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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools (S374A210020)
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	18
Adequacy of Resources			
1. Resources		25	22
	Sub Total	100	95
Priority Questions			
CPP1			
CPP1			
1. CPP1		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
CPP2			
CPP2			
1. CPP2		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
	Total	110	105

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - TSL - 3: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools (S374A210020)

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 narrative covers key components that develop a picture of a needs for a project based on gaps and weaknesses that supports the plan expand both its human capital management system and its performance base compensation system by targeting schools that exhibit high needs based on multiple criteria. In doing so, the applicant will lessen risk indicators such as attrition and absenteeism that negatively affect student performance.

   Strengths

   The needs of the project are sufficiently detailed and are supported by the project (pages e28-e36). Gaps experienced by target schools will be addressed using the of existing efforts supported by grants such as GEAR UP and the School Climate Program. For example, the GEAR UP and School Climate program grants are focusing on addressing the social emotional needs of students while the applicant's program will focus on addressing the academic needs of students through implementing a robust professional development program. These efforts will target schools that serve underrepresented groups and in so doing, will address performance gaps for these students

   Using strategies such as coaching support, professional development is provided to teacher assistants (page e28) as well as teacher leaders (page e18-e36). This support will strengthen the pathway to teaching for teacher assistants. This is important as the applicant indicates that some of the most effective teachers in the school system have come from teaching assistant positions.

   The applicant further describes measured goals and objectives of the project that are aligned with the state teacher evaluation system. Such activities will ensure the project meets the needs of the target population.

   Weaknesses

   None 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 narrative provides program that using supporting research studies that justify the activities in the project. Specifically, the applicant combines existing efforts from grant funds as well as beefing up the existing systems as a means of building teacher capacity and increasing the teacher workforce for high-need schools. The rationale contains inputs, outputs and outcomes that provide a clear outline of the project.

   Strengths:

   The project design is of high quality to administer the project (pages e36-e43). The high-quality implementation plan will implement a human capital management plan as well as a proficiency-based compensation system through the project rationale. Specifically, the logic model contains multiple components including staff, state systems and structures and partners that support the activities within the project. These activities include instituting a leadership academic and providing mentoring for beginning teachers. All of the components support the long-term goals for students to demonstrate on-grade-level achievement.

   The project design plan is supported with measurable targets. For example, staff diversity will increase by 1% each year from a baseline of 8%. The two program components (recruitment and compensation) will increase diversity of staff through partnerships with diverse colleges.

   The applicant provides coaching to strengthen the capacity of existing personnel (page e38). Additionally, efforts will include formative and summative evaluation activities. These efforts will assess progress in achieving outcomes and objectives and provide feedback to guide implementation and make mid-course corrections (page e43).

   Weaknesses

   None 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 is provided to sufficiently describe how the project components will be carried out. Included in the narrative are personnel designated for activities as well as a timeline for activities. Key personnel are designated for leading the project within existing district efforts,

Strengths:

The efforts stated in the management plan are sufficiently provided for program management (page e48-e50). For example, some key positions are described in detail. For example, a full-time, grant-funded project director will lead the program and ensure fiscal management. The project director will also communicate with school personnel, independent evaluator, partners, and the federal program office. Moreover, the project director will ensure that the project will adhere to the grant timeline; meet program milestones; coordinate grant components and professional learning; lead sustainability planning efforts; and participate on the Management Team and District Executive Cabinet meetings. With centralized efforts, functions will flow smoothly. The timeline includes milestones and persons responsible for activities (pages e48-e50). The management plan is designed in such a way that the team can implement activities according to the timeline. This is because, overall activities are provided for team members.

Weaknesses:

The narrative needs additional detail in describing the day-to-day responsibilities of each position (page e46-e48). For key positions, this information is needed to provide an exemplary narrative.

Reader's Score: 18

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 narrative describes how the activities will result in change, building capacity and extend beyond the period of grant funding. As the applicant expands its current systems, sustainable outcomes will be realized through evaluation outcomes and programs implemented through the project. The applicant will build capacity of persons who participate in the project.

   Strengths :

   The applicant provides an adequate mechanism to support the project (pages e51-e57). The narrative highlights specific

aspects, such as partnership and financial support, that will lead to the sustainability of project activities beyond the funding period. For example, the applicant identifies partners who will help sustain activities. Support is provided by each school through MOUs (pages e51-e57). In this way, stakeholders from various school sites provide support to the project. Use of state and private funds provide resources for project activities will provide additional support. Additionally, all functions are aligned with specific personnel.

Weaknesses:

The narrative is not extensive to describe how the goal targets will increase sustainability of the project (page e54). Rather, these performance targets describe the ultimate goals of the project rather than how such targets will continue.

Reader's Score: 22

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 applicant uses master teachers and mentors as part of project activities (page e57). The master teachers serve as mentors to beginning teachers provide avenues to support and prepare other teachers. The applicant aligns its activities with state policies and programs for teacher recruitment and leadership development but specifically uses a statewide model for measuring student growth to align with teacher performance. This activity will increase the number of certified teachers as well as increase the skills of teachers in high-need schools. The performance-based measurements system will be used for teachers, teacher assistants and administrators to provide bonuses and incentives. Such financial incentives can be used to obtain additional certifications.

    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:

   Strengths:

   The activities indicted the narrative will target a diverse number of teachers and promote inclusive and bias-free human resource practices. This is because the applicant targets schools that have large numbers of minority teachers (page e28). These teachers will be targeted for professional development that will aid in professional growth The applicant will ensure that such teachers have access to high quality professional development and equitable access to performance-based compensation.

   Weaknesses:

   None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/03/2021 01:12 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools (S374A210020)
Reader #1:   **********

		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	16
Adequacy of Resources			
1. Resources		25	23
	Sub Total	100	94
Priority Questions			
CPP1			
CPP1			
1. CPP1		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
CPP2			
CPP2			
1. CPP2		5	5
	Sub Total	5	5
	Total	110	104

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools (S374A210020)

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 applicant has provided relevant information regarding the need for the project. The application identifies service gaps and weaknesses that will be addressed by building on four existing federal grant programs. The applicant provides a clear plan to use professional development to meet the needs of the target population as well as assessments to improve instruction and support rigorous academic standards.

   Supporting Statements:

   Strengths:
   Districtwide data provided within Teacher Leader Rating Scales and Educator Support Surveys clearly provide relevant data regarding specific gaps or weaknesses in services by depicting issues that will be addressed such as the lack of diverse teachers within their school district, high attrition rates, and inequitable access to effective educators. (e 19-25). The applicant's strategy to integrate with or build on similar or related efforts will effectively improve student outcomes by providing opportunities for professional development services to be incorporated within 4 existing federal grant programs such as GEAR UP, Education Innovation and Research, Project Prevent, and School Climate Transformation. As such, supplementing these programs with professional development will aid in strengthening underrepresented students (e21-23). The applicant's plan for offering the NC Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) and Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) will improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards through monitoring and assessing leadership and teaching practices which will lead to an increase in quality teaching, and professional practice and progressively impact student learning (e 23-26). Furthermore, the competency-based approach which links the criteria of educator competencies to district objectives and school needs will successfully address the needs of the target population by providing target schools with qualified educators who mirror the demographics of the students which will address schools' academic needs. This will also increase cultural competency within the school district (e 26-28).

Weaknesses:

None 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's design provides a clear rationale and is clearly linked to relevant literature, a high-quality review and plan for project implementation as well as describes how selected strategies and tools will support enhanced academic achievement among students. Methods of evaluation are suitable and will include assessing the progress toward achieving intended outcomes which will occur through providing performance feedback and periodic assessment of progress.

    Supporting Statements:

    Strengths:
    The proposed implementation plan and logic model clearly include a rationale and will effectively guide the design of the project. The design components include evidence-based activities such as recruitment, preparation and support, and rewards that have been proven to create equitable access to effective, diverse educators (e 35-36). Within the logic model, these activities are clearly depicted and logically connect to outcomes that include the increased retention of effective teachers in high-need Schools (e 59). The applicant's review of relevant literature regarding their proposed human capital infrastructure provides a clear justification for their implementation design and includes citations and an evidence base that substantiates offering a wide range of recruitment practices that have been proven to be successful in recruiting high-quality educators (e36-49). As such, methods such as recruiting from multiple sources, automating algorithmic recruitment tasks will be useful to ensure the achievement of project objectives which is to improve student outcomes through employing highly effective teachers (e36-49). Assessing student standardized test scores, teacher promotion, turnover, and retention rates, and utilizing surveys are methods of evaluation that will suitably guide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress by providing ongoing reviews of data and programmatic results(e 44-45) . Methods will undoubtedly inform programmatic corrections and gauge progress toward achieving intended outcomes (e 44-45) .

    Weaknesses:

    None 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 applicant has provided clear information that demonstrates that personnel and budget oversight will be available to accomplish project objectives. The applicant has provided a timeline that shows when tasks will be implemented however, the applicant has not provided a clear depiction of how and when milestones will occur which is needed to ensure that there is proper guidance with regards to the progress of the project.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:
The applicant's management plan will facilitate the achievement of objectives by utilizing a highly qualified Management Team with defined responsibilities(e 48-50). The plan clearly depicts appropriate oversight duties that are commensurate with experience by including aa full-time, Master's level Project Director who will be required to have a valid teaching and/or administrative credential for the state of North Carolina with grant management experience and will be responsible for oversight of STRIVE, guiding the strategic direction of the program; coordinating implementation and sustaining effective educators. (e 47, 79). aThe full-time Accountability Coordinator's experience is relevant to the position and required qualifications such as having a Bachelor's degree and at least 5 years of experience collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data as well as grant management experience will ensure that data and financial reporting will be in compliance with federal regulations (e81). and (e 47). The applicant's timeline supports project implementation by depicting when project tasks will occur (e 48-50). Also, within the timeline, there is a depiction of how tasks will be implemented as key staff are assigned to specified activities (e 48-50).

Weaknesses:
The applicant's milestones do not support the ongoing monitoring of program tasks as there is no clear delineation of when checkpoints will occur. Milestones are not differentiated from project tasks which makes it difficult to ascertain when incremental monitoring of program progress will occur (e48-50).

Reader's Score: 16

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 narrative includes activities that support systemic change and sustainability through capacity building. The plan is strengthened by the inclusion of a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:
School improvement plans will positively impact change by promoting continuous improvement at their target schools including frequent reviews of academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and school-climate indicators that will be useful to provide ongoing teacher support, engagement, and gauge student progress (e 52). Recruiting diverse educators into hard-to-staff positions; recruiting and supporting well-qualified administrators into leadership roles and increasing educator effectiveness will improve services and build local capacity by providing equitable access to effective educators that will impact the educational quality and academic acumen of students and LEAs (e 52). Resources such as district-wide support and in-kind support are sufficient to operate the project effectively beyond the length of the grant and includes a 50% match to implement activities, integration of best practices, as well as the continuing use of state, local, and private funds that will be used to ensure that the activities of the program do not cease (e53-56). The 10-year long-term plan, as well as letters of support, are sufficient to confirm that there will be a continuance of services beyond the life of the grant (e 40). The plan also provides a clear depiction of a multi-year financial and operating model and the demonstrated commitment of partners and stakeholders to retain key program components of the program (e 40, 54-55).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's 5 key TSL-related objectives within their strategic plan do not sufficiently demonstrate a commitment to provide resources beyond the length of the grant as efforts are not described beyond June 2025 (e54).

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:

Overview:
The applicant has provided a clear strategy concerning professional development opportunities in High-Need Schools that includes how they will meet the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:
The applicant's professional development plan that includes individual mentoring, monthly group sessions to discuss common struggles; targeted professional learning (e.g., licensure training via Praxis boot camps) will clearly provide opportunities for support and sufficiently address diverse learners through utilizing content coaches and instructional facilitators who will share instructional strategies of how to meet the educational needs of diverse learners (e. 15, 30-33). Instructional tools such as full-length modules, mini-modules, instructor-led courses, evaluation standards, and NC Digital Learning Competencies will improve student academic achievement by enabling low-performing schools to make adjustments to impact leadership, teaching and learning, and student outcomes among diverse learners (e 22).

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:

Overview:
 The applicant has described a clear plan to provide underrepresented teacher candidates with clear pathways and intensive support to enter the teaching profession.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:
The partnership with Western Carolina University (WCU) to implement Students to Teachers Education Pathways will be effective in providing college access opportunities by offering hands-on training, college access experiences, and transferable coursework to apply to teacher education programs at WCU (e 29). Support services will facilitate successful completion of the program and include workshops such as the college application process, FAFSA, scholarships, and Praxis Core preparation (e 29). Partnerships with Livingstone College, UNC-Charlotte, and WCU are clear collaborative efforts that will support recruitment activities to create a diverse pipeline of highly qualified teachers with emphasis on increasing the number of certified teachers in shortage areas(e 29-30)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/02/2021 10:49 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools (S374A210020)
Reader #2: **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Need for Project			
1. Need		25	21
Quality of Project Design			
1. Project Design		30	25
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		20	15
Adequacy of Resources			
1. Resources		25	22
	Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions			
CPP1			
CPP1			
1. CPP1		5	4
	Sub Total	5	4
CPP2			
CPP2			
1. CPP2		5	3
	Sub Total	5	3
	Total	110	90

Panel #3 - TSL - 3: 84.374A

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

Applicant: Iredell-Statesville Schools (S374A210020)

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 adequately identifies specific gaps in service and magnitude of these gaps, as well as strategies to address these gaps. Includes demonstrated evidence that the project builds on existing efforts and includes adequate Federal and State Resources and appears appropriate to addressing the needs of target populations.

   Strengths
   The academic achievement and exclusionary discipline data in the project statement of need adequately identifies specific gaps in service as well as plans, for the most part, of how to address as well as target goals and timelines. This is supported with thoughtful, specific and self-reflective data. Three of the four identified needs - Low Academic Achievement Coupled with Behavior and Attendance Issues Lack of Diverse Educators and High Attrition Rate are adequately addressed, as noted in the comment below. e19-21
   The Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Incentive Program demonstrates significant evidence of external support as well as connection to existing activities. Specifically, TSL activities are currently supported by four other active Federal US ED grants, e.g. the GEAR UP, Education Innovation and Research, Project Prevent, and School Climate Transformation grants. e21-22
   The HCMS component is aligned with external efforts to improve educator diversity and increase academic outcomes, including NC Statewide Accountability Model on Student Growth and Framework for 21st Century Learning and the NC Professional Standards for educators. e23-24
   Furthermore, the EVAAS component of the Human Capital Management System will support staff to improve student outcomes and learning through the use of an appropriate evaluation system. e24

   Weaknesses
   The HCMS proposal does not examine why teachers are scoring below proficiency, noting that teachers below proficiency be recommended for dismissal, demotion or nonrenewal. e26
   The plan to implement use of HCMS software is not adequately outlined. Frontline analytic software is identified as a solution to support hiring diverse talent, however the specific strategies that will be implemented to secure and recruit diverse and high-quality educators is less adequately developed - e.g. project will "secure outstanding diverse talent" and "a strategic, competency-based approach to recruitment and selection will be implemented. Our process will focus on efforts to align". However, the critical question of HOW does not seem to be fully addressed. e27-28

Reader's Score: 21

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 project demonstrates a clear rationale, includes a thorough and contextualized review of literature that aligns with foci, and robust methodological tools that adequately ensure fidelity. Design of the project is adequate with several notable exceptions noted.

   Strengths:
   The theory of action on which the rationale is built thoroughly supports the likelihood of project success, providing solid rationale and clearly linking educator development to academic outcomes and success. The theory of action proposes that if educators are exposed to high-quality experiences that (a) recruit, (b) prepare and support, (c) lead, and (d) reward, then this change will lead to equitable access to effective, diverse educators who have a positive impact on student academic achievement. e36
   The review of literature that supports the rationale thoroughly connects to and supports the four core functions of acquire, hire, sustain and evaluate. The resources cited are comprehensive, plentiful, and up-to-date, and incorporate adequate internal, local/regional and national sources. e36-37, e11-119
   The methods of evaluation, including ongoing monitoring and formative and summative evaluations, will support the ongoing quality of the project and success in achieving goals outlined. e43
   The Fidelity Index (DRAFT) and Power Analysis will ensure accurate interpretation of program performance, outlining a robust and comprehensive array of data to be collected as well as a "snapshot" of the tool that will be used to gather data may inform mid-stream corrections and adjustments as necessary. e121-125

   Weaknesses:
   The descriptions of the partnerships with HBCU pipelines do not quite adequately convey critical aspects of support. Not enough detail is provided specifically about the "high-quality strategies to recruit...effective educators that increase diversity." e37

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.**
   In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the 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 is only minimally effective when outlining the components that will lead to project success. The milestones that have been included are achievable, and several directly correspond to highest-level goals of the project. Responsibilities in these cases are clear and are designated to staff who seem capable. Funding request appears reasonable to support the project.

Strengths:
The staffing of the project will thoroughly support the likely achievements of the proposal, with both full-time project director and a full-time accountability coordinator dedicated to supporting the achievement of milestones in the intended time period. e47

The timeline adequately integrates many essential components, e.g., the dedicated Educators of Color recruitment strategy, developing partnerships with HBCUs and ensuring that many higher-level goals are fully integrated. e49

The personnel needed to implement the proposed project are highly-qualified, having past experiences that will aid them in their new roles. Additionally, the responsibilities of each role are clearly outlined, ensuring a timely implementation, leading to a likelihood of overall success. e60-86

Weaknesses:

The management plan inadequately addresses management of key focus areas. More specific information with regard to diversity in hiring and retention would bolster their case. e46-50

The management plan is minimally adequate overall in addressing several key focus areas. The section seems light on detail given the robust, comprehensive, and interrelated goals of STRIVE. e46-50

Reader's Score: 15

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 program outline demonstrates adequate likelihood of systemic improvement. The project builds on significant local capacity and demonstrates likelihood of long-term success. The program demonstrates a likelihood of success.

   Strengths:
   The STRIVE program will likely achieve results as it is built on and integrates with the existing continuous improvement model (I-SS) compounding the positive impacts of each. e51
   The integration of the project with the I-SS 2025 Strategic Plan will increase the likelihood or sustainability of continued resources, given long-term and district-wide support for the project. e53

The financial and operating model demonstrates significant commitment to long-term continuity, evidenced by Table 15, District Multi-year Long Term Plan, indicating 10+ years of planning. This is highly beneficial as it is not common for many districts to have commitments past five to seven years, let alone 10 or more. The likelihood of impact will be much greater with that kind of commitment. e54

The commitment of partners such as Livingstone College, Western Carolina University, and Edgenuity will help the project succeed, evidenced by significant matches and authentic and mutually beneficial partnerships. e55-56, e91-107

Weaknesses:
The resource plan omits examples of past success. Additional information about prior examples of how the I-SS model has yielded previous success, created improvement, etc. e51-56

Several goal projections seem unreasonable - e.g, 100% of BTs have a proficient rating or better on each of five standards AND meet/exceed expected growth is questionable; in isolation, this benchmark is likely immaterial. However, it indicates a possible tendency towards being overly ambitious in expectation-setting or optimistic with regard to gains over benchmarks. e54

Reader's Score: **22**

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 adequately addressed Sub-Criteria A in their proposal. The PLC model notes that content coaches at target schools will provide professional development, mentoring and support to staff via Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model to support the development of highly effective educators. These strategies will support efforts to recruit, select and develop highly qualified and diverse leaders who have the skills and knowledge to improve education. e22, e27-29

   Weaknesses:
   While the PLC program model notes that leaders support improved education, the specifics of this could be addressed more thoroughly. e27-29

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 application somewhat addresses Sub-Criterion A regarding educator candidate support and preparation strategies and practices focused on underrepresented teacher candidates. The program indicates positively for increasing diversity with strong evidence of Grow Your Own model integration, where the HR Team and principals encourage and support their most promising teacher assistants to work toward teacher certification by helping them apply for bachelor programs and providing them with a stipend upon attainment. e8-9

   Weaknesses:
   The program itself is an excellent idea for increasing qualified and diverse educators, however, more detail would be helpful.

Reader's Score: 3

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