustain the vital project elements of family engagements in the students' learning processes and yield results of a closer family connection to learning and higher student achievement. Processes are well-described and diverse, i.e., project partners' agreement to allocate continued resources to spread the NJFE Hub activities, NJFE Hub instructors becoming trained presenters to scale up and sustain activities for the New Jersey Department of Education, Parent Group Specialists being developed to continue their efforts past the grant cycle to guide parent advisory groups, having community organization partners on each of the 28 LEAs' parent teams to continue their work past the grant cycle (pp. e15, e24, e34, e44, e50).

All these strategies are well-developed and designed to increase and sustain the opportunities for family and student engagement in the educational, mental, and social learning taking place for the children and are addressing equity of opportunities for families/students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

Strengths:

(1) The applicant provides several key aspects of a management plan. Specificity and thoroughness are noted for the activities being well-linked to goals and objectives (pp. e24-e37). A well-explained example is the Activity Related to Goal 1 and Objective 1.1: By Year 1, Quarter 2, establish the FE Hub Advisory Committee of 30 members representing New Jersey's diversity, with membership including a majority of parents, representing with expertise in improving services for disadvantaged children, local school representatives (elementary and secondary schools), students, business/community representatives, and SEA and LEA representatives (p. e24).

(2) A convincing discussion is presented for the adequacy of several of the important pieces of a continuous improvement

processes in the implementation of this project. Quality processes include gaining participant feedback after project sessions and activities; assessing participant feedback on the quality, relevance, usefulness and impact of products and services; having informal “chats” with families and youth about the project’s activities and service; implementing a youth advisory board (NJ YELL) to provide project input; gaining input from the Advisory Board; and utilizing the Plan-Do-Study-Act Model for continued project improvement (p. e40). These strategies are a major part of a complete process for continued improvement of this project.

(3) Many methods to ensure high quality project activities. The applicant describes that it will utilize some materials/resources from credible sources to better ensure high-quality, i.e., materials from the Regional Education Labs, the National Center for Mental Health in Schools and the Center for Parent Information and Resources (p. e40). Another viable strategy planned to ensure high quality of activities and services is the collecting and analyzing of the participant feedback following each service or presentations (p. e40).

(4) The applicant provides appropriate project time allocation and roles for its key personnel. Examples of clarity include the Project Co-Directors’ FTE unit of 1.0; the Family Engagement Specialists (3) at 1.0 FTE each; and the Product Development Coordinator at .20 FTE (pp. e52, e332). The roles of these positions are well-detailed for this proposed project. For example, the Project Co-Directors each have their duties outlined – one will have the primary responsibility for the technical assistance to the SEA and the other Co-Director will be responsible for the targeted and intensive technical assistance to the LEAs. Both will be responsible for the commencement of the project start-up, developing a project work plan, ensuring staffing of all positions, data collection, management and reporting for project programs and services (pp. e332-e333). The applicant’s thorough description of these key personnel’s roles and project time commitments will lead to a sequential and well-organized project to meet the project’s objectives for these positions.

(5) Concrete and effective measures are in place to guarantee a diversity of perspectives will be utilized in the operation of this project. Diversity of ideas and opinions for family engagement in education are varied, such as through voices of youth, parents, project partners, educators, business people, and project staff who will address the school and community needs for education (p. e41). Perspectives will be gained from the Project Advisory Council (with a majority being parents), from satisfaction surveys from project participants, and via a project website that has a module for visitors to give project feedback. The applicant well-describes the diversity of feedback that will be gained from the Project Advisory Council that will contain parents, educators, representatives from the SEA and the participating LEAs, university staff for teacher preparation, healthcare, family organizations, and Community-Based Organizations. (pp. e23, e41-e42). Other perspectives will be provided by the project staff at their monthly management team meetings (p. e42). The applicant’s attention to including a wide diversity of voices will create project strategies and products that will better meet the needs of the families, schools, educators, students, and community organizations to increase effective family engagement activities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant fully explains several strategies to effectively encourage persons from traditionally underrepresented populations to apply for personnel positions for this project. Strategies include posting project job vacancies with the community-based organizations, with organizations representing diverse cultures (the NAACP and the NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice), in publications accessed by underrepresented groups, by encouraging parent leaders to apply, and in the applicant's offices in diverse communities (p. e42). A clear and intentional plan for recruiting project personnel is presented, and such activities will maintain and enhance the diversity of the applicant's personnel and the project staff to better represent populations that have been traditionally marginalized.

