

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2024 10:10 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Education (S282A240008)

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	26
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	9
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	3
Sub Total	3	3

Total

110

90

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - State Entities Panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Education (S282A240008)

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 applicant provides a fully developed project rationale section that notes that the Rhode Island Charter Schools Program (RICSP) has experienced success with prior public charter schools and seeks to expand and increase the number of high-quality charters specifically to increase charter seat availability for educationally disadvantaged students. The rationale section features a logic model (pgs.e31-e40) that focuses on 4 objectives: 1) opening new and expanding high-quality charter schools to increase the number of high-quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island's educationally disadvantaged students, 2) create a statewide system of support for opening new schools to improve the quality and efficiency of [the Rhode Island Department of Education's] RIDE (the state's only authorizer) to increase high-quality educational opportunities, 3) foster partnerships among RI's charter and traditional school districts to raise achievement for all students particularly educationally disadvantaged students in schools identified for comprehensive support and intervention, and 4) invest in school leadership to support Rhode Island's new, expanding, and existing charter schools. Each objective is then supported by inputs, strategies, key activities & actions, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes. Project rationale for the 26 additional subgrantees is based on Rhode Island's prior CSP grant, current demand for additional charter seats, and projections of potential subgrantees ready to apply based on past applications (pg.e42-e43).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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 applicant has provided a fully developed set of performance measures that have been aligned with the logic model. These measures are sorted by objective, and each measure is explicated in terms of strategies, performance measures, performance targets, and target explanations. Each performance objective features at least two performance targets that can be reported annually (pgs.e31-e40). Additionally, the extensive Charter School Performance Review System: A Guide for The Charter School Community has been provided in Appendix F10

Sub

(pgs.e322-e365). The guide includes performance indicators (i.e., academic, financial sustainability, organizational performance sustainability, and compliance sustainability), annual reporting guidelines and instructions, renewal process details (i.e., timeline, tiers, application, submission, site visit instructions, and renewal recommendations).

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 provides an adequately developed case for the ambitiousness of the project's objectives. Specifically, in the Objective 2 Performance Measures table on page e35, the target explanation discusses the attainability of a "5% increase in (subgrantee) applications each year" and a "3% increase [per] year for unique applicants." In addition, the proposal includes a table "based on...historical factors and assumptions about the pipeline [of potential grantees]" that includes the number of projected subgrantees per year (pg.e43). Discussion of this table notes that "three individual [subgrantee] schools per year represents approximately a 33% increase in the number of charter schools over the life of the grant" (pg.e41).

Weaknesses:

While three schools per year would yield a 33% increase in Rhode Island charters over the grant period, this growth aligns with the current pipeline of high-quality charter schools that have expressed interest in expansion applications and with the current pipeline of new school teams that have expressed interest in submitting a proposal." (pg.e41). If the growth is aligned with current (i.e., existing) funding this indicates that while the objectives are clearly attainable, it is unclear if they are significantly ambitious.

Reader's Score: 3

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 well developed statement of demand and need by explaining the exigent demand by families for additional charter school seats: "For the 2024-25 school year, Rhode Island's charter schools received 32,403 applications for 2,942 available charter school seats." (pg.e41). Additionally, "Every charter school must run a lottery due to significant demand. Every charter has received more applications than seats available, and more than 80% of charter schools receive more than five applications for every available seat." Furthermore, "11,379 students are in schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Intervention status" (pg.e42), and, as noted in the project overview, "these students are largely in educationally disadvantaged student groups—those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, English Learners, and students with disabilities." (pg.e10). Thus, the explanation and table regarding the logic driving the number of planned subgrantees, the amount of each subgrant, and the type of subgrants expected each year is evidentially supported (pgs.e42-e43). The number of expected subgrants is also aligned with the budget narrative (pgs.e501-e507).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant states that they have based their future subgrantee awards on their "previous CSP grant", with additional funding included for future funding "due to increased costs and expectations on new and expanding schools", this does not fully explain either the increased cost basis nor the additional expectations that the next

Sub

round o subgrantees would be held to should funding be awarded (pg.e42).

Reader's Score: 19

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 well developed case that eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives. The proposal includes key activities and details of the subgrant process (pgs.e44-e53). "The proposal review process and timeline consists of four key sections: 1) the application process, 2) the public comment process, 3) the proposal quality evaluation, and 4) the recommendation, vote, and approval", and requirements and deadlines for each step are provided. Appendix F3, Request for Proposals for New Student Seats (pgs.e159-e210) includes adequate detail regarding the subgrant processes and procedures and addresses the types of subgrants (i.e., new charter or expansion). The application also includes Appendix F13: 2023-24 CSP: Guidelines for Planning and Implementation Grants. This document provides detailed, thorough CSP grant information, CSP subgrant application instructions, and CSP assurances (pgs. e455-e469).

