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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DeSoto Independent School District (S374A210002)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	20
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	14
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	25	21
Sub Total	100	85
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Total	110	93

Panel #5 - TSL - 5: 84.374A

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

Applicant: DeSoto Independent School District (S374A210002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining evidence of the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.
   (ii)   The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.
   (iii)   The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.
   (iv)   The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

   General:

   Overview

   Several well-supported needs are presented for the project. The application links grant activities, strategies/activities, and identified needs and gaps and thoroughly describes how it will integrate with and build upon its current efforts of a Human Capital Management System (HCMS) for teachers. The applicant will need to better collect student demographic data to study how each grade level at each school is academically performing so that project interventions are more targeted for both the students and teachers (pp. e15, e30-e31).

   Strengths

   The specific gaps in human resource services, effective infrastructure for professional development for school principals and assistant principals, and opportunities to better address the needs of educators are detailed for the targeted DeSoto Independent School District. The applicant demonstrates the district's needs as evidenced in a lack of vital infrastructure to hire, develop, and retain effective school administrators, lack of positive learning environments in the schools, and a lack of high-quality and highly effective teachers who were supported by highly effective school leaders (pp. e18-e19, e21). By assessing human resource management problems in the schools, the applicant can better address locating effective potential applicants and/or growing their own in order to have the most effective teachers hired for their schools (pp. e15, e30-e31).

   An importance exists for accurately establishing the needs of students prior to developing any project, so that appropriate student and school staff outcomes will be appropriately identified, and the school district details specific gaps in its human resource development for school educators. The identification of the gaps will make the applicant focus on key issues that will need to be addressed instead of having a more generalized focus on just improving teacher training or just improving all subject area content for the students (pp. e15, e30).

   The Leadership Excellence, Achievement, and Development Project (LEAD) is part of the LEA's new strategic plan and commitment to improve student learning. The LEA is incorporating its student achievement data tracking systems (Department of Research, Evaluation & Design) and the new Student Support Department into this project's focus on

increasing student achievement and engaging school administrators in leading the new focus (p. e29).

The project will better align all educator evaluations and the LEA's compensation system to link to achieving greater student outcomes, focus on individual student needs and track individual students' performance data to improve instruction, focus on the Texas Educational Academic Standards for students, and engage students in student-centered teaching and learning, and provide students to grade-level, appropriate, high quality instructional materials (pp. e27-e28).

Weaknesses

The applicant does not provide clear supporting data of student population size, ethnicities, rates of special education or English Learners by grade levels for each participating school.   It is difficult to fully ascertain the extent of any gap or weakness in these schools without disaggregated data specific to each school to demonstrate which grade levels of students are poorly performing academically (pp. e15-e16, e35).

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   The extent to which the proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale.
   (ii)   The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.
   (iii)   The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

   General:

   Overview

   The application presents strong research to form its project and strategies (pp. e17, 22, e23, e28, e34, e55-e56).

   A Logic Model provides linkages of resources, project activities, and alignment to achieve outcomes beneficial for developing a pipeline of future school administrators (p. e60).

   Strengths

   A clear Logic Model and a full project evaluation plan are provided to guide the project's components toward intended outcomes.   LEA, TNTP, and IHE human resources are brought to bear to implement specific project strategies that lead to Outputs in new HCMS and PBCS systems for administrators with measurable Short-Term and Long-Term Outcomes (3+ years). The proper alignment of project elements in the Logic Model will allow the applicant, partners and stakeholders to fully realize how all resources and activities in this project work together to move towards greater chances of achieving the project outcomes (p. e60).

   Strong educational research studies are clearly provided for the rationale of selecting the project strategies such as the coaching of principals, and leadership practices leading to more positive school culture shifts. The applicant has selected an effective strategy of principal coaching to increase the quality and effectiveness of the school principals as they engage with students and teachers which will create a more positive and academically engaging school atmosphere (pp. e17, 22,

e23, e28, e34, e55-e56).

A viable and more reliable administrator evaluation system will replace a current one that does not contain the multi-factors and criterion for increases in student achievement that are necessary in a quality assessment. A higher quality assessment process that also includes targeted professional development for the principals will increase the knowledge base of the principals, quality of support they provide the teachers, and overall give more precise and accurate assessments of the job performance (p. 38).

