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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MSD of Decatur Township (S374A210024)
Reader #3:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	25	25
Sub Total	100	99
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	110	109

Panel #6 - TSL - 6: 84.374A

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

Applicant: MSD of Decatur Township (S374A210024)

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 presents a comprehensive plan to address the Need for Project criterion. The proposed project reflects a partnership between eight LEAs and it will reach 91 schools (78 high-need schools), 242 principals, 3,978 teachers, and 57,037 students. (pg. e15) The applicant presents a clear description of the gaps, weaknesses, and challenges within the target districts in terms of student academic performance and teacher preparation and teaching strategies. They clearly describe the linkages and leveraging opportunities with other funding sources and strategies for ensuring that the work is part of their district-wide comprehensive efforts to improve teaching and learning.

   Supporting Statements:

   Strengths:

   The applicant demonstrates and documents that the target districts have significant numbers of High-Need Schools with 78 schools or 86% meeting the TSL project criteria of a high-need school (at least 50% free or reduced-price lunch/FRPL). The average FRPL rate across the participating schools is 70.6% percent. The applicant includes a complete list of participating schools. (pg. e21, Appendix E)

   The applicant demonstrates a need for improving teaching strategies by presenting data related to student academic achievement, which shows that in 2019 across the target districts the average proficiency math is a low 43% and 44% in English Language Arts, despite 88% of teachers having been rated as effective or higher in the same period. These statistics indicate a discrepancy between how teachers are measured and how students are performing, which the applicant intends to address with the proposed project. (pg. e34)

   The applicant reports that four of the districts that they refer to as Companion Districts, are struggling to recruit and retain diverse educators and teachers of color. (pg. e25) Teachers of color make up less than 5% of all teachers in three of the four Companion Districts and the fourth district is almost entirely Latinx (98%). The applicant states that there is also a need for teacher diversity in the other Core Districts who have fewer teachers of color relative to their student populations, with 35% of the participating schools not having any administrators of color on staff. (pg. e26, e27) This indicates a need

to strengthen the educator recruitment, development, and retention system.

The applicant reports that the Companion Districts lack consistency with identifying effective teachers and don't have aligned opportunities for professional development linked to building teacher capacity. (pg. e26) Furthermore, there is a lack of clear pathways and opportunities for teachers to move from the classroom to leadership roles, indicating a clear need for strengthening their Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS). (pg. e27)

In terms of the project being a part of a comprehensive effort to remedy the identified problems, the application clearly builds upon on related efforts as the applicant intends to leverage the work and success of their 2017 TSL grant while increasing the number of districts, educators, and students involved with the new project and elevating its focus on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of diverse educators. (pg. e27) All the proposed activities are aligned, evidence-based, and have a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. The applicant is creating pathways for every level of the school system to be included to ensure a comprehensive effort. (pg. e29) The detailed description of how this will happen is found on pages e30-e33. Additionally, the applicant describes a reasonable plan for having each participating district utilize and combine different funding streams to integrate their own district and local priorities with the overarching grant project goals. (pg. e27, e28)

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 proposed project is deeply rooted in research and evidence that demonstrates a clear Rationale for their Theory of Change. The applicant provides relevant citations and a description of the alignment of said research with the purpose and structure of their proposed project. There are built in opportunities for providing performance feedback on project progress toward achieving intended outcomes, however, the applicant does not provide strategies for providing timely periodic assessment.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to create a systematic approach for continuously expanding their Networked Improvement Community (NIC) to build a diversity of knowledge and experiences; develop strategies for recruitment and retention (with focus on educators of color); provide professional development (ILTs, PLCs, Coaching, Leadership Academies to support educator growth); and feedback (coaching, online platform). The applicant aligns these evidence-based treatments in a comprehensive system of both big and smaller level strategies and supports. A detailed, comprehensive description of the project design (including a Theory of Action description [pg. e20, e21]) is presented on pages e37 – e39.