(1) The qualifications, relevant training, and career experiences of the Executive Project Director and the Project Co-Directors are well-explained and of high quality to ensure the success of this project. The Executive Project Director holds a J Juris Doctor of Law (J.D.) degree from Michigan Law School, has served as Executive Director the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network for 27 years, and has implemented large projects and programs, including ones relevant to this proposed project (p. e42). She has actively led and participated in the Family-to-Family Health Information Center, the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, and the Parent Training and Information Center (p. e177).

This project's Co-Directors have quality educational and career experiences relevant to this project, i.e., both have attained university degrees. . The project's Senior Project Director has quality educational and career experiences relevant to this project, including earning a master's degree in Public Health and working in an organization who develops and implements national professional development programs and strategic cross-sector partnerships, the National Program Director at the What to Expect Foundation (p. e43). The Co-Directors of this project demonstrate higher education degrees or continued learning at the collegiate level, i.e., one Co-Director has a B.S. degree in Economics and International Relations and the other Co-director has coursework completion at the Cittone Institute and the Brookdale Community College (pp. e44- e45, e183, e193). They also have career experiences relevant to this project, including one Co-Director leading the NJ Tiered Systems of Support-Early Reading Collaboration (a Federally funded grant program (p. e43).

(2) The other key personnel of the full-time Regional Family Engagement Coordinators are well-described to have quality educational backgrounds and relevant career experiences that include currently taking coursework or have completed university degrees in human resources and K-6 education. They also have relevant experiences of leading human resources for organizations, implementing parent advocacy programs, and conducting Individualized Education Plan facilitator trainings (pp. e184-e192). Such high quality and project-relevant education and career experiences will ensure the project will be implemented with fidelity to the grant initiative's purpose and the goals of the project.

(3) The applicant well-details its project's consultants' expertise and backgrounds that enable them to effectively utilize their experiences in implementing activities in this project. The two consultants bring their content expertise in the areas of literacy, parent engagement in education, and effective methodologies in Social Emotional Learning (p. e46). One consultant is a Professor of Psychology and has conducted meaningful research in teacher professional development in literacy and the other consultant is a researcher who has designed strategies for parents to address their children's literacy, interpersonal, social, and emotional skills (p. e46).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 presents details of the commitment of the project partner, the New Jersey Department of Education, i.e., support letter from the New Jersey Department of Education for its support as a partner and its roles in the project (pp. e264-e265). The Department of Education and the applicant have a long-standing relationship in providing technical assistance to parent and educator groups, including the two working together to facilitate Communities of Practice in the state for Parent Technical Assistance Centers (p. e48). In addition, the demonstrated commitment of the SEA and the applicant in forming parent engagement groups is well-detailed, i.e., serving over 40,043 parents, and 16,829 professional educators in 80 school districts (p. e49). The partner demonstrates its commitment to this project with funds for the project, utilization of some of its staffing for this project, and its network with all the LEAs in the state, i.e., New Jersey Department of Education will provide support for product development, delivery of workshops, coordination of program logistics, and outreach to attain LEA participation and partnerships (p. e53).

(2) Reasonableness and clarity of a relationship to the project's design and potential significance is demonstrated for several of the proposed costs. Well-detailed identification is shown for most of the item(s), categories of expenses, and cost estimates for all five project years. An example of reasonableness is the cost for the Travel for staff to in-state meetings and trainings, product development, planning meetings, and out-of-state conferences and grantee meetings, i.e., total five-year Travel Budget of \$55,000 (p. e336). Another well-defined budget category is the Contractual Costs for a five-year total of \$375,000, i.e., fiscal audit each year at \$17,500, translations/interpretations of resources/materials in needed languages at an annual projected expense of \$7,500, web development for a total of \$94,500 and evaluation expenses for an estimated \$75,000 per year (p. e336).

The applicant shows that the funding for this project includes a significant matching of funds of \$779,000 for utilization in project years 2-5 (pp. e54, e341). Clear details are shown for the calculation, purpose, and source of the matching funds, i.e., New Jersey Department of Education's in-kind donation of \$49,500 for project use including identification, training and engagement of parent leaders and staff for the implementation of SPAN's Parents As Champions for School Health and Empowering Women in Community Leadership for Healthier Families (p. e341). Other well-explained matching funds are derived from the applicant (in-kind project support for salaries of the Co-Directors), participating LEAs for in-kind resources for project conferences, and Head Start (in-kind workshop spaces) (pp. e341-e342). All these matching contributions will greatly add to the availability of meeting/conference spaces and provide additional in-kind staffing for this project.