A full project evaluation plan is provided with critical elements of an external evaluation team to evaluate the project, annual performance feedback, use of formative data in making midcourse corrections, four clear project goals, and expected percentages of increase for all short-term and long-term outcomes (pp. e41, e49-e51). The applicant also affirms that it will collect, analyze, and report the GPRA Measures for this project. All these elements of a quality evaluation plan will bring all project participants together to discuss, analyze, and adjust the project with project data in mind and not just general perceptions of how the project is progressing (pp. e42-e43).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**
   In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

   General:

   Overview

   Milestone activities are well-detailed with quarterly timeframes of implementation and partners/entities/staff members responsible for each milestone implementation and completion. Most of the Budget is reasonable and cost effective, with a large amount of the Budget being devoted to the contractual agreement with the expert entity TNTP who will be providing the large share of professional development and evaluation instrument development. More specificity is needed in the Management Plan for responsibilities of the three project personnel and for the PBCS system (pp. e44-e45).

   Strengths:

   The district's leadership has vast quality experience in school accountability programming and comprehensive strategic planning for student and school improvement (pp. e44-45). The Superintendent has quality experiences in student academic performance data analysis and designing Catalyst Schools which created positive turnaround schools that had been under State Control for extreme lack of student achievement for several years. (Spring Branch Independent School District Schools). This quality expert will have an opportunity to use the learned skills for the increasing of student achievement during this project in the DeSoto Schools (p. e62).

   The applicant presents a well-explained and reasonable three year-Budget, clearly defined metrics for measurement, and a management plan that contains all critical milestone activities to successfully lead this project for all three years and keep the project within its timeframe (pp. e47-e52, e94-e102). Qualified project leaders will have the ability to successful implement the project and provide leadership for the needed collaboration of all the project partners to fully execute the whole project as designed (pp. e28, e47-e52).

Project Outcomes are detailed for expected increases for professional growth in the administrators, the increase in recruiting high-quality applicants for the vacant leadership positions, and administrators' evaluations showing a greater relationship with student achievement in the schools (pp. e42-e44).

Weaknesses:

The PBCS Plan for School Leadership Compensation does not provide a nexus of rationale and its selected budget amount for PBCS compensations to indicate that the amounts of bonus compensation are like other bonuses in like size schools. It is unclear how the district arrived at the average amounts of dollars per administrator that could be earned in the PBCS system, such as the average of $16,667 annual compensation per principal. A bonus compensation cannot be paid to educators who earn it through their effective job performance if a school district cannot ascertain how, it will be divided among all effective and highly effective educators (p. e105).

Limited detail is provided for the responsibilities of the Instructional Coaches. Eighteen Instructional Coaches are listed in the Budget to receive performance-based compensation, but it is not clear how those coaches will function within this project (pp. e34, 101). No Project Milestones are listed for activities of the Instructional Coaches. Without clarifying these issues, no one will know how many Instructional Coaches to hire and how their work will be divided across the schools (pp. 47-52).

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.
   (ii)   The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population.
   (iii)   The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.

   General:

   Overview

   This project has the potential to bring systemic change for the district in terms of creating a new principal/assistant principal evaluation system and greater school-level leadership for the students and teachers. Sustainability has been developed via fiscal resources being allocated after 2022 specifically for the HCMS and the PBCS parts of this project. Firm commitment on the part of the school-district and its partner is not clearly presented in writing for the support of this project (pp. e52-e53, e84).

   Strengths

   A significant system change is anticipated to occur when the district places an emphasis on school leadership improving the school climate and culture, improves teacher effectiveness, engages teachers and students in rigorous academic standards-based learning, and evaluates school principals and assistant principals on criteria involving those merits and others. Since the district does not currently have an effective model for administrator evaluation, this change is a paramount change and will retain more educators in the schools and increase student learning (pp. e52-e53).

The multi-year operational Budget of $11,121,506 will provide the funds necessary for the project's components of improving the school district's principals and critical central office administrators for academic improvement and human resources to engage in high quality professional development, strive to improve academic instruction in schools, and better lead the teachers in each school (pp. e98-e105).