The application expands an existing NIC to facilitate innovation and improvements across each participating district's Human Capital Management Systems (HCMS) with a specific and purposeful focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting educators of color. This project demonstrates that it is part of a comprehensive approach to creating change by expanding upon an already successful structure for a multi-state, multi-district consortium of schools and districts to leverage improvements collectively throughout the NIC. (pg. e18)

The applicant cites several sources of research throughout their project design narrative, demonstrating that their project has a solid Rationale and Theory of Change. (pgs. e41-e50, Appendix F Bibliography, pgs. e81-e86) Furthermore, they describe the methodological tools that will be employed to achieve their objectives, demonstrating a strong connection between the objectives and the need for the project. (pg. e46)

The project's comprehensive evaluation plan includes the engagement of an external evaluator who will work with project staff and school district personnel to gather and analyze project data. (Appendix B, pgs. e89-e96, the evaluation plan - Appendix F) The evaluation will be based on the logic model (Appendix A) and theory of action (pgs. e20, e21) and will utilize the TSL Performance Measures to gauge implementation progress and determine the impact of activities. The evaluation will report annually on each objective and make it clear where each district has or has not made progress. (pg. e46).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant's evaluation plan is robust and will provide an annual assessment of project progress, they do not include any specific strategies for providing project periodic feedback in real-time throughout the grant year, making it difficult to ascertain how they will be able to adjust project strategies in a nimble fashion. (pgs. e46, e89-e96)

Reader's Score: 29

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 presents a reasonable management plan that includes a detailed description and outlines the role and responsibilities of the key personnel, project activities, milestones, and timelines for accomplishing the project tasks.

   Supporting Statements:

   Strengths:

   The applicant proposes to hire a full-time Project Director to manage the complexity of working with 8 LEAs spread across multiple states. The proposed Project Director has over 20 years of experience in the education sector and will serve in a 100% FTE on this project. They also provide a detailed description of the other key personnel, described roles and responsibilities, demonstrating that there is a strong project leadership team to manage the project. (pgs. e50, e51)

   The applicant includes a detailed description of the project implementation plan that includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (pg. e44 - e45) The plan demonstrates a strong

design that has appropriate mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and assessing project progress.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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 demonstrates that they have adequate resources to effectively implement and manage the proposed project. They provide a clear description of how the proposed activities align with, complement, and support earlier initiatives and efforts at improving their Human Capital Management System, teacher competencies and student academic outcomes. Their plan effectively leverages existing resources to expand professional development opportunities and abilities to recruit, prepare, support, and retain a diverse educator workforce. The applicant includes a detailed budget that is in direct alignment with the proposed activities and describes strategies for sustainability.

   Supporting Statements:

   Strengths:

   The proposed project addresses changes at every level of the education system: NIC, district, school, and classroom levels, thereby creating system changes and improvements. The applicant explains that in their earlier TSL project, the Core Districts experienced positive outcomes that resulted in system-level change and improvements to their HCMS, and they purport that the proposed project will also strengthen the districts' human capital pipelines and an expansion of the NIC to include four new districts. (pg. e52)

   The applicant demonstrates their understanding that to sustain improvements across whole systems, both capacity and systems for improvement at all levels is required. Their plan for the NIC includes strategies to expand and bring in new districts over time and implement effective practices so that the work can continue to spread and disseminate across the network. The Core Districts will utilize a Gradual Release Model (GRM) to ensure effective knowledge transfers to the Companion Districts. They will work closely with the districts to build the processes and knowledge of how to implement and sustain the project activities in the long term. (pgs. e54, e55)

   The applicant clearly demonstrates that they have adequate resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant as evidenced by the letters of support and letters of commitment from each participating district (Appendix C). There is strong support and buy-in from key stakeholders including superintendents, board of education members, school and district leaders, teachers, parents, and members of congress. Additionally, all four Core Districts expressed a strong

commitment to the sustainability of the project and a desire to expand their NIC to broaden their networks and provide support to Companion Districts. (pg. e56) The applicant demonstrates that they have met the non-federal match requirement with the assistance of their stakeholders. (Appendix D) Each participating district has committed to match TSL funding at 50%, demonstrating a major commitment of resources to the project. (Letters of Commitment - Appendix C, pg. e56)