Weaknesses:

While the process is substantively described, it is unclear how the state entity will support diverse charter models and rural schools during and after the subgrant award process. It is also unclear how the state will support and inform potential applicants regarding the level of autonomy afforded by the state. Further, while the peer review process is noted as a key activity for objective 1, the process for selecting and training peer reviewers is not detailed sufficiently.

Reader's Score: 13

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 provides an adequately developed plan to monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants. The proposal includes a plan for monitoring subgrantees (pgs.e54-e55). Quarterly and annual project and fiscal reports will be analyzed, concerns will be followed-up on, and technical assistance featuring NACSA resources aligned with needs will be provided. Appendix F13: 2023-24 CSP: Guidelines for Planning and Implementation Grants provides detailed, thorough CSP grant information including subgrant reporting requirements (pgs. e455-e469). Monitoring process development, alignment, and training are clearly noted as being within the purview of the charter schools coordinator to be completed in Year 1 and followed up through Year 5 (pg.e66).

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Weaknesses:

While an adequate plan for monitoring is provided, efforts to ensure public transparency are not specifically discussed. Monitoring plans are also somewhat vague in that they lack specific actionable timelines, don't address sustainability, and don't include corrective action plans.

Reader's Score: 7

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 includes a fully developed plan for avoiding duplication of work for the charter schools and the authorizer (pgs.e55-e56). The applicant states that interoffice collaboration between RIDE and other R government offices has been effective in reducing administrative burdens related to charter oversight (pg.e55). The Charter School Performance Review System: A Guide for The Charter School Community has been provided in Appendix F10 (pgs.e322-e365). The guide includes information on reviews that provide data used by multiple offices (i.e., RISCSP and RIDE's Office of College and Career Readiness). Appendix F14, Charter School Financial Reporting Deadlines: At-A-Glance is a good example of burden reduction and duplication avoidance since the guide reminds charter operators of report types, deadlines, contacts, and writ that provides the basis of requirements.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

The applicant includes a well developed explanation of the TA available to subgrant applicants and subgrantees from RICSP and RIDE (pgs.e56-e57). The Build Excel Sustain (BES) Leaders for Emerging Networks of School (LENS) program, "a year-long, part-time training and coaching program features the most effective practices of equitable and excellent schools nationwide", will be available to subgrantees and extant public charter schools (pg. e19). BES's Fellow On Support (FOS) program will be offered to new charters to "support each founder from the planning year through the second year of operation to effectively deliver on the school's mission and vision and achieve its ambitious goals" (pg.e18). Subgrant applicants with preliminary approval are provided the Rhode Island Charter Public Schools: Pre-Opening Handbook (Appendix F15, pgs.e476-e491) that assists founders and operators in getting started with charter implementation. RICSP plans to expand a unique approach to improving authorizing practices via a state-level central enrollment system (i.e., EnrollRI) that aids parents as they seek to enroll students using one portal while also allowing for data collection and analysis to provide insights into "authorizing practices and overall charter performance" (pg.e30 and pgs.e61-e62).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant clearly provides support for subgrantees as they open schools, it is unclear what supports are available as the school programs mature and require technical assistance appropriate for more advanced programs to continue to support the at-risk populations targeted by the RISCSP. Additional information on ongoing supports for a diverse range of schools and education models would help to strengthen the project as well.

Sub

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 an adequately developed plan to solicit input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state (pgs.e57-e58). Stakeholder feedback and engagement is required by state law as part of the authorization process through hearings, requests for impact analyses, and "written support" (i.e., a resolution or ordinance granted by a town or city council for network charters or charters with more than one school) (pg.e58). Requirements and deadlines for input are embedded within the Request for Proposals for New Student Seats (Appendix F3) and Excerpts from Rhode Island Charter Statute (Appendix F2).

Weaknesses:

While the efforts to solicit and consider input focus on legislation and initial authorization, there is no specific timeline for when or how input collection and sharing will continue after authorization. Additionally, no details are provided regarding how data will be collected and shared post-authorization to improve the implementation and operation of charters.

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 an adequately developed case regarding 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. The proposal states that Rhode Island's charter regulations require: autonomy over curriculum, autonomy in staffing, fiscal autonomy, and autonomy within federal law (pgs.e59-e60).

Weaknesses:

While the state has clearly ensured autonomy in the early phases of the charter school planning authorizing, and implementation, there is no additional detail or assurances provided regarding the flexibility afforded to more mature programs.