The district's plan for matching resources indicates resourcefulness in the design of its avenues to support this project, including utilizing matching in-kind/monetary donations (p. e95).   Evidence is noted that fiscal resources for this project will also appropriately derive from an existing LEA State SSI Community Partnerships Grant and a private STEM Implementation Grant, to incorporate similar efforts into one robust Performance Based Compensation System and Human Capital Management System Project (pp. e94-95, e104).

This project has the vision to build a type of capacity-building of future school administrators for this district, with one component of the collaboration with the local institution of higher education and the creation of a pipeline of future candidates to fill principal/assistant principal vacancies as these cohort groups complete their administrative licensure requirements and courses (p. e53).

A feasible plan for project sustainability is provided. The applicant presents a strong argument that it will have nearly $5 million annually (after 2022) to allocate to the HCMS (p. e54). Plans include a logical rationale that the district will have the appropriate level of operational funds to sustain the professional development activities, the administrators' PBCS compensation, the pipeline strategies for cohorts of educators to enter administrative positions in the district, and the funding of the administrative position of Executive Leadership Coach and Director of Professional Learning and Development (pp. e54, e98, e105).

Weaknesses:

This project does not have project commitment from the current school principals and assistant principals. There are not letters of support for this project provided from the current principals or assistant principals. If a new project is planned for a district that involves educator evaluations and bonus compensation, is it essential to have administrators' input and support for the project that personally involves them as both evaluators of teachers and as a school leader receiving evaluation. No buy-in for the process will mean that the process is in danger of not being implemented with reliability and transparency (p. e84).

Reader's Score: 21

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

 1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Supporting Educators and Their Professional Growth (Up to 5 points).**

    Under this priority, projects that are designed to increase the number and percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators--which may include one or more of the following: teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or other School Leaders as defined in section 8101(44) of the ESEA--through Evidence-Based strategies incorporating one or more of the following options:

    a)   Adopting, implementing, or expanding efforts to recruit, select, prepare, support, and develop talented individuals--to serve as mentors, instructional coaches, principals, or School Leaders in High-Need Schools who have the knowledge and skills to significantly improve instruction.

b) Implementing practices or strategies that support High-Need Schools in recruiting, preparing, hiring, supporting, developing, and retaining qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators.
c) Increasing the number of teachers with State or national advanced educator certification or certification in a teacher shortage area, as determined by the Secretary, such as special education or bilingual education.
d) Providing high-quality professional development opportunities to all educators in High-Need Schools on meeting the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

General:

Strengths

The project will increase the number of educators who will be formally trained in school administration and include embedded coaching and professional development to current and aspiring school leaders who are currently or will be serving students in the nine high-need schools (p. e86).

Weaknesses

The overall recruitment and retention strategies are limited in nature for guiding more diverse educators into the field of school administration and keeping them within the school district following placements and a full discussion of how members of the trained administrative cohort groups will be hired and placed into schools is missing. Efforts to encourage and recruit educators are thwarted if full plans are not established for how persons who have participated in leadership training will have great opportunities to be hired in the schools (p. e35).

Reader's Score: 4

CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Under this priority, applicants must develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding one or more of the following options:**
   a) Educator candidate support and preparation strategies and practices focused on underrepresented teacher candidates, and which may include "grow your own programs," which typically recruit middle or high school students, paraprofessionals, or other school staff and provide them with clear pathways and intensive support to enter the teaching profession.
   b) Professional growth and leadership opportunities for diverse educators, including opportunities to influence school, district, or State policies and practices in order to improve educator diversity.
   c) High-quality professional development on addressing bias in instructional practice and fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive workplace and school climate for educators.
   d) Data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator and school leader diversity.

General:

Strengths

The Aspiring Leaders' Program is targeting effective teachers in the district in a "grow-your-own" pipeline of future principals and assistant principals. Targeted individuals will be persons of color, with a goal of identifying 20% as Hispanic and bilingual to participate in a career pathway to become a school administrator and receive the certification training locally and embedded administration on-site tasks with coaching. Such strong and supportive training programs

will increase the number of diverse and effective educators in the schools (p. e36).