The applicant provides detailed budget worksheets and a comprehensive budget narrative describing each of the expenditures and sources of revenue and support. The budget aligns clearly with the proposed project activities and demonstrates the ability to implement the project. (pgs. e119-e156)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **25**

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 presents a clear plan to meet the criterion for Competitive Preference Priority #1 for increasing the number and percentage of well-prepared, experienced, effective, and diverse educators across the target school districts and schools. Their plan includes implementing practices or strategies that support their High-Need Schools in recruiting, preparing, hiring, supporting, developing, and retaining qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators.

   Supporting Statements:

   Strengths:

The applicant's overall project is designed to increase the number and percentage of well prepared, experienced, effective diverse teachers and school leaders through its aligned system of supports and project activities. The plan is for all educators in the target schools to be provided with high quality, evidence-based professional development to support their individual growth and many opportunities for job-specific collaboration, including the superintendent to the teachers. There will be structured opportunities for collaboration and support linked to meaningful instructional changes which will lead to stronger student performance. The customized professional development will include Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and Coaching, all of which are focused on building educator capacity. (pg. e22)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 presents a well-developed plan to meet the criterion for Competitive Preference Priority #2. Their project is designed to include specific strategies for improving the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce.

Supporting Statements:

Strengths:

The applicant describes a clear workforce development plan where the target districts are committed to improving the recruitment, outreach, preparation, support, development, and retention of a diverse educator workforce. Recruitment and retention activities will support increased numbers of teachers and leaders of color within each district and will ensure more equitable practices across the schools and districts that will then benefit all students. The districts will participate in an annual convening called the Educator Exchange that brings together leaders and students from HBCUs/MSIs and the target districts. The goal of this event will be to share best practices around recruiting and retaining diverse educators, and to serve as a catalyst to establish partnerships between districts and HBCUs/MSIs for creating a diverse educator pipeline. Each district will have an Educator Diversity Council and the Networked Improvement Community will have a NIC-level Educator Diversity Council that includes members from each district's council. The Educator Diversity Councils

will focus on increasing educator diversity by holding all participating districts accountable to reaching this objective. The project will ensure that the districts create year-round, multi-stakeholder recruitment and retention systems to strengthen and diversify their educator pipelines. (GEPA Statement, pg. e9)

The applicant also describes plans for strategies and practices to be implemented that will increase the number of teachers and leaders of color in alignment with the nationally recognized strategies including Grow Your Own programs and structured leadership opportunities (i.e. career ladders and Leadership Academies). (pg. e23, e24)

The applicant provides a copy of their well-developed Diversity Recruitment Plan. (pgs. e111-e113)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/03/2021 11:07 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MSD of Decatur Township (S374A210024)
Reader #2:   **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	25
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	25	25
Sub Total	100	99
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	110	109

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: MSD of Decatur Township (S374A210024)

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:

   The applicant presented a discussion that provided justification for the proposed project . The applicant discussed expanding the program's Human Capital Management system to better manage and improve teacher performance. The trainings that were discussed were appropriated to equip teachers with the necessary skills to be effective in the classroom. The discussion of the funding streams provide evidence of sustainability and support.

   Strengths:

   (i) The proposed project will address weaknesses in services by implementing a Human Capital Management Systems that provides leadership academies, job-embedded professional development, peer feedback through online platforms, career ladders, and teacher collaboration and support (e. 34-35). The applicant noted weaknesses in service and infrastructure in the areas of educator diversity, career advancement pathways for diverse teacher leader populations, and professional development activities (e. 35). The proposed training and support for companion districts improves human capital efforts for better management in the development of educators (e. 26). Furthermore, the proposed year-round recruitment strategy increases the level of engagement in identifying effective teachers particularly those minority populations who have been historically under-represented in the field (e. 26).

