

rich and challenging curricula for all students, and to design instructional strategies and other means to improve all students' education. Finally, the Secretary believes that educators should consider the schoolwide impact of gifted and talented programs.

In the course of developing this final priority, selection criteria and post-award requirements, the Secretary has followed legally mandated procedures for rulemaking. On January 12, 1995, the Secretary published a notice in the **Federal Register** (60 FR 2956) inviting written public comments to be submitted on or before February 27, 1995.

**Note:** This notice of final priority, selection criteria and post-award requirements does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

### Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Secretary's invitation in the notice of proposed priority, selection criteria, and post-award requirements, two parties submitted comments. An analysis of the comments follows.

**Comments:** One commenter wrote to endorse the current grantee. One commenter wrote to express concern that the proposed absolute priority requiring applicants to submit plans to establish a national research and development center that contributes to increasing the capacity of educational systems to provide all students with equal opportunities to learn to high standards and achieve educational success might shift the focus away from the needs of students with high abilities and unusual talents and undercut many reform efforts.

**Discussion:** Under the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1994, Congress found and declared that, "(8) the experience and knowledge gained in developing and implementing programs for gifted and talented students can and should be used as a basis to—"(A) develop a rich and challenging curriculum for all students; and "(B) provide all students with important and challenging subject matter to study and encourage the habits of hard work."

**Changes:** None.

**Comments:** The Department's review revealed an inadvertent omission in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION listing of partners that might strengthen the center's capacity to accomplish its mission. Tribal colleges should have been included in the list.

**Discussion:** The Secretary believes that a partnership with tribal colleges

could strengthen the center's capacity to accomplish its mission and to better serve a special population of gifted and talented students who may not be identified and served through traditional assessment methods.

**Changes:** The list of partners has been revised to include tribal colleges.

### Absolute Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary funds under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority:

Each project must propose plans to establish a national research and development center that—

- Conducts research and development activities concerning the educational needs of children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities;

- Contributes to increasing the capacity of educational systems to provide all students with equal opportunities to learn to high standards and achieve educational success;
- Uses research methods in at least some of its studies that involve advanced or innovative quantitative or qualitative techniques of sampling, data gathering, conceptualization and measurement of variables, data analyses, and interdisciplinary perspectives;

- Conducts one or more definitive research studies that have national implications and that will inform policy or practice across the nation; i.e., use large representative samples and rigorous scientific techniques that preclude biased results and support generalizable, replicable findings concerning the education of sizable populations of children or youth;

- Includes research and development activities related to the following topics:

- (a) Identifying, teaching, and serving gifted and talented students;

- (b) Improving the education of gifted and talented students who may not be identified and served through traditional assessment methods and programs, (including economically disadvantaged individuals, individuals of limited-English proficiency, and individuals with disabilities);

- (c) Using knowledge and experience gained in developing and implementing gifted and talented programs and methods to serve all students; and

- (d) Understanding the effects of gifted education programs on the educational

achievement of students schoolwide; and

- Documents, reports, and disseminates its research activities in ways that will allow others to use the research results.

### Selection Criteria

The Secretary will not use the selection criteria established in the Javits Gifted and Talented Program regulations, 34 CFR 791.21. The Secretary will use selection criteria consistent with the provisions for the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination and Improvement Act of 1994. The Secretary will use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications for the center award. The maximum score for all these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses:

- (a) *Research Mission and Technical Soundness.* (40 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality and significance of the center's overall research agenda, definitive study or studies, and other individual research projects, including—

- (1) The coherence, significance, and technical merits of the center's research projects and agenda, in the context of the current state of the field; and

- (2) The importance, quality of design and methodological rigor of the center's definitive study or studies.

- (b) *Personnel.* (30 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the qualifications and time commitments of the center's personnel, including—

- (1) The time commitment, experiences, and expertise of the primary researchers enabling them to achieve the center's mission; and

- (2) The qualifications of the Director and support staff, and whether they will commit at least a majority of their time to center activities.

- (c) *Institutional Arrangements.* (30 points) The Secretary reviews each application to evaluate the capacity of the center's institutional structure and arrangements to support the center's projects and objectives, including—

- (1) The center's ability to respond to and provide leadership for those who can use or benefit from the center's research;

- (2) The center's plans to support, monitor, and complete research projects that meet the highest standards of professional excellence; and

- (3) The center's ability to disseminate useful research findings and other information to appropriate audiences in