The professional development opportunities in the school district will include Professional Learning Communities addressing bias-free instructional practices and how teachers can participate in a supportive school climate and workplace in their endeavors to become educational leaders. Professional Learning Communities create positive avenues to increase the pedagogy of diverse educators who are also learners in the schools and give them a boost in career-ladder experiences (pp. e29-e31).

Weaknesses

It is unclear how the district plans to identify the individuals who will participate in the Aspiring Leaders' Program or how persons will be chosen from a self-identified group. If a plan does not clearly demonstrate overt efforts to become bias-free, few efforts in increasing diversity in the school workplace will occur (p. e36).

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/03/2021 10:20 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/03/2021 01:42 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DeSoto Independent School District (S374A210002)
Reader #2:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	12
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	25	20
Sub Total	100	87
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	110	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - TSL - 5: 84.374A

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

Applicant: DeSoto Independent School District (S374A210002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining evidence of the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   **The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.**
   (ii)   **The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.**
   (iii)   **The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.**
   (iv)   **The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.**

   General:

   Overview: The application includes a comprehensive review of specific gaps and weaknesses including numerous inequities such as district leadership, decreasing student achievement, and poverty based on free and reduced lunch data (p. e17). In addition to gaps related to high need schools, there are challenges related to school leadership turnover, and a school district climbing back from major infrastructure issues (p. e15).

   Strengths:
   The application effectively links the gaps and weaknesses in the area of school leadership to the strategies proposed to address the severity of the challenges.
   Multiple sources of data provide strong evidence of gaps and weaknesses related to effective leadership and the connection between student achievement and instructional leaders (pp. e17, e19, e21-22). Relying on these multiple sources of data will ensure there is a relationship between the rationale and the need for the proposed project as it evolves.

   Considering recent district financial and leadership turmoil, the applicant describes a proposed model that will enhance and build on current state and district initiatives such as a local designation plan and teacher pay structure (p. e23-24). Building on to existing initiatives creates a culture of support, specifically when current initiatives show promise. Building stakeholder support for new initiatives increases the likelihood of project success.

   Ongoing state and local initiatives such as the current evaluation system are described and clearly indicate the proposed project is part of a comprehensive plan to provide effective leadership recruitment, retention and pay structure that will support rigorous academic standards for students (pp. e26, e28). Becoming a component of a district's comprehensive plan indicates commitment from central administration and ensures support for implementation of the proposed initiatives and sustainability beyond the life of the grant.

   The proposed project will integrate and build on a continuous improvement model under development by the district's Board of Trustees and provided through collaboration with a state level organization (p. e25). Integrating and building on to work that has already begun and is endorsed by district leadership further indicates support and commitment that will ensure the proposed project initiatives receive appropriate oversight and management.

The applicant provides specific data that clearly supports the needs of the student population across the three LEAs and the needs of teachers and school leaders. Data is clearly presented in Table 1-4 on pp. e30-31. The specificity of data from multiple sources strengthens the rational and links to the needs of the target students, teachers, and school leaders.

Weaknesses: No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   The extent to which the proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale.
   (ii)   The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.
   (iii)   The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

   General:

   Overview: The rationale for the proposed projects begins with the needs described in the previous section and this section includes evidence to support the use of research- based strategies substantiated by a strong review of relevant literature to support the proposed initiatives (pp. e32-39). The implementation process is clearly described with a major focus on leadership development and the impact on student achievement. Appropriate methodological tools include multiple measures clearly described and will be managed by an external evaluation partner. Periodic feedback to include midcourse adjustments is specifically addressed.

   Strengths:
   The goals, objectives and metric chart provides a clear vision of the components of the proposed project and strongly connects with the relevant literature and research-based practices while clearly supporting the rationale (pp. e31-32, e42-44). Vision clarity for the project design components, based on relevant research, creates confidence that the approach will yield positive results for leaders, educators and students. High quality literature reviews build confidence in the success of the initiatives selected.

   The application includes strong support for the implementation of the leadership development model with focus on instructional leadership. (p. e40)
   The collaborative partnership with a higher education institution and a national educational organization strengthens the applicant's efforts to develop and implement an aspiring leader program that is central to creating a pipeline for much needed instructional leaders.