   (ii) The proposed project will be supported by existing funds from several districts in the target area identified through the Human Capital Management System (e. 28). Funding will be generated from Title I, Title II, Opportunity funds, literacy grants, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, state, and local funds (e. 28).

   (iii) The proposed project will improve teaching and learning, as well as rigorous academic standards by implementing Instructional Leadership Teams, Professional Learning Community sessions, career ladders, strategic planning for better communication (e. 29). The applicant noted that the program activities are evidence-based and aligned with program objectives (e. 29).

   (iv) The proposed project's design is well thought out due to its comprehensive system approach that include an online platform for educators; leadership activities at the district level; professional growth at the school level, and coaching at the classroom level (e. 29).

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:

   The applicant presented a comprehensive discussion regarding the components of the research design as well as the research/literature to support the project.   The theory of action approach connected connect proven strategies to address educational challenges in the district as well as enhance skills associated with job performance.   The feed-back model was appropriate to identify issues, strengths, and weaknesses that my impact the delivery of services.

   Strengths:

   (i)   The propose project theory in action rationale provides a systematic approach to implement services that enhance recruit and retention, professional development, and teacher and program staff feed-back (e. 37). The logic model will include performance measures to determine the impact of activities associated with the services (e. 46). The applicant discussed evidence based rationale for each area. For example, the applicant explained that human capital management practices such as performance base compensation and career ladders incentives increases the likelihood of attracting effective teachers (e. 38).

   (ii)   The proposed project discussed research literature that provided evidence of proven strategies that will ensure successful achievement of project objectives (e. 42).   Some of the recent studies such as Grissom et al., 2021, Opper, 2019, Doan, 2010 suggested there is a positive relationship between effective teacher leaders and increased student achievement (e. 42).   The applicant noted that racially diverse school leaders who are effective can benefit students from different racial backgrounds as well as mitigate incidents involving negative student behaviors that lead to suspension (e. 42).

   (iii)   The program's proposed eternal evaluation process will provide better feed-back information through assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes (e. 44). Evaluation data from project-wide assessments and leadership surveys will be summarized in annual reports highlighting the progress or gaps in services of each district (e. 48).

   Weaknesses:

   i)   No weaknesses noted.
   ii)   No weaknesses noted.

iii)   The applicant did not provide specifics regarding when the evaluation team will meet to discuss results from program

      assessments and surveys.

Reader's Score: **29**

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:

   The applicant provided a management plan the met the conditions of the criteria.   The key personnel had the requisite experience and expertise to implement a program of this magnitude. The applicant provided the timelines and job responsibilities important to implementing this project.

   Strengths: The proposed project management plan is sufficient in that it includes personnel with a wealth of experience and expertise (e. 50-51). For example, the individual who is overseeing the implementation of the project has over twenty years serving in the educational field (e. 50). The applicant provided responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for project coach, school leader coach, recruitment and retention coach and grant manager (e. 50-51).

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **20**

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:

   The applicant presented a discussion that included aspirations of increased qualified and skill personnel, expanding capacity, and utilizing resources . The proposed expansion of the human capital management system led to improvements and system change through the implementation of leader programs and incentives. The Gradual Release Model was utilized to provide a method of seamless communication and feed-back throughout the school districts. The applicant provided evidence that support and funding will continue past the length of the grant.

Strengths:

(i) The proposed project districts' human capital management system will demonstrate system change or improvements by utilizing existing systems in the district to provide teacher and principal professional development, teacher and principal evaluation, teacher and principal performance-based compensation, and a career ladder (e. 51). The applicant explained implementation of Instructional Leadership Teams and Professional Learning Community sessions will change the manner in which teachers are provided feedback and professional development training (e. 53).

(ii) The project proposes a Gradual Release Model to build local capacity through the transference of knowledge from core districts to new districts   (e. 52). The applicant referenced the benefit of the program's online platform as a tool to view and transfer feed-back to all educators (e. 52). Similarly, the applicant explained that new districts can view the program's dashboard where instructional leadership teams and profession learning community sessions are being tracked and monitored (e. 52).