(3) The applicant well-explains that its total Budget of \$4,997,785 (five-year total) is reasonable to the number of LEAs, schools, and students with the project's elements, i.e., serving 75 LEAs, over 650 schools, 450,000 students in project years 1-3, and 1,875-2,250 underserved parents (pp. e53-e54, e343). The anticipated benefits for these large numbers of persons include development of systemic services for enhanced family engagement, higher levels of literacy for the

students, and greater levels of social-emotional literacy for the youth and younger children (p. e54). Additionally, the applicant details that educators' knowledge of family engagement patterns and effective strategies will increase as they assist the students in meeting the state academic standards (p. e54).

Weaknesses:

(2) Some lack of reasonableness exists in the Budget. There is a lack of clarity for the budgeting of some project personnel. Two personnel positions appear in the Narrative, but are not noted for title, salary, fringe benefits in the Budget. The applicant is lacking titles, salaries, and fringe benefits in its Project Budget for project personnel of Family Resource Specialist and a Web Content Manager which are listed as project personnel in the Narrative (pp. e45, e52, e332).

The applicant does not demonstrate in its Narrative or Budget how it will devote the obligatory 30% or more of the project funds for activities for evidence-based parent education (pp. All Narrative, Budget, Attachments). Further information is needed by the applicant to better indicate specificity in the Budget to show the obligatory emphasis upon evidence-based parent education.

Reader's Score: 18

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

(a)(b) and (c) The applicant well-explains that its project will have specific elements to address the impacts on students, families, and educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. Details are shown that it will conduct a needs assessment/asset mapping of students/families and educators for how they and their communities were impacted (p. e28). In addition, this project will have elements to re-engage and support disengaged students and families and provide community-based organizations more sources and supports to meet the basic, health, safety, social, emotional, and academic needs expressed and seen in educators, families, and students. Specific examples of providing those supports are the New Jersey Office of Resilience and the ACE Collaborative implementing an Action Plan containing training of families and

teachers in Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health First Aid, and trauma-informed practices (p. e28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) Establishing, expanding, or improving the engagement of underserved community members (including underserved students and families) in informing and making decisions that influence policy and practice at the school, district, or State level by elevating their voices and their perspectives and providing them with access to opportunities for leadership (e.g., establishing student government programs and parent and caregiver leadership initiatives)).**
- (2) Increasing student racial or socioeconomic diversity, through developing or implementing evidence-based policies or strategies that include one or more of the following:**
 - (i) Ongoing, robust family and community involvement.**
 - (ii) Intra- or inter-district or regional coordination.**
 - (iii) Cross-agency collaboration, such as with housing or transportation authorities.**
 - (iv) Alignment with an existing public diversity plan or diversity needs assessment.**

Strengths:

(1) The applicant well-describes the project's activities to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in homes during out-of-school time and in all levels of schools (early childhood, elementary, middle, and high schools), i.e., the Literacy Strategies for Families element to occur out of school time in the home (p. e33). Equity of services and programming is noted throughout this project for underserved students who are of different ages, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and academic needs. For example, project staff will utilize their abilities to serve the diversity of students, as the personnel are collectively able to speak 8 languages and are diverse in cultures/ethnicities: African American, Latina, and South Asian (p. e8).

(2)(i) The applicant well-explains that its project will increase student racial or socioeconomic diversity, through developing and implementing evidence-based strategies that involve ongoing/continuous, robust family and community involvement for the improvement of students' educational and social/emotional learning. Strategies include the evidence-based Parents As Champions for Literacy Program (involves training educators and parents for effective teaching and learning for students of different ages, diverse cultural/linguistic backgrounds, and academic needs (p. e33). Other key strategies to ensure an increase in services for student racial and socioeconomic include the Empowering Women in Community Leadership for Healthier Families, promotion of leadership opportunities on the communities' Advisory Boards for this project and expanding the leadership roles for disadvantaged and a diversity of ethnicities of students on the project's Youth Advisory Boards (NJ YELL) (pp. e29, e40).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a strong explanation of its establishing and enhancing its cross-agency partnerships to meet the family wellbeing needs. Specificity is noted for the specific Project Goals and Objectives – Goal 3, Objectives 3.1, 3.2 for engaging in a wide variety of partners concern with child development and family well-being and proving intensive support and leadership develop to parents most negatively impact by COVID-19 and/or with the child welfare system (p. e36). Examples of the cross-agency partnerships include the applicant partnering with several agencies, including Parents, Inc – New Jersey affiliate of Parents Anonymous, Family Success Centers operated by Community-Based Organizations, New Jersey Black Issues Convention Organization, Save Our Schools NJ Community Organization, and the Newark Trust for Education (pp. e307, e315, e319). These agencies are described to be collaborating with the applicant in providing several programs of well-being, such as the Parents as Champions for Healthy Schools (p. e32), and child nutrition and literacy in the Head Start Programs, and health and nutrition needs from the New Jersey Department of Health Maternal and Child Health Department (p. e360).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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