   The application highlights absolute and competitive preference priorities which clearly link with the project goals and objectives (pp. e32, 34, 35, 36, 37 38, 39).
   Absolute priorities and competitive preference priorities are highlighted throughout the narrative and clearly link to the project goals and objectives while ensuring the intent of the proposed strategies are appropriate to meet the needs of the targeted participants

   Measures of evaluation and periodic feedback are comprehensively addressed and includes an external evaluation partner with a strong background in analytics and supports the expected outcomes and feedback frequency See chart on pp. e42-44. These measures will ensure a laser focus on goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

Weaknesses: No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**
   In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

   General:

   Overview: The application includes a well-developed management plan with both narrative descriptions and a chart that displays Milestones and participants responsible over the years of the grant period. The chart provides evidence that implementation and timeline dates are planned and designed to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget (pp. e47-52)

   Strengths:

   Responsibilities of the Project Staff are clearly described and include background and experience required to support the proposed project's goals and objectives, including a Project Director with a research and evaluation background and direct line to the Superintendent. Other key project staff have experience in developing and implementation of hiring systems geared toward effective practices (pp. e45-46). Hiring project personnel with expertise in implementing large scale grants with a background in initiatives that are components of the proposed project ensures proper oversight and management.

   The chart is well designed and includes implementation milestones, participants (person responsible), and timeline dates over three project years (p. e47). The chart demonstrates the applicant's vision for completing goals and objectives on time and on budget.

   Weaknesses:
   Project Staff are clearly described with the inclusion of roles and responsibilities. However, hiring only one full time Project Manager is concerning while relegating major responsibilities to existing staff. Considering the applicant's infrastructure as they rebuild, adding additional duties as responsibilities to existing staff could impact seamless implementation of the project and effect an on time and on budget implementation process. (p. e45)

   There is lack of clarity between the narrative and the budget related to positions that are funded full time from the proposed grant budget the district budget. For example, the budget reflects a full-time Project Director, Professional Learning and Development Director, and the Executive Leadership Coach but the Project Director is the only full- time positions described in the management plan section of the proposal. (pp, e45, 46).

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.
   (ii)   The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population.
   (iii)   The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.

   General:

   Overview: The applicant provides clear evidence of commitment to system change and improvement by developing systems to support school leaders and students in high need schools. These systems do not currently exists and will support a district that is in the rebuilding phase of operation (p. e52).

   Strengths:
   The vision of the new district administration and local stakeholders is described and further supports the likelihood of the success of the proposed project by addressing leadership needs and resulting in improved student learning (p. e52).

   The applicant provides strong evidence of the desire to ensure the proposed activities will result in system change considering the proposed leadership initiatives do not currently exists (p. e52). The proposed initiatives will greatly enhance current activities and will build capacity to achieve the proposed goals and activities. The proposed initiatives, such as career pathways and a performance-based compensation model will likely result in the district's ability to recruit and retain highly effective leadership that will positively impact schools, teachers, and students as the district continues to rebuild its infrastructure.

   The application adequately describes how the proposed activities will build local capacity (p. e53)by including collaborative partnerships with higher education entities and creating a pipeline for aspiring leaders that can be replicated with other school districts.

   Though the applicant is challenged fiscally by many factors, they are committed to sustainability of the project initiatives beyond the life of the grant (p. e54). The proposed match strategy for non-paid staff is one example of an effort to integrate grant activities as responsibilities of existing positions, making the Program Manager the only position that will need to be maintained after grant funding has ended.

   Stakeholder support is convincing based on letters of support from a cross section of the community (p. e54). Support from community stakeholders encourages and facilitates collaborative partnerships that help school to thrive and remain a central hub for students and families to engage beyond the school day.

   Weaknesses:

   Considering the funding challenges of the district, a sustainability plan would provide vision, aspiration, and the likelihood of continuing the proposed project beyond the three- year grant funding cycle.