(iii) The proposed project use of resources beyond the length of the grant will be in the form of matching funds from core districts (e. 54). The applicant noted the program will use technical assistance partners to support training, coaching, and assistance with the online platform (e. 56).

Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses noted.
(ii) No weaknesses noted.
(iii) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 25

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 proposed customized professional development will increase opportunities for teachers by providing evidence-based professional development services such as instructional leadership teams, professional learning communities, and coaching (e. 22). The applicant explained to accomplish this effort, several platforms of communication and learning will be implemented that include online platform, in-person sessions, and annual meetings with diversity personnel (e. 22). Stipends will be provided to teacher leaders as an incentive for their advancement in leadership roles (e. 22).

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses 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 proposed educator diversity convening, year-round recruitment and retention, and educator diversity council will increase educator diversity by stated outreach efforts under each area (e. 23). It is clear that the program is serious about issues relating to inclusion because of the outreach to historically black institutions of higher learning to meet and discuss strategies to attract minorities (e. 23). Furthermore, the program has a council whose sole purpose is to increase the number of underrepresented minority professionals in education (e. 24).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/03/2021 12:28 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MSD of Decatur Township (S374A210024)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need	25	22
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	20	20
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Resources	25	25
Sub Total	100	95
Priority Questions		
CPP1		
CPP1		
1. CPP1	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
CPP2		
CPP2		
1. CPP2	5	3
Sub Total	5	3
Total	110	103

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: MSD of Decatur Township (S374A210024)

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 demonstrates a clear need for the project by sharing clear examples for each need and/or population it will serve (e26-e27). The application links programs/strategies, grant activities, and the identified gaps and thoroughly describes how it will integrate with and build on similar efforts in districts within the consortium. The applicant has provided many examples of how this project is part of a comprehensive effort and build upon prior efforts at improving teaching and learning. Through citations and examples of previous successes and research-based strategies, the applicant has demonstrated the likelihood that this project will be successful at meeting the needs of the target population. Describing the magnitude of the improvements the project saw during its prior implementation would lend further support and credence to the likelihood that the proposed strategies, upon which they will be expanding and replicating for this project, are likely to again succeed and produce statistically significant results.

   Strengths

   The applicant has done a commendable job describing the magnitude of need for targeted participants and student body. A comprehensive table of each districts' students' performance measures was included on page e35, allowing the reader to develop a full understanding of each district's individualized needs, as well as the overall needs of the consortium.

   The applicant has done a solid job identifying the specific needs of the target population and aligning them to specific strategies for improvement (e25-27). Mapping needs to strategies in such a way helps ensure that each identified need is addressed throughout the project.

   Several examples of districts' and educators' needs were also provided throughout the application. As an example, participating districts in the project are typically small districts with few schools, that could benefit from the cross collaboration and the sharing of resources that the project's network would provide (e33). Participating districts also lack in diversity of educators, with an average of 66% of their student's minorities and 25% of their teachers the same (e34). This demonstrates a clear need for an uptick in recruitment and retention of minorities, which the grow your own program and intentional convening's and conversations around diversity are sure to impact. Pairing districts according to their

strengths and needs is also likely to yield positive results as they share ideas and best practices across the network.

The proposed project will build upon existing and previous efforts in the partner districts. From the 2017 grant, districts developed and sustained HCMS' and were able to establish lessons learned, which will be used to inform the newly proposed project (e19). Having the benefit of district's that have had the opportunity to try and revise certain aspects of their HCMS provides benefits to newly recruited districts as they are more likely to be able to avoid some of the pitfalls experienced by similar districts in their initial phases of implementation and apply immediately what demonstrated effectiveness.

In some ways, the HCMS were able to improve upon the difficulties of some districts in recruiting and retaining educators of color (e25). Because core districts have experienced success with components of this proposed project, it is likely that new districts will experience improvements as well.

