

proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the application supports the Department's strategic interests embodied in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: greater accountability for student achievement, increased flexibility and local control, more parental choice, and a focus on what works.

(2) The extent to which the application offers a reasonable and sound plan that likely will produce outcomes, products, or publications that will inform the field about evaluation practice to determine the effectiveness of new and advanced technology tools and applications in education, and that are easily exportable to different settings, including urban, rural, and suburban communities.

(3) The extent to which the application proposes to disaggregate evaluation results so that the impact of the intervention on the academic achievement of sub-groups of students, such as students who are ethnic or language minorities, rurally isolated, or from families with incomes below the poverty line, can be determined.

(b) *Quality of the project design* (35 points). In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methodology proposed is thorough, feasible, and employs a methodologically sound experimental or quasi-experimental design to determine the effectiveness of the educational technology intervention under study.

(2) The extent to which the methodology proposed includes the use of valid, reliable, and objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the intervention being evaluated.

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build evaluation capacity and practice that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(4) The extent to which the design for implementing the proposed evaluation, documenting evaluation activities, and disseminating knowledge, will result in information to guide replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

(c) *Quality of project personnel* (15 points). In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary will consider:

(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons without regard to race,

color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(2) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

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

(d) *Adequacy of resources* (15 points). In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the partnership members contribute to the activities assisted under the grant by providing substantial support in the form of non-Federal funds and/or in-kind contributions, including staff and facilities.

(2) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(4) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

(e) *Quality of the management plan* (15 points). In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary will consider the following factors:

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

(2) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

#### **Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking**

Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities and other program requirements. Ordinarily, this practice would have applied to the competitive priority, selection criteria, and requirements in this notice. Section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), however, exempts rules that apply to the first competition under a new program from this requirement. The competition

covered by this notice is a new activity under the National Technology Activities authorized by the ESEA, as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Secretary, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, in order to ensure timely grant awards, has decided to forego public comment with respect to the competitive priority, selection criteria and program requirements. The competitive priority, selection criteria, and requirements of this grant notice will apply only to the FY 2003 grant competition.

#### **Application Procedures**

The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998, (Pub. L. 105-277) and the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999, (Pub. L. 106-107) encourage us to undertake initiatives to improve our grant processes. Enhancing the ability of individuals and entities to conduct business with us electronically is a major part of our response to these Acts. Therefore, we are taking steps to adopt the Internet as our chief means of conducting transactions in order to improve services to our customers and to simplify and expedite our business processes.

We are requiring that applications to the FY 2003 Evaluating State Education Technology Programs Grant Competition be submitted electronically using e-Application available through the Education Department's e-GRANTS system. The e-GRANTS system is accessible through its portal page at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

Applicants who are unable to submit an application through the e-GRANTS system may apply for a waiver to the electronic submission requirement. To apply for a waiver, applicants must explain the reason(s) that prevent them from using the Internet to submit their applications. The reason(s) must be outlined in a letter addressed to: Enid Simmons, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3E215, Washington, DC 20202. We must receive your letter no later than two weeks before the closing date.

Any application that receives a waiver to the electronic submission requirement will be given the same consideration in the review process as an electronic application.

#### **Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications**

In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project for electronic submission of applications to include additional formula grant programs and additional