Reader's Score: 20

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Supporting Educators and Their Professional Growth (Up to 5 points).**

   Under this priority, projects that are designed to increase the number and percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators--which may include one or more of the following: teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or other School Leaders as defined in section 8101(44) of the ESEA--through Evidence-Based strategies incorporating one or more of the following options:

   a)   Adopting, implementing, or expanding efforts to recruit, select, prepare, support, and develop talented individuals--to serve as mentors, instructional coaches, principals, or School Leaders in High-Need Schools who have the knowledge and skills to significantly improve instruction.
   b)   Implementing practices or strategies that support High-Need Schools in recruiting, preparing, hiring, supporting, developing, and retaining qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators.
   c)   Increasing the number of teachers with State or national advanced educator certification or certification in a teacher shortage area, as determined by the Secretary, such as special education or bilingual education.
   d)   Providing high-quality professional development opportunities to all educators in High-Need Schools on meeting the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

   General:
   Strengths:
   The application provides evidence of CCPI requirements to address the need for effective school leaders which impacts teacher performance, school climate and student learning. This proposed project will include components such as mentors, instructional coaches and other strategies to support teachers (p. e16). There is strong evidence highlighted throughout the proposed project narrative of research-based initiatives that clearly connects to each component of this priority (p. e34, 36, 38, 39).

   The application details efforts to recruit and retain effective leaders and support creating a pipeline for aspiring leaders with a local university partner which directly responds to local needs for effective leadership that supports student achievement and aspirations of educators.

   The application provides a substantive description supporting and developing instructional leaders for high need schools in a district that is rebuilding with newly hired school leaders (p. e32). Effective instructional leaders impact school culture, teacher morale, and student success.

   Weaknesses:
   No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DeSoto Independent School District (S374A210002)
Reader #3:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Need for Project			
1. Need		25	25
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		30	30
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		20	13
Adequacy of Resources			
1. Resources		25	23
	Sub Total	100	91
Priority Questions			
CPP1			
CPP1			
1. CPP1		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
CPP2			
CPP2			
1. CPP2		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
	Total	110	101

Panel #5 - TSL - 5: 84.374A

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

Applicant: DeSoto Independent School District (S374A210002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. **The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining evidence of the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.
   (ii) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources.
   (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.
   (iv) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

   General:

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

   Strengths
   ANSWER: i) The Applicant clearly identified the specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities that have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. DeSoto experienced significant leadership turnover, with all schools currently being led by an administrator newer to the district. DeSoto ISD was an early adopter of the Texas Principal Evaluation & Support System (TPESS), used to evaluate and appraise principals, identify performance strengths and support gaps, and provide constructive feedback. Furthermore, In May 2020, DeSoto ISD partnered with TNTP to conduct an analysis of teacher evaluation processes within the district in preparation for the launch of a new performance-based compensation system (PBCS) for teachers. The results of the teacher evaluation process will provide the landscape for how leader effectiveness is evaluated . e23

   ii) The applicant clearly articulated how the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve Relevant Outcomes using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources. Implementation of this new system starting in the fall will help the district take advantage of state funding available to support this plan. This system is the foundation for the HCMS and PBCS that are proposed as part of this project, allowing DeSoto to use this as a building block for leader development systems. e23

   iii) The proposed project is clearly part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students. For example, the foundation for the LEAD DeSoto project, and the fundamental activities that will address these gaps and weaknesses identified, begins with DeSoto ISD's new strategic plan: "Be the Future", through which DeSoto ISD has adopted seven commitments that encompass the aspirations of the district. Strategic commitment number four to Develop Extraordinary People is directly aligned with and informed by the insufficiencies in the district's leadership workforce. Within this commitment, the district has further refined key priorities

that encompass the aspirations of the district.   e24

(iv) The design of the proposed project is appropriate and successfully addresses the needs of the target population.   For example, The DeSoto ISD student body is 73.2% Black, 21.4% Hispanic, 2.9% Multi-Racial, 2.1% White, and 0.4% Other. DeSoto educates one of the highest rates of foster children in Texas, representative of 3.1% of the student population at the end of the '20-'21 school year. 8.6% of the student population has limited English proficiency, and 11% of students receive special education services. The data provided demonstrate a significant gap in student achievement with a renewed focus on strong, quality instructional leadership for teachers and students. e25