The newly proposed project will build upon the previous project by increasing the number of districts, educators, and students impacted and elevating its focus on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of diverse educators (e27). Expanding the project to new districts will widen its positive impacts and further the development of local capacity within the district.

Tools from the previous project will also be used as a foundation for the proposed project (e.g., training materials, data dashboards, playbooks, etc.) This helps ensure continuity of interventions and alignment with previous efforts. Each district will contribute multiple streams of funding to this comprehensive effort (e28) which will ultimately include online platforms for educators, network convening's (e30), aligned strategic plans (e31) and PLCs (e32). Having contributions from each district helps secure buy-in and garner commitment to the project and promote sustainability.

Overall, it seems the design of the proposed project is appropriate to address the cited needs of the districts, educators, and students.

Weaknesses
Although the applicant cited improvements of core districts in increasing the retention and recruiting of minority educators (e25), data around the magnitude of that improvement were not provided. Therefore, although we know the HCMS had a positive effect on this challenge, we do not know to what extent there was a positive impact or the true magnitude of need that existed. Providing pre and post data from the previous model would help the reader determine the true magnitude of their prior impact and likely future impacts (e40).

Reader's Score: 22

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's design adequately addresses all elements of the selection criterion except the way in which they will collect and implement real-time feedback on project implementation. The proposed project is designed around a clear and research-supported rationale and includes a detailed logic model that aligns project activities with intended outcomes.

Therefore, it is highly likely that the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes.

Strengths:

The proposed project demonstrates a clear rationale (e38-41, e58), supported by research cited throughout the application and a detailed literature review on pages e41 through e46.
For each component of the project, the applicant demonstrated a rationale and a corresponding plan for implementation. For example, studies on the impacts of diverse educators on student achievement (e34) and effects of inadequate resources for educators of color were some of the many studies cited to support the proposed project objectives of building a more diverse educator pipeline and implementing the various opportunities for collaboration and support. Implementing a project that has a clear rationale demonstrated through the logic model, as well as a clear research basis increases the likelihood that the project will yield the positive effects intended.

The applicant has provided a high-quality plan for implementation, using appropriate methical tools (e44-45). The plan documents, in detail, the critical steps necessary to put the project in place and achieve its objectives. It provides a step-by-step list of tasks with assigned owners and due dates. Having a detailed plan for implementation of the project will assist with keeping the project team on track and focused towards the intended outcomes.
The applicant has formulated a plan for periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the intended outcomes of the project for every component of the project (e47-50). This helps ensure that every component of the project is appropriately evaluated and monitored for progress throughout the project, which ultimately increases the likelihood of positive results of the project.

The evaluator will report annually on each objective and make it clear where each district has or has not made progress (e46). Assigning time annually to evaluate the progress of each district helps ensure that no district is lost or left behind in the improvement process. As issues are noted, districts can obtain targeted supports to get their project back on track and achieve the intended outcomes.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how the applicant will evaluate overall implementation and satisfaction with the project in real time to provide feedback that can allow for mid-course adjustments. The applicant has cited many methods for measuring progress towards ultimate outcomes, but it is not as clear how implementation will be evaluated along the way.

Reader's Score: 28

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 a detailed management plan that seems likely to support in achieving the objectives of the proposed project. There is a clear timeline with detailed responsibilities and roles for key personnel. The project also has a project director devoted 100% of the time to this project, in addition to several other key personnel to support implementation. All of these factors increase the likelihood that the project will be completed on time and within budget and likely achieve its stated objectives.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a detailed and thorough management plan with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones (e.44-45). Having this information clearly detailed helps ensure that all project partners have a shared understanding of needed progress and the timeline in which progress needs to happen. .

A detailed management plan with clearly identified responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks also helps ensure that the project will be completed on time and within budget.

The project will be led by a project director (PD) who helped implement the 2017 TSL grant and has over 20 years' experience in the education sector. The project director will dedicate 100% of their time to this project (e50). Having a PD with direct experience on this specific type of grant that was implemented successfully in the past sets this project up for success as the PD already has familiarity with this specific type of grant project and all of its associated requirements (e. g., reporting). Making this position solely focused on the grant, with 100% of the PD's time dedicated to this project will allow the PD to provide substantial oversight to the project, further increasing the likelihood that the project will be completed on time, within budget and successfully.

The applicant has also identified several other key personnel to help implement this project (e51). The solid management plan in combination with all of the experienced designated personnel make it highly likely that the applicant will achieve the project's identified objectives on time and on budget.

Weaknesses:

None cited.

Reader's Score: 20

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 has proposed a project design that is likely to lead to systemic change and build local capacity. The applicant also has a long history of implementing such projects with success, which increases the likelihood of sustainability, as does the broad support of the project demonstrated by stakeholders.

   Strengths:

Because this project incorporates districts from multiple jurisdictions, it has the potential to make a far and wide reaching impact in the larger education system. In total, it will initially impact 91 schools (78 high-need schools), 242 principals, 3,978 teachers, and 57,037 students (e18).

In addition to reaching and connecting multiple districts, this project will have direct impacts on schools and classrooms (e52). Because "core districts" (districts from previous project) have had past success with components of this project, it is likely that new districts will also experience success with the project's initiatives.

Because new districts are being joined with existing districts with prior experience with the project's components, new districts will also have the benefit of the lessons learned and added supports of core districts (e25). This increases the likelihood that new, and ultimately all participating districts, will see positive impacts from the project's interventions.

As part of the project, all districts will incorporate tents of the project into their strategic plans (e53). Incorporating tenets of this project into each district's strategic plan will further help ensure systemic change related to evaluations, retention, diversity, and educator development (e59) within each district.
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Through the sharing of lessons learned, opportunities to discuss and share practices, it is likely that local capacity will be built for all districts participating in the project. Participants of the project upon which this project is built reported a change in their instructional practice as a result of the program and districts noted a marked change in the correlation between teacher effectiveness ratings and student performance (e53). This makes it highly likely that the proposed project will also build local capacity. Other examples to support the building of local capacity include the online educator platform to share and receive feedback and dashboards to share progress on ILTs, PLTs, etc. (e55). Having such networks in place will allow educators to share practice, problems, and solutions, which will further develop and build local capacity and change throughout the system.

The applicant has provided letters of support from a variety of stakeholders starting on page e73 (e.g., superintendents, board of education members, school and district leaders, teachers, parents, and members of congress). Having a broad range of support from a variety of stakeholders helps to create buy-in and support for the program.

A detailed multi-year operating model (e56-58) has been provided as part of the application. This model includes the way in which the proposed project will eventually generate its own revenue by recruiting new districts and educators to the network and charging them a fee for participation (e57). This helps ensure continued revenue for the project beyond the term of the grant.

Weaknesses:

None cited

Reader's Score: 25

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:

This project proposes to implement practices and strategies to support High-Need Schools in recruiting, preparing, hiring, supporting, developing, and retaining qualified, experienced, effective, and diverse educators. The proposed project will serve 78 high needs schools (e21) by developing its educators. All educators within the districts will be provided the opportunity to participate in evidence-based professional development to support their individual growth and to collaborate with other educators with similar positions. Professional development will be provided in a variety of ways to increase accessibility. This includes virtually meetings, an online platform, and opportunities for in-person convening's (e22).

Weaknesses:

None cited.

**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 applicant proposes to focus on increasing recruitment of underrepresented teacher candidates across the participating districts. To do so, they will place intentional efforts on discussing, gathering feedback, and learning best practices related to the recruitment and retention of ethnically diverse educators (e23). Soliciting feedback from HBCUs and MSIs will also support the foundation of future relationships with these institutions to recruit diverse educators.

Weaknesses:

The primary focus for recruiting diverse educators seems to be conversations of how to do so, at this stage. Although the application references grow you own programs (e20, e26), there is no information on how or when these programs will be developed in participating districts.

Reader's Score: 3

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