State student performance standards; and

- (2) The need of States, LEAs, schools, and tribes for help in integrating into a coherent strategy for improving teaching and learning the various programs under ESEA with State and local programs and other education reform efforts;
- Section 13101 further refers to—
 (1) The special peeds of students
- (1) The special needs of students living in urban and rural areas;
- (2) The special needs of States and Outlying Areas in geographic isolation; and
- (3) The need in regions serving significant populations of Indians or Alaska Natives for assistance in the development and implementation of instructional strategies, methods, and materials that address the specific cultural and other needs of Indian or Alaska Native students.
- 3. *Plan of Operation* (30 Points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of the plan of operation for the Center, including—
- (a) The quality of the design of the Center;
- (b) The extent to which the plan of management is effective and ensures proper and efficient administration of the Center;
- (c) How well the objectives of the Center relate to the purposes of Title XIII of ESEA and to the identified needs of the region;
- (d) The quality of the applicant plan to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective; and
- (e) How the applicant will ensure that Center participants who are otherwise eligible to participate are selected without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or handicapping condition.

Section 13102 specifies that each Center will be required to—

- (1) Coordinate services, work cooperatively, and regularly share information with the Regional Educational Laboratories, the Eisenhower Regional Consortia, research and development centers, State literacy centers authorized under the National Literacy Act of 1991, and other entities engaged in research, development, dissemination, and technical assistance activities that are supported by the Department as part of a Federal technical assistance system, to provide a broad range of support services to schools in the region while minimizing the duplication of those services:
- (2) Consult with representatives of SEAs, LEAs, and populations served through the ESEA;

(3) Provide services to States, LEAs, tribes, and schools, in coordination with the National Diffusion Network State Facilitators activities under section 13201, in order to provide the support and assistance diffusion agents need to carry out their mission effectively; and

(4) Provide professional development services to SEAs, LEAs, and the National Diffusion Network State Facilitators to increase the capacity of those entities to provide high-quality technical assistance in support of ESEA programs.

Section 13102 of ESEA specifies that each Center must provide support, training, and assistance to SEAs, tribal divisions of education, LEAs, schools, and other ESEA grant recipients, in—

(1) Improving the quality of instruction, curricula, assessments, and other aspects of school reform, supported with funds under Title I of ESEA;

(2) Implementing effective schoolwide programs under Section 1114 of ESEA;

- (3) Meeting the needs of children served under ESEA, including children in high-poverty areas, migratory children, immigrant children, children with limited-English proficiency, neglected or delinquent children, homeless children and youth, Indian children, children with disabilities, and, where applicable, Alaska Native children and Native Hawaiian children;
- (4) Implementing high-quality professional development activities for teachers, and where appropriate, administrators, pupil services personnel, and other staff;
- (5) Improving the quality of bilingual education, including programs that emphasize English and native language proficiency and promote multicultural understanding;
- (6) Creating safe and drug-free environments, especially in areas experiencing high levels of drug use and violence in the community and school;
- (7) Implementing educational applications of technology;
- (8) Coordinating services and programs to meet the needs of students so that students can fully participate in the educational program of the school;
- (9) Expanding the involvement and participation of parents in the education of their children;
- (10) Reforming schools, school systems, and the governance and management of schools;
 - (11) Evaluating programs;
- (12) Meeting the special needs of students living in urban and rural areas and the special needs of LEAs serving urban and rural areas;
- (13) Integrating and coordinating programs under ESEA with each other,

as well as with other Federal, State, and local programs and reforms; and

- (14) Giving priority to servicing schoolwide programs under section 1114 of IASA and LEAs and Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded schools with the highest percentages or numbers of children in poverty.
- 4. Quality of Key Personnel (7 Points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of key personnel the applicant plans to use for the proposed Center, including—
- (a) The qualifications of the project director (if one is to be used);
- (b) The qualifications of each of the other key personnel to be used for the Center;
- (c) The time that each person referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) will commit to the Center; and
- (d) How the applicant, as part of its nondiscriminatory employment practices, will ensure that its personnel are selected for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or handicapping condition.

To determine personnel qualifications under paragraphs (a) and (b) the Secretary considers—

- (1) Experience and training in fields related to the objectives of the Center; and
- (2) Any other qualifications that pertain to the quality of the Center.
- 5. Budget and Cost Effectiveness (5 Points). The Secretary reviews each applicant to determine the extent to which—
- (a) The budget is adequate to support the proposed Center;
- (b) Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the proposed Center.

Section 13102 of ESEA specifies that each Center must provide technical assistance using the highest quality and most cost-effective strategies possible.

- 6. Evaluation Plan (5 Points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of the evaluation plan for the Center, including the extent to which the applicant's methods of evaluation—
 - (a) Are appropriate to the project; and
- (b) To the extent possible, are objective and produce data that are quantifiable.

(Cross-reference: See 34 CFR 75.590 Evaluation by the Grantee.)

7. Adequacy of Resources (3 Points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the adequacy of the resources that the applicant plans to devote to the Center, including facilities, equipment, and supplies.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Centers will assist client organizations in furthering their systemic reform and