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: 9

Sub

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 applicant provides an adequately developed management plan on pages e65-e68. The plan is divided by objective and features key activities, tasks, task leads, and completion years. RIDE will oversee RICSP via weekly check-ins. The project director will lead, "monthly fiscal and contract reviews and monthly sessions [to] address challenges and make continuous improvements" (pg.e61). The applicant also provides additional information regarding the EnrollRI system, which serves as both a management tool and a parent portal to public charter enrollment in Rhode Island (pgs.e61-e62).

Weaknesses:

While the proposal includes a timeline and tasks, milestones are not included for each goal. Additionally, the management plan narrative (pg.e64), the "Leads" column in the management plan crosswalk, and the budget narrative (pg.e501) do not align, and there is no mention of staff below RICSP leadership levels.

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 provides a partially developed case for the adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. Continuous improvement is a goal of the project director-led monthly RICSP team meetings (pg.e61). Feedback and improvement mechanisms are included in the Request for Proposals for New Student Seats (Appendix F3) and the Charter School Performance Review System: A Guide for The Charter School Community (Appendix F10).

Weaknesses:

While continuous improvement is a goal of meetings and a component of RFPs and reviews, processes for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in more mature programs (post-authorization and implementation) are not evidenced.

Reader's Score: 1

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 an adequately developed case that 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. The time commitments of the Project Director and Charter Schools Coordinator are discussed in the management plan section (pg.e63).

Weaknesses:

The management plan (pg.e64) and the budget narrative (pg.e501) are not aligned, introducing uncertainty around the staff budgeting plan and a lack of clarity regarding grant leadership fiscal support. The management plan states that, "The RICSP personnel budget will be used to support the salaries for the Charter School Specialist and Education Specialist" (pg.e64), yet the budget narrative indicates that the RICSP grant does not propose any expenses in the area of personnel or fringe (pg.e501).

Sub

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 meets Competitive Preference Priority 1 via (A), since the RIDE Council on Education is the sole authorizer in Rhode Island. An appeals process is also provided in RI state law (pg.e22).

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 meets this priority by providing a fully developed case 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. The proposal cites specific state laws that stipulate equitable funding for public charter schools (pgs.e22-e23) and provides excerpts from these laws in Appendix F2 (Excerpts from other Rhode Island General Laws) and Appendix F9 (FY2024 Funding Formula Supporting Calculations).

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 meets this priority by providing a fully developed proposal section that states that collaborative relationships between public charters and traditional public schools are required by state law, since charters are intended "to be vanguards, laboratories, and an expression of the ongoing and vital state interest in improving education" (pg.e23). The applicant also provides an adequate list of charter-focused projects and programs that are designed to encourage and require further dissemination and collaboration between charters and struggling schools and LEAs.

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 meets this priority by providing a fully developed proposal section that states, "pursuant to § 16-77.1-5 and § 16-77-4.1, Rhode Island charter schools can seek state funding for facilities through RI's school housing aid and School Building Authority Capital Fund", and "as of June 1, 2024, more than 50% (13) of RI's charter schools have been allocated ~\$258MM worth of facility reimbursement" (pg.e27).

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 meets this priority by providing a fully developed case that Rhode Island State law requires that "at least one-half (1/2) of the total number of charter public schools in the state shall be reserved for charter school applications designed to increase the educational opportunities for at-risk pupils", and that charter schools must "increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as educationally disadvantaged and at-risk" (pg.e27). The proposal also notes that the 2023 CREDO national Charter School Study "found that students who attend charter schools in RI gain, on average, 90 days of additional learning in reading and 88 additional days of learning in math." (pg.e28).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Education (S282A240008)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	34
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	25
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	81
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	3
Sub Total	3	3

Total

110

91

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - State Entities Panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Education (S282A240008)

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: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a comprehensive research-backed and evidence-based logic model with four objectives (pgs. e31-e40). The first objective is to support the opening of new and expansion of high-quality charter schools that will increase the number of high-quality educational opportunities for Rhode Island's educationally disadvantaged students, which is the rationale for this proposed project. The applicant included CREDO's most recent national charter school performance report as outside information, which cannot be considered into this review. This outside report released that students who attend charter schools in Rhode Island gain, on average, 90 days of additional learning in reading and 88 additional days of learning in math (pgs. e10, e43-e44, e392-e393).

The applicant presented key priorities in detail and explained what activities it would execute to support the opening of new charter schools, replication schools, and expansion of high-quality charter school, including the number of new and expansion schools during each grant year (pg. e43). Through supporting ongoing efforts to improve authorizer effectiveness and efficiency, the applicant proposes it will reduce barriers for charter schools so they can allocate more resources to support teaching and learning and increasing the high-quality educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students (pg. e29).

The project will fund subgrants for three cohorts of schools culminating in nine new schools over the grant period (pg. e43). The total number of new schools is reasonable given the historical pattern of two new or expanding schools each year over the last ten years (pg. e11).

Rhode Island Charter Schools Program (RICSP) supports the state's goal to provide all students, regardless of where they live, access to a high-quality education (pg. e10). The applicant made the case that opening nine schools over the grant period will provide new opportunities for students currently attending low-achieving schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance

Sub

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 applicant detailed multiple performance measures are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely, and clearly related to the intended project outcomes (pgs. e31-e40). For example, grant objective 1 has five performance measures to ensure the applicant supports the opening of new and expanding high-quality charter schools that increase the number of high-quality opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students in the state (pgs. e32-e33) These performance measures are (a) the number of existing charter schools that apply for expansion, (b) the percent of new seat applicants that participate in at least one technical assistance session, (c) the percent of seats that are approved to serve educationally disadvantaged students predominantly, (d) the percent of approved new seat applications that open on time, and (e) the number of new high-quality charter schools created. Each of the performance measures has a target, which are (a) three or more per year, (b) 100%, (c) 90%, (d) 100% will complete readiness tasks on time, and (e) three cohorts of three, showing that they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to the project objective, and timely (all annual measures). The performance measures are mostly annual measures with a couple that are measured at the end of the grant period.

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:

The applicant clearly articulated ambitious yet attainable objectives and performance targets (pgs. e31-40). For example, during the most recent charter school application cycle five charter schools applied for expansion, yet only two were granted (pg. e32). The applicant's stated target is three subgrants per cohort (pg. e43), which is one more per year than the pattern over the last ten years (pg. e11). The other three objectives are also ambitious and include investing in charter school leadership by partnering with Build Excel Sustain (BES) and accessing their LENS program (pgs. e18-e19), improving authorizing practices to support charter school time spent with student education rather than administrative efforts, and foster partnerships between and among charter schools and school districts to share best-practices and improve education statewide.

The applicant's charter school student applicant data supports these objectives as well, with 9,726 unique applicants vying for 2,942 new seats available in Fall 2024 (pg. e11). And over 82% of these applications came from families in urban areas, where the majority of low-performing schools are located (pg. e10).

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 provided a proposed number of subgrants by each project year that is supported by a thorough explanation of the demand and need for the proposed number of subgrant awards, which included providing convincing data supporting the demand for charter school seats. In fall 2024 there were 9,726 unique applicants

Sub

vying for 2,942 new seats available (pg. e11) and the fact that all charter schools must run a lottery due to significant demand, with many charter schools receiving five or more applications for every available seat (pg. e42).

The applicant also provided justification for its proposed number of subgrants each year by providing the average number of new or expanding charter schools being approved each year for the last ten years (pg. e11). Using that data, the applicant proposed to award three subgrants per year (pgs. e42-e43). Each subgrantee would receive three years of funding (1 planning year + 2 implementation years) and a total of [REDACTED] (pg. e42). The applicant noted this is more funding than the previous CSP grant due to the increased costs and expectations on new and expanding schools (pg. e42).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide the proposed number of subgrants by subgrant type, instead lumping new and expansion proposals together in one group (pg. e43).

Reader's Score: 19

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 presented a well-developed plan to award subgrants, including having most components to a successful subgrant competition described in detail. The applicant described things it learned from past review of data and feedback from charter schools, which included implementing a revised charter performance review system and application process for new seats. The new charter performance review system ensures that every existing charter school receives annual performance evaluations that serve as a clear benchmark for understanding whether their performance puts them in a position to successfully apply for expansion (pg. e12). In addition, the application processes for new seats were consolidated and focused on serving educationally disadvantaged students (pg. e12). Both changes will help ensure applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the applicant's objectives for improving educational results for students.

Thes subgrant application process itself is aligned with the state's application and approval process for approving new and expanding charter schools (pg. e44) and is communicated through the Commissioner's Field Memo. Subgrantees eligible as an expansion must demonstrate they have a proven record of academic success as evidenced by the statewide accountability system (pg. e45). All subgrantees will be required to set 2-3 goals directly related to project objectives 1 and 3 (pg. e46) and these must be adopted as part of their school-specific goals in their charter performance agreement.

The applicant provided a specific timeline for subgrant application and detailed all steps throughout the application process (pgs. e47-e53).

The applicant uses Schoolworks as its peer reviewer for all charter and subgrant applications, which ensures each subgrant application is betted by a high-quality, independent, and objective external evaluator (pg. e45).

Weaknesses:

The applicant omitted a key component of the subgrant application, which is to describe expenditures and activities as part of a sustainability plan. Instead, the subgrant application requires an explanation of how the subgrