

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/16/2024 04:20 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Arizona Department of Education (S282A240006)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	32
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	13
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	24
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	11
Sub Total	100	80
Priority Questions		
CPP 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	2
Sub Total	3	2

Total

110

89

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - State Entities Panel - 3: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Arizona Department of Education (S282A240006)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (up to 5 points);

Strengths:

The proposal offers data and relevant research beginning on e27 to demonstrate the need for additional charter schools, both due to the high level of poverty in the state and the success of charter schools in serving educationally disadvantaged students. The applicant provides data (e38) to indicate that the 40 subgrantees awarded through the 2018 CSP SE grant enrolled at least 40% or more disadvantaged students and that 22.5% of all students in the state attend charter schools. This data provides the backdrop for the expected outcome listed in the Logic Model (e36) of opening 24 charter schools serving disadvantaged students.

The proposal defines the number of schools to open and describes the support provided to subgrantees (e36). The applicant will support opening new charter schools and expanding charter schools with training to improve student outcomes and select charter leaders. The proposal defines the support the applicant will provide (e29) in professional development and technical assistance to subgrantees. For example, the applicant has made formative assessment a priority instructional practice and staff are currently involved in providing training to previously awarded schools in the process (e34).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide sufficient details (e37) for how it will support the use of charter schools to improve struggling schools (both charter and other public schools), stating simply that it will continue current efforts. The proposal does not address how the applicant plans to share best practices between charter schools, other public schools, and local education agencies (LEAs).

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 5 points); and

Strengths:

The performance measures in this proposal include opening 24 new charter schools, closing achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students, increasing instructional capacity, and encouraging participation in dual or

Sub

concurrent enrollment programs (e39-40). These performance measures directly align with the expected outcomes on the Logic Model (e36). The applicant provides a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, and all of the measures can be tracked annually.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entity program (up to 5 points).

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates its success under a prior CSP SE grant (e41) with data showing the number of charter schools opened in the past seven years, its rigorous review process to ensure quality applicants, and a pipeline of interested subgrant applicants (e43). The application describes the number of students attending charter schools, that number as a percentage of overall school enrollment (e41), and the documented success of educationally disadvantaged students in those charter schools (e42). The reported data provides a strong rationale for the applicant's objectives.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand and need, and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants (up to 20 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides a description of the number of subgrants, by project year and type, and the amounts for each type (e43). The applicant provides information to support their calculations, based on need, projections for upcoming demand, and the history of charter schools under prior CSP grant programs. The proposal describes the reasoning for the award amounts for waiver schools (e43), based on previous subgrant award experience and current market conditions. The budget narrative (beginning on e405) provides a justification for expenditures and includes an explanation for the way the applicant has accounted for the diminishing number of waiver schools and increasing number of new and expansion/replication schools over the grant term.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant does explain the rationale for the funding for waiver schools, the proposal does not provide a thorough explain the methodology and calculations used to determine grant awards for schools applying for new subgrants (e43).

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program and improve education results for students (up to 15 points).

Strengths:

The applicant offers a detailed plan for determining subgrant awards which includes training on the subgrant application, evaluation criteria, and training for budget development (e44). The proposal addresses how the applicant will encourage diverse charter models by assigning preference points to those subgrantees that plan to serve rural communities or high school students (e45). The applicant provides a detailed discussion of how they will publicize the availability of the subgrant and how they will select peer reviewers to evaluate the applications (e46). The development of a new website, "Welcome Charter LEAs," adds a compelling resource to support new schools. The applicant describes the subgrant application in detail and includes all required components for the subgrant application process (e47). The subgrant application requires that applicants conduct an assessment of community needs and implement protocols to incorporate community assets (e51).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not explain how the needs assessment will be used to select applicants for subgrants. The applicant indicates they will advertise the subgrant opportunity but there is no assurance that they will target potential applicants for schools serving at-risk students.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - State Plan**1. The State entity's plan to--**

Reader's Score: 24

Sub**1. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program (up to 10 points);****Strengths:**

The applicant provides examples of the current monitoring materials, such as the Monitoring Handbook, which includes procedures for Checklist Monitoring, Comprehensive Monitoring, and End-of-Project Monitoring documents (beginning on e336) and indicates plans to update and improve those resources. With training and documentation via the Monitoring Handbook (e53), charter schools will be well-informed of expectations and procedures. For example, the Monitoring Handbook includes a rubric that describes an Ongoing Risk Assessment (beginning on e337) to review the school's operations, compliance, grants management, and annual reporting activities. Any schools considered out of compliance will be promptly notified for corrective actions, including immediate follow-up on any issues still outstanding on a second visit (e343). Specific guidelines for managing grant expenditures are discussed, as well as support for special education and English learners to ensure schools are serving students in compliance with state and federal laws (e54). Subgrant applications must address their plans for sustainability (e54). The applicant provides a Risk Assessment Framework (e345) which outlines the risk assessment process and template for monitoring subgrantee risk. This detailed plan provides a clear roadmap for monitoring eligible applicants receiving subgrants.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

2. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies (up to 5 points);

Strengths:

The applicant describes the activities of various agencies (e55), such as the Arizona (AZ) Department of Education, the AZ State Board for Charter Schools, and AZ Charter Schools Program (CSP), and indicates that each agency has its own legal function, reporting requirements, and responsibilities (e55). There is a clear division of duties that avoids duplication of work. For example, charter LEAs report enrollment, achievement, and federal data directly to the AZ Department of Education, while finance and operations data are funneled to the AZ State Board for Charter Schools.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not include a plan to avoid duplication of work beyond reporting functions (e55). The proposal does not discuss the many other activities related to charter school oversight and how they can avoid duplication of work or reduce the burden for schools or authorizers. The applicant does not demonstrate a collaborative relationship between the agencies (e55).

Reader's Score: 3

3. Provide technical assistance and support for--

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State (up to 10 points);**

Strengths:

i. The applicant provides a plan (e55-58) to provide technical support to charter school subgrantees, which includes training to improve student recruitment and enrollment, closure plans, discipline practices, and classroom management. The applicant delivers intense training to subgrantees to resolve the overuse of discipline practices (e56).

ii. The AZ State Board for Charter Schools authorizes 99% of charter schools in the state. Arizona State University oversees nine charter entities and follows the same authorization process as the state board (e15) but is not an active authorizer at this time. Members of the State Board for Charter Schools participated in a two-year training offered by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to strengthen its authorizing practices (e57). Members of the state board currently serve on NACSA's advisory council supporting other states' authorizing processes (e57).

Weaknesses:

i. There is not a clear plan to ensure Technical Assistance is directly related to school needs and the plan does not provide sufficient details for the activities and rationale (e56). The applicant does not provide a specific timeline for technical assistance activities to charter schools (e57).

ii. The applicant states it has no legal authority to mandate technical assistance to the State Board of Charter Schools, and relies on the State Superintendent's position on the board to influence policies and procedures (e57). The applicant does not provide details for ongoing efforts to provide technical assistance to public chartering agencies.

Sub

Reader's Score: 6

4. **The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State (up to 5 points); and**

Strengths:

The applicant requires proposed charter schools to describe their plans for parent and community engagement (e58) as part of their subgrant application. They must demonstrate active partnerships with parents and community groups, and the authorizer monitors implementation of these plans through site visits and parent interviews (e59). The State Superintendent holds community events to invite community feedback (e58).

Weaknesses:

The plan does not include plans for soliciting input directly from parents and community groups on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State (e58). It is not clear how any information gathered from charter schools at site visits and interviews would be used. The applicant does not provide details to describe how data collection is managed and shared.

Reader's Score: 3

5. **The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law (up to 5 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant documents a significant level of autonomy for charter schools within the state (e59-60). In addition to autonomy regarding curriculum and instruction, budgets and expenditures, daily operation, and personnel, charter schools can elect to seek exceptions to additional rules for finance and procurement (e59).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides no information on how they would work to maximize the flexibility allowed by law for charter schools (e59).

Reader's Score: 2

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:**

Reader's Score: 11

Sub

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 (up to 10 points);**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides a detailed table of activities and responsibilities beginning on e52. The timeline is realistic and reasonable with work beginning in October 2024 if approved and continuing through the final grant report in 2028 (e70). All work is to be completed by AZCSP staff, with the exception of the final grant evaluation and peer reviews of subgrant applications (e70). The applicant also indicates that the director oversees all CSP activities and contractors (e70). The tables beginning on e48 outline clear distinctions between responsibilities of key staff and contractors.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not provide information regarding the qualifications of key personnel who are responsible for overseeing the proposed project. The applicant does not indicate who will provide end-of-grant evaluation and their qualifications (e70).

Reader's Score: 7

2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project (up to 3 points);

Strengths:

The applicant describes several strategies for collecting feedback (e71-72), including surveys after each training session, surveys to leaders prior to training to inform training content, surveys to schools following each monitoring visit, and an end-of-grant evaluation conducted by a third party. The proposal describes plans to use the feedback received from surveys (e71) to evaluate and improve services. For example, the applicant plans to evaluate training sessions to improve their timeliness, content, and delivery methods (e71). The proposed efforts to collect feedback and evaluations indicate a commitment to continuous improvement.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a plan for how they analyze feedback to address improving the project.

Reader's Score: 2

3. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (up to 2 points).

Strengths:

The staffing plan beginning on e72 for this project includes 1.0 FTE for the Director, 1.0 FTE for the Education Specialist Lead, 2.0 FTEs for additional Education Specialists, and .15 FTE for a Program Project Assistant and Associate Superintendent (e72). The tables beginning on e61 provide sufficient information to see the division of duties within the applicant's staff. Specifically, the director oversees all grant-related activities, manages staff, and oversees contractors. The education specialists are responsible for technical assistance and monitoring school performance (e72). The proposed budget includes appropriate allocations for these staff members (e418) and is explained in the budget narrative (e403).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

CPP 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency, or An Appeals Process (0 or 1 Points)

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

a. Allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency (LEA) to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the State ; or

b. In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the State has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Note: In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing the appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

Please specify whether they meet (a) or (b) and clearly explain why in the strengths.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, a non-LEA organization, has nearly exclusive chartering authority in the state (e21), which is clearly aligned with CPP1.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Equitable Financing (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

Strengths:

The applicant describes multiple strategies (e21-23) utilized by the State of Arizona to ensure equitable funding for charter schools. These strategies include a guarantee of the same Base Support Level funding as public schools, additional funding for smaller LEAs which typically includes charter schools, and access to funding via an Estimated Student Count at the beginning of the school year instead of waiting for official enrollment numbers ensuring there is no delay to receive funding at the beginning of the school year (e22). These innovative strategies ensure that charter schools operate on equal footing with other public schools in the State.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates the State is using best practices with the following strategies (e23-25). In 2023, Arizona Department of Education implemented a new school improvement program for struggling schools (e23). The Superintendent instituted the AZ Educator Leadership division to improve the quality and effectiveness of instructors and school leaders (e23). The Lab School is a collaboration between the AZ Educator Leadership division and a struggling public school to build a model to raise student achievement in schools across the state (e24). Field-tested practices are disseminated across the state to district and charter schools (e24). The State provides Technical Assistance embedded into practices with subgrant recipients to share best practices directly (e24). These approaches demonstrate a fully developed system to share best practices across public and charter schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Charter School Facilities (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a State that provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) Funding for facilities**
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition**
- c) Access to public facilities**
- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies**
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings**
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges**

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that the State has systems in place to provide charter schools with multiple ways to access school facilities (e25-26). For example, the School Facilities Board annually publishes a list of vacant and unused buildings suitable for schools. Arizona charter schools also have access to public municipal bonds by state law. The State provides funding to support bonds to finance a pool of loans to charter schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Serving At-Risk Students (up to 3 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a description (e26-27) of the State's commitment to funding and supporting successful dropout recovery programs. In addition, the subgrant application includes preference points for participation in dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools that offer comprehensive career service and college preparation.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a clear plan to ensure equitable access to these programs for at risk students (e27).

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/16/2024 04:20 PM

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Last Updated: 07/16/2024 05:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Arizona Department of Education (S282A240006)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	32
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	14
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	27
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	12
Sub Total	100	85
Priority Questions		
CPP 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	2
Sub Total	3	2

Total

110

94

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - State Entities Panel - 3: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Arizona Department of Education (S282A240006)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (up to 5 points);

Strengths:

The Arizona Charter Schools Program (AZCSP) targets charter schools serving high percentages of disadvantaged students (e29). The high population growth in Arizona yields strong rationale for expansion of the charter sector beyond serving the current 22% of all students (e29). The applicant proposes support for 24 new schools and 23 waiver schools for this award (e29). Twenty percent of children living in Arizona live below the poverty line, thus demonstrating the rationale for the project to prioritize serving at-risk students (e28). Promising academic achievement at charter schools awarded sub-grants through a previous SE grant provide research and rationale for another round of CSP funding (e29). Previous CSP technical assistance efforts were employed at schools that demonstrated academic gains (e29). A research-backed logic model, using previous CSP data points, is provided with in-depth details of the theory of action (e36). Data from prior instructional training for CSP sub-grantees demonstrates high satisfaction with professional development and a cohesive statewide system of supports (e33). CSP sub-grantees will participate in statewide supports for improvement through the Formative Assessment program proposed (e34). Field tested and proven strategies will be disseminated through a statewide digital education program (e37-38).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide detailed examples of the state's approach and activities to utilize best practices to support struggling schools.

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 5 points); and

Strengths:

Performance measures and objectives, along with activities, are clearly outlined with specific examples, are measurable, and are related to annually measured outcomes. For example, the applicant set a realistic performance measure of increasing Math and English performance by at-risk students, both of which can be reported annually (e38-40). Academic improvement and creation of new charter schools is highly likely given the demand for new schools and the supports in place to provide quality ongoing professional development.

Sub

Quantitative data points include academic growth, graduation rates, and demographic targets. Qualitative data points include participation in professional development and post-training surveys (e39-40).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The ambitiousness of the State entity’s objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entity program (up to 5 points).

Strengths:

The applicant's program goals and performance measures are both ambitious and attainable. The state charter school authorizer's report predicted increased demand for new charter schools (e41), demonstrating the pipeline is attainable. Parent demand for charter schools continues to increase, thus justifying the ambitiousness of the new school growth. (e41). English and Math scores for under-served charter students have risen in Arizona, demonstrating success of current school models (e41-42).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand and need, and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants (up to 20 points).

Strengths:

Nearly all charter schools that were previously awarded SE sub-grants remain open and are thriving (e43). The applicant cites research conducted by the primary authorizer, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS), which provides historical data to determine the demand for new schools (e43). Sub-grant award amounts are based on previous awards, market conditions, and costs for Arizona (e43). The rationale for differing yearly funding amounts by sub-grant type are explained (e44). Waiver schools have experienced slow growth and demonstrate they have continuing needs (supplies/equipment and teacher recruitment/training) as they continue to grow, thus providing a sound rationale for continued support of waiver schools (e44).

Weaknesses:

The applicant used historical data and rationale for sub-grant award amounts, but lacked details such as whether previous awards were fully expended or where previous awards fell short of the schools' needs.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity’s objectives for the quality charter school program and improve education results for students (up to 15 points).

Strengths:

The applicant presents a fully developed outline of the various methods for disseminating information about the sub-group application process. The methods include workshops, emails, online sources, and alerts (e46). Diverse school models,

including those that support dual enrollment, early college high schools or career/college prep are prioritized (e45). The key activities, timelines, and process for the sub-grant application process is comprehensively outlined in Appendix F. The sub-grant application components are fully developed and meet various criteria, such as community-based need assessment, charter contract agreement with the authorizer, sustainability, roles and responsibilities, enrollment, authorizer oversight, and transportation (e270-271). Details on the peer reviewer qualifications, selection, and peer review process of review are fully developed(e51-52).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not mention if or how rural schools would be prioritized or encouraged as sub-grantees.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 27

Sub

1. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program (up to 10 points);

Strengths:

A well-established monitoring guide is provided which outlines details of the processes and timelines used for ongoing monitoring, with future edits to be made upon award (e53 and Appendix F Attachment 25). Sub-grantees are heavily monitored early after their award, throughout the lifetime of the sub-grant (including through reimbursement requests) and finally at the end of the project (e55). A comprehensive risk assessment template is used to mitigate risk and provide ongoing technical assistance and corrective action if needed (e53, e345). Reimbursements and budget guidelines mitigate risk by having a 10% or a [REDACTED] threshold for budget overages (e54). The charter schools division works with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to monitor federal funding usage and requirements (e54). To reduce the risk of closure, schools must address sustainability after receipt of the sub-grant in their sub-grant application (e54). To ensure transparency, sub-grantee monitoring reports and corrective action plans are posted on the ADE website (e55).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies (up to 5 points);

Strengths:

In an effort to avoid duplication of work and burden to sub-grantees, charter schools will report enrollment, achievement, and federal data directly to ADE; accountability audits are reported to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (authorizer); and the Arizona Charter School Program receives reports on progress toward their grant objectives (e55). Sub-grantees benefit, and have less burden, from the reporting/monitoring being handled by different entities (e55).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not discuss ways in which the duplication of work burden would be reduced for the sub-grantees other than sharing data reports.

Reader's Score: 3

3. Provide technical assistance and support for--

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State (up to 10 points);**

Strengths:

- (i) Technical assistance to eligible applicants would include coaching on enrollment, how to make marketing plans and demographic expectations for the charter school, how to maintain student retention, and avoid the overuse of discipline (e54-56). The applicant requires sub-grantees to attend technical assistance trainings related the overuse of discipline, social emotional learning and formative assessments, therefore strengthening their understanding of and the instructional methods for underserved students, thus yielding positive outcomes (e56).
- (ii) The primary authorizer is open to training and participates in offerings by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) for continuous improvement (e57). There is close alignment and collaboration between the AZCSP and the ASBCS (authorizer) which enables clear communication and evaluation of authorizing policies and expectations (e57).

Weaknesses:

- (i) The applicant didn't provide evidence that the technical assistance trainings are based on the needs of sub-grant recipients.
- (ii) The current collaboration between the authorizer and ASBCS is not formalized through a requirement or mandate. Therefore, it is unclear if this collaborative relationship could change if existing staff members change or leave their roles.

Reader's Score: 8

4. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State (up to 5 points); and

Strengths:

Demonstrating a priority to engage the community, the new ADE state Superintendent set a mission that specifically identifies the commitment to empower parents (e58). The state superintendent holds community listening sessions for community members about their needs and desires related to school choice (e58). To work to prevent a developer from opening a school without parental input, a comprehensive plan for community engagement must be submitted with a sub-grant application (e59). AZCSP revisits that plan annually as part of ongoing monitoring (359).

Weaknesses:

The applicant didn't provide strong details on the parental input data collection and how that data will be used.

Reader's Score: 3

5. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law (up

Sub

to 5 points).

Strengths:

The applicant fully demonstrates the flexibility allowed in state law for charter schools in the areas of curriculum and instruction, budgets and expenditures, daily operation, and personnel (e59). Examples of autonomy are demonstrated in the areas of procurement (budgetary), alternative school calendar (operations), and instructional decisions (instruction) (e60).

Weaknesses:

There is no mention of the applicant continuing to work on maximizing (or expanding) the flexibilities allowed by state law.

Reader's Score: 3

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:**

Reader's Score: 12

Sub

- 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 (up to 10 points);**

Strengths:

The AZCSP does not contract with a third party to oversee management duties (e60), showing that there is the on staff capacity to manage the CSP grant. The applicant has articulated appropriate management objectives with timelines and measures to ensure the project goals are realized (e61-70). A realistic, and proven management plan of responsibilities, timelines, milestones, budget, and activities is fully developed (e61-70).

Weaknesses:

The application did not make evident information on job descriptions or the qualifications of staff.

Reader's Score: 8

- 2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project (up to 3 points);**

Strengths:

AZCSP staff solicit qualitative and quantitative feedback from sub-grantees on a yearly basis (e71). The applicant uses a third-party research firm (Research Making Change) to collect instructional coaching data to be used for continuous improvement (e71). Needs assessment surveys will drive training design and delivery (e71). A final end of project review will be conducted by a third party using an evaluation framework (e71).

Sub

Weaknesses:

Although examples are given about the types, frequency, and who/how feedback will be requested, specifics on how the feedback will be used were not provided.

Reader's Score: 2

- 3. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (up to 2 points).**

Strengths:

A strong staffing model, including four, 1.0 FTE positions and two, .15 FTE positions are allocated by ADE to conduct the outlined grant management activities (e72). Evidence of specific job duties is provided (e72).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

CPP 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency, or An Appeals Process (0 or 1 Points)**

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

- a. Allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency (LEA) to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the State ; or
- b. In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the State has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Note: In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing the appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

Please specify whether they meet (a) or (b) and clearly explain why in the strengths.

Strengths:

The Arizona State Board for Authorizers, which is not an LEA, is the primary authorizer. There are also other non-LEA authorizers in the state of Arizona.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Equitable Financing (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

Strengths:

Charter schools receive the same per pupil base level funding as school districts indicating that equitable financing is present for Arizona charter schools. The state of Arizona has a mechanism for additional funding for smaller charter schools (e22). Additionally, the "Estimated Student Count" allows a school to estimate enrollment, and receive funding, without waiting for the school to open (e22). The legislature created two other funding streams whereby the charter school can receive additional funding for support with facilities and to participate in a bond (e22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

Strengths:

Best practices that were developed using instructional techniques field tested in Arizona charter schools, are disseminated to charter and non-charter school leaders through a statewide initiative for school leadership (e23). Another project, the Lab School, demonstrates how the CSP division of the ADE works with a local struggling school district to build a model for student improvement (e24).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Charter School Facilities (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a State that provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) Funding for facilities
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition
- c) Access to public facilities

- d) **The ability to share in bonds or mill levies**
- e) **The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings**
- f) **Low- or no-cost leasing privileges**

Strengths:

ADE helps charter schools find suitable school buildings by publishing a yearly list of vacant and unused school buildings (e25). Arizona charter schools have access to public municipal bonds and [REDACTED] in bond financing has been issued thus far (e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Serving At-Risk Students (up to 3 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

Strengths:

The applicant states support for schools that serve at-risk students and gives priority to sub-grant applicants who offer dual enrollment and early college, or career and college preparation programs (e27). Additionally, charter schools have access to Drop-Out Recovery funding and supports from ADE (e26).

Weaknesses:

Although the state offers funding and support for dropout prevention and recovery, the applicant does not mention this as a priority for sub-grant applicant priority.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/16/2024 05:01 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/16/2024 01:36 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Arizona Department of Education (S282A240006)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	29
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	26
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	11
Sub Total	100	78

Priority Questions

CPP 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
CPP 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
CPP 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	2
Sub Total	3	2

Total

110

87

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - State Entities Panel - 3: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Arizona Department of Education (S282A240006)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (up to 5 points);

Strengths:

The applicant provides a logic model that addresses all objectives with activities and outcomes related to each (p. e36). The applicant makes a strong case for the need for additional charter schools, identifying Arizona as one of the fastest-growing US states with many disadvantaged youth (p. 27). As part of its rationale, the applicant states that 23 successful schools will be rolled into the grant with 24 new schools to be developed, replicated, or expanded (p. e29). The applicant focuses on two key elements of the grant: to expand the number of high-quality charter schools and to improve student outcomes by training school leaders on instructional rounds and functional assessment (p. e32). The applicant will support charter schools beginning with a rigorous application process preceded by extensive training on proposal development (p. e33). In addition, intensive monitoring will be followed by support for academics, operations, and Board training (p. e36). Finally, the school will disseminate best practices under the Arizona Department of Education Leadership (ADEL) initiative of the AZ Effective Educator Division (p. e38).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant describes support for struggling schools in partnership with the state, the evidence indicates that they will only mirror the SEA practices for charter schools needing support and improvement (p. e37). How the state will leverage charter school success and innovations in non-charter schools is unclear. The applicant's measures include the self-reporting of TA implementation, which may not produce accurate, unbiased results (p. e39).

Reader's Score: 3

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 5 points); and

Strengths:

In this fully developed response, the applicant presents four objectives accompanied by performance measures and targets (p.39). These objectives are designed as SMART goals. Outcome targets are differentiated by cohort. Outcomes focus on opening schools, increasing student performance, increasing the capacity of teachers and leaders through TA, and improving graduation rates and outcomes through dual enrollment or early college high

Sub

school. Each is accompanied by a rationale and is described in SMART goal terms (p. e40). The outcomes are directly related to the objectives. The applicant presents evidence of using quantitative and qualitative data for reviewing the project (p. e40). Performance measures, such as state assessment data, are reviewed annually (p. e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entity program (up to 5 points).

Strengths:

Using data from the past seven years, the applicant provides calculations that make the number of subgrants reasonable (p. e41). The applicant will leverage the state's rigorous authorizing process to ensure only high-quality applicants receive subgrants (p. e41). Statewide enrollment in charter schools, now 20% of total public school enrollment, continues to increase, providing an additional rationale for ambitious goals (p. e41). Charter school academic data provided indicate that the state's charter school students who are economically disadvantaged, including students with disabilities and English language learners, outperform their traditional school peers (p. e42). Peer-reviewed research shows that Arizona charter schools demonstrate higher academic growth rates, supporting the project's ambitious academic goals (p. e42).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand and need, and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants (up to 20 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence of awarding 40 grants over five years to 38 successfully operating charter schools that remain open and serving students (p. e43). The applicant awarded 14 new applications, 13 expansions, and 13 replications during the period. Funding is also available for waiver schools, which are currently within the previous CSP grant cycle. (p. e43). In combination with a state study that showed an increased interest in charter schools, the applicant derived the number of subgrants, delineating between new charters and waiver schools (p. e43). The proposal includes a solid rationale for differentiating the grant awards based on new, expansion, or replication plans (p. e44). In addition, the applicant provides a rationale for supporting waiver schools that require continuing grant funds (p. e44).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a rationale for the amounts awarded for each type of subgrantee, but there are no calculations or references to previous amounts provided. The applicant did not provide any explanation or calculations related to how the funding amounts were derived. The applicant did not explain why the schools did not have sufficient funds in their earlier awards, attributing it only to adopting "slow growth models" (p. e44).

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

1. **The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program and improve education results for students (up to 15 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a detailed timeline of activities and responsibilities for its subgrant process (beginning e61) broken down by year, with specific components for administrative, training, and evaluation responsibilities. A detailed application timeline is provided on page e350. The applicant will give multiple pre-application trainings, with state-wide training opportunities (p. e44). The subgrant process will award additional priority points to applicants who develop high school models with dual enrollment opportunities. The applicant provides evidence of a wide range of school models awarded in previous subgrants (p. e45). The proposal includes a variety of ways the applicant will publicize the subgrants (p. e46). The applicant coordinates with the state data process to find eligible subgrant applicants (p. e47). The application process described will ensure high-quality applicants with well-designed programs (p. e48). The applicant requires a needs assessment and explains how the results or findings of the assessment should be incorporated into the subgrant proposal (p. e50). The proposal includes a process for selecting peer reviewers. It includes standardized Evaluator Qualifications that are supported by evidence of applicants from diverse backgrounds and are supported by training before the subgrant process begins (p. e52). The applicant describes its proposal evaluation process in detail and gives a timeline of the scoring and announcement (p. e52). The process includes a review of a written proposal and in-person interviews, allowing for follow-up from questions generated during the review. The Project Director and Team Lead review budgets to ensure reasonable and allowable expenditures (p. e53).

Weaknesses:

In the application, diverse school models are mentioned, but there are no details regarding how this project would support them. In particular, the applicant does not address how rural schools would be recruited for the process or why this program would benefit them. The applicant lists various models but does not demonstrate how the introduction of those models aligns with the project's outcomes, particularly those about achievement (p. e46). Although several methods for publicizing the subgrant availability are provided, the applicant does not clearly demonstrate how their process will ensure that educationally disadvantaged students make up a sufficient number of new enrollees in the new, expanded, or replicated schools. The applicant's response to publicizing subgrants includes many other federal grants for which they may be eligible but does not specifically discuss publicizing the subgrant opportunity (p. e47). It is unclear what role the needs assessment will play in selecting successful proposals.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. **The State entity's plan to--**

Reader's Score: 26

Sub

1. **Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program (up to 10 points);**

Strengths:

The applicant's fully developed response demonstrates a clear plan for monitoring subgrantees. A monitoring handbook is included that informs subgrantees of all elements of the review, including monitoring both during and at

Sub

the end of the project (p. e53). The applicant refers to a monitoring system for its previous subgrant awardees (e53), which will be revised during the grant period to align with the project goals. Awardees will receive training in the system processes, including financial and academic monitoring tools (p. e53). The applicant describes a risk assessment instrument in the appendix (p. e345). A detailed finance guide includes allowable and nonallowable costs, procurement guidelines (p. e359), and the state's financial performance framework (p. e117). A plan for addressing schools that are out of compliance is described, with "at risk" schools placed on administrative hold (p. e54) and compliance requirements include financial oversight and monitoring of practices to ensure that state and federal funding for students with disabilities and English language learners is spent appropriately (p. e54). Each subgrantee must develop a sustainability plan for when grant funds are exhausted (p. e54). Monitoring reports and Corrective Action plans are sent to the subgrantee and publicly posted on the Arizona Department of Education website (p. e54).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

2. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies (up to 5 points);

Strengths:

The applicant's adequate response describes some evidence of reducing the duplication of work at charter schools and the authorizer (p. e55). The applicant describes a data reporting system that includes the Department of Education, the State Board for Charter Schools, and the CSP program that does not overlap and are complementary, each providing different areas of accountability (p. e55).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide additional changes that would reduce duplication of work beyond data collection. There is no plan, and there is no evidence of collaboration between the group

Reader's Score: 3

3. Provide technical assistance and support for--

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State (up to 10 points);**

Strengths:

i. The application includes evidence of a technical assistance plan that supports subgrantee opening and operation (p. e55). In particular, the applicant will provide training on formative assessment and instructional rounds as a research-based means of improving academic outcomes (p. e56). Schools are required to participate in state classroom management training (p. e56). Technical assistance is included in the timeline of the management plan (p. e65). The applicant will employ an external evaluator to assess the impact of the technical assistance (p. e71). A technical assistance manual is included in the application (p. e307). Extensive training is provided to subgrant applicants, including recruiting and enrolling educationally disadvantaged students (p. e55).

ii. The applicant provides some evidence of providing technical assistance to the state's chartering agencies (p. e57). The applicant will reinforce training from NACSA by the state Charter Review Board (p. e56).

Sub

Weaknesses:

- i. The applicant does not describe clearly how the subgrantees' needs and the TA are related. Training is not differentiated by school type or location, making it difficult to ascertain whether the training is comprehensive.
- ii. The applicant does not present a comprehensive plan for supporting quality authorizing. There is no requirement that the state participate in any technical assistance, including whether to adopt the changes recommended by the third-party review of the authorizer's policies and practices (p. e57).

Reader's Score: 8

4. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State (up to 5 points); and

Strengths:

The applicant provides a moderately detailed plan for soliciting input from parents and community members. In support of the State Superintendents new mission statement empowering parents, the applicant states that subgrant applicants must explain how input will be used (p. e58). Applicants must demonstrate active partnerships with parents and community groups (p. e58). AZCSP staff will monitor the implementation of these partnership plans annually, emphasizing ensuring charter schools with little or no support from opening (p. e59). Parents are interviewed annually as part of the monitoring process (p. e60)

Weaknesses:

While its subgrant process requires a plan to include stakeholder input, the applicant needs to describe in its plan specific mechanisms for using input from parents on the CSP process. There is no description of how input will be considered or any descriptions of data collection methods or frequency. There is no plan describing a mechanism that ensures parent input is included in the continuous improvement of the project.

Reader's Score: 3

5. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law (up to 5 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence of revised state statutes that result in a strong charter law (p. e59). Charters are granted wide autonomy over curriculum, budgets, operations, calendars, and personnel. The applicant's plan to provide training in formative assessment allows schools to maximize their autonomy in curriculum and instruction (p. e34).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a plan to maximize the flexibility the law allows. Current flexibilities are listed, but no new initiatives are described. The applicant fails to identify any areas of the current law that would benefit from review or strengthening.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

Reader's Score: 11

Sub

- 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 (up to 10 points);**

Strengths:

In its well-developed response, the applicant presents a detailed timeline for each management plan objective (p. e61) and assigns responsibility to specific staff for meeting milestones by specific dates. Program staff mainly carry out these responsibilities (p. e 69), and descriptions of these responsibilities are outlined (p. 72). The staff described are those currently implementing the successful CSP program (p.e72). Although the applicant uses data from other sources, it controls the subgrant process. A list of monitoring procedures is included. The narrative and the budget delineate between technical assistance and administrative tasks. The timeline includes contractors and their deliverables (p. e70). The applicant presents a budget narrative that shows the budget is aligned with the project objectives and management plan (p. e405).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide descriptions and resumes of key personnel, making it difficult to discern whether staff members have the skills and experience to conduct their roles and the qualifications and experience necessary to meet the project goals.

Reader's Score: 8

- 2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project (up to 3 points);**

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequate response that describes efforts to solicit subgrantee feedback through surveys completed at the end of each monitoring visit (p. e71). An external evaluation of the professional development and technical assistance will provide data incorporated into future training (p. e71). A table presented by the applicant lists evaluation activities and who is responsible for providing the data (p. e69).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include sufficient plan details to ensure feedback. There are no procedures for feedback on the application process or the subgrantee award experience. It is not clear whether an external evaluator has been engaged, with the application referencing evaluators "such as WestEd" (p. e71). The applicant does not describe procedures for analyzing data or how the data will be used for continuous improvement.

Reader's Score: 2

- 3. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (up to 2 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant provides adequate information on the time commitments of key personnel by listing positions, FTE, and responsibilities (p. e72). Sufficient information is provided on contractors' roles and the grant functions they will be used for (p. e72).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The staffing information listed in the application does not provide enough information to assess whether time commitments are sufficient. In particular, the time commitments of the Education Specialist Teams are not aligned with site visits for instructional rounds or professional development specifically (p. e70).

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

CPP 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency, or An Appeals Process (0 or 1 Points)

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

- a. Allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency (LEA) to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the State ; or
- b. In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the State has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Note: In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing the appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

Please specify whether they meet (a) or (b) and clearly explain why in the strengths.

Strengths:

The applicant states that Arizona law provides for multiple authorizers, including the state board of education, the state board for charter schools, a university, and a community college; LEAs are prohibited from authorizing charters (p. e14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

CPP 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Equitable Financing (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

Strengths:

Arizona's education financing system ensures equitable funding for charter schools compared to traditional public schools. All schools in the state receive a base level of support (p. e14). Charter schools also benefit from a smaller Local Education Agency (LEA) weight, which provides additional funding. Another advantage is that charter schools can receive funding from the beginning of the year through the Estimated Student Count process rather than waiting for official enrollment counts (p. e22). Since charter schools are not allowed to set their taxes, the state provides Additional

Assistance funding to help them meet their financial needs. Additionally, charter schools can use Charter Equalization Assistance funds to lease facilities or participate in bond offerings (p. e23).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

Strengths:

The applicant points to several examples of the state using best practices from charter schools. The Superintendent's Instruction Improvement initiative recruited the applicant's staff to provide successful strategies (p. e23). A Lab School was created that uses charter school professional development to help teachers at struggling schools prepare better lessons (p. e24). The applicant provides training on instructional rounds and formative assessments. The applicant proposes to provide training in "field-tested" techniques for improving instruction (p. e23). Two technical assistance programs will be embedded into the program to support Instructional Rounds and Formative assessment (p. e24).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Charter School Facilities (up to 2 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a State that provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) **Funding for facilities**
- b) **Assistance with facilities acquisition**
- c) **Access to public facilities**
- d) **The ability to share in bonds or mill levies**
- e) **The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings**
- f) **Low- or no-cost leasing privileges**

Strengths:

The applicant shows that the State Facilities Board publishes vacant building lists that may house charter schools (p. e25). Charter schools in Arizona also have access to public municipal bonds (p. e26).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 2

CPP 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Serving At-Risk Students (up to 3 points)

To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequately developed response and states that the legislature funds dropout recovery programs for charter schools serving at-risk students (p. e26). Funds may be used for tutoring, career counseling, and college counseling (p. e27). Preferences are included in the subgrant that award points for participation in dual enrollment or early college high schools that offer comprehensive career and college support (p. e27).

Weaknesses:

The application describes efforts to provide equitable access by offering dropout recovery at any high school with state funds. Missing from the plan, however, are detailed activities ensuring the schools have access to these programs. In addition, there is no requirement that high schools adopt these programs.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/16/2024 01:36 PM