Weaknesses
i) no weaknesses noted
ii)no weaknesses noted
iii)no weaknesses noted
iv) no weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
   (i)   The extent to which the proposed project Demonstrates a Rationale.
   (ii)   The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.
   (iii)   The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

   General:

   Overview; The applicant addressed the following factors:

   Strengths:
   (i) The proposed project demonstrates a clear Rationale. For example, research shows that highly effective principals raise the achievement of an atypical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals' lower achievement by the same amount. The applicant cites (Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin, 2013) to support how highly effective principals raise the achievement of an atypical student. The four main project workstreams – pipeline, evaluation, career pathways and compensation (including a PBCS), and leadership development, will support DeSoto in building a new human capital management system that demonstrates a district commitment to enhancing quality leadership across campuses. e31-e44

   (ii) The design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure the achievement of the project objectives is discussed. For example, a key aspect of LEAD Desoto includes building instructional leadership teams that can collaborate around strategies to improve teaching and learning. Not only does this focus on equity and inclusion important for supporting a more diverse education workforce, but research indicates that leaders who have a bend toward an equity mindset are more likely to hold high expectations for all students and therefore, potentially reverse the gaps in student outcomes (Nadelson et al., 2020). e31-e44

(iii) The methods of evaluation to provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes is clearly discussed. The goals, objectives, and associated outcomes outlined in the logic model will be used by the district to help meet the goal of enhancing the recruitment, selection, development, compensation, professional growth, and retention of leaders through a systematic redesign of the DeSoto ISD Human Capital Management System . The methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes e31-e44

Weaknesses:
i) no weaknesses noted
ii)no weaknesses noted
iii)no weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**
    In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

    General:

    Overview: The management plan for the proposed project is clearly articulated.

    Strengths :
    The management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget is focused. For example, the resumes for Key Personnel included in the application illustrate the superintendent sponsorship and support for this project will drive the grant as a key contributor to DeSoto's strategic plan. The partnerships will set the vision for instructional
    leadership at DeSoto ISD. The leadership team through clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones will transform the traditional approach to education by creating personalized learning experiences for each of the district's 35,000 students which will result in dramatic increases in student achievement. The Cabinet members will work closely with the Superintendent to oversee day-to-day operations of the district to align the goals and intended outcomes of the project for accomplishing project tasks.e44-52

    Weaknesses:
    There are inconsistencies between the budget and the budget narratives. For example, the Deputy Academic Officer and the senior data Strategist are mentioned in the narrative as key personnel, yet no line item is noted in the budget. e44-52 e45 . The qualifications of the Deputy Academic Officer and the Senior Data Strategist are not stated.   e46

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. **The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
    (i)   The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

(ii)   The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population.
(iii)   The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., SEAs, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence.

General:

Overview The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement is clearly stated.

Strengths:

(i) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement is clearly stated. For example, the implementation of career pathways and a performance-based compensation model will improve retention and improve the district's ability to competitively attract talented candidates. Professional learning and development will usher in a systemic change by emphasizing and ensuring continuous improvement amongst leaders, and will improve leaders' ability through hands-on coaching and personalized supports. e-52-54

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand serves that address the needs of the target population is clearly defined. For example, through skill-building, professional development, and the implementation of ongoing supports and coaching that provides individualized support to each leader, the project increases the capacity of its workforce. These expanded services will have a cascading effect – as leaders become more confident in their role, they will have increased ability to support and improve teacher performance and ultimately student achievement. e-52-54

iii) The applicant clearly demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan. For example, beginning in 2019 when the district was working through financial exigency strategies, DeSoto ISD took out a $15 million loan to stay solvent. In the last three years, the district has made a $5 million loan payment out of regular budgeted operating funds. This means that DeSoto is not just adopting a balanced budget, but is operating on 93% of its operating budget, with the remainder going to make loan payments. After 2022, that funding comes back to the district and will be refocused on strategic plan initiatives – this will allow DeSoto to earmark future operating funds to support the continuation and sustainability of the LEAD DeSoto project. e-52-54

Weaknesses:
i) none noted
ii. There were no MOUs from the superintendent and building principal to show support in partnership . It is critically important to include the superintendent of a school district in such an important initiative t build trust and buy-ins.
iii) none noted.-e91-84

Reader's Score: 23

Priority Questions

CPP1 - CPP1

 1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Supporting Educators and Their Professional Growth (Up to 5 points).**

Under this priority, projects that are designed to increase the number and percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators--which may include one or more of the following: teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, or other School Leaders as defined in section 8101(44) of the ESEA--through Evidence-Based strategies incorporating one or more of the following options:

a)   Adopting, implementing, or expanding efforts to recruit, select, prepare, support, and develop talented individuals--to serve as mentors, instructional coaches, principals, or School Leaders in High-Need Schools who have the knowledge and skills to significantly improve instruction.
b)   Implementing practices or strategies that support High-Need Schools in recruiting, preparing, hiring, supporting, developing, and retaining qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators.
c)   Increasing the number of teachers with State or national advanced educator certification or certification in a teacher shortage area, as determined by the Secretary, such as special education or bilingual education.
d)   Providing high-quality professional development opportunities to all educators in High-Need Schools on meeting the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

General:

The applicant clearly addressed adopting, implementing, or expanding efforts to recruit, select, prepare, support, and develop talented individuals--to serve as mentors, instructional coaches, principals, or School Leaders in High-Need Schools who have the knowledge and skills to significantly improve instruction. For example, the project will also contribute to improved recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce. The Pipeline strategies and new human capital practices adopted will be focused on goals related to building district leadership that mirrors the growing Hispanic student population to significantly improve instruction. e-35, 49,50

Weaknesses: None noted

Reader's Score: 5

CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Under this priority, applicants must develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding one or more of the following options:**
   a)   Educator candidate support and preparation strategies and practices focused on underrepresented teacher candidates, and which may include "grow your own programs," which typically recruit middle or high school students, paraprofessionals, or other school staff and provide them with clear pathways and intensive support to enter the teaching profession.
   b)   Professional growth and leadership opportunities for diverse educators, including opportunities to influence school, district, or State policies and practices in order to improve educator diversity.
   c)   High-quality professional development on addressing bias in instructional practice and fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive workplace and school climate for educators.
   d)   Data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator and school leader diversity.

General:

The applicants will develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding. The human capital practices implemented as part of the project will be focused on recruiting and supporting a more diverse educator

workforce that mirrors the growing Hispanic student population. A new system of professional learning for leaders will focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion and will ensure DeSoto implements professional development that fosters an inclusive and supportive school climate for diverse leaders. e34, 44,59

Weaknesses :
None noted

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
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CPP2 - CPP2

1. **Under this priority, applicants must develop projects that are designed to improve the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce through adopting, implementing, or expanding one or more of the following options:**
   a)   Educator candidate support and preparation strategies and practices focused on underrepresented teacher candidates, and which may include "grow your own programs," which typically recruit middle or high school students, paraprofessionals, or other school staff and provide them with clear pathways and intensive support to enter the teaching profession.
   b)   Professional growth and leadership opportunities for diverse educators, including opportunities to influence school, district, or State policies and practices in order to improve educator diversity.
   c)   High-quality professional development on addressing bias in instructional practice and fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive workplace and school climate for educators.
   d)   Data systems, timelines, and action plans for promoting inclusive and bias-free human resources practices that promote and support development of educator and school leader diversity.

   General:

   Strengths:

   The application clearly describes component of CPP2, including recruitment and retention of diverse leaders for a diverse population of students (p. e16, 36, 37). A specific focus on Hispanic leaders with the pipeline for aspiring leaders will remove barriers to accessing positions in high need schools and result in retaining effective teachers while improving student learning (p. e36, 37).

   The application adequately outlines efforts to address culturally responsive leadership practices in instruction and school climate (p. e36, 37). Embedded professional development for instructional school leaders will provide opportunities for coaching and mentoring strategies that are reported as highly successful in relevant research. There is evidence these strategies will include data systems, timelines and actionable models to support school leader diversity (p. e37, 38).

   Weaknesses:
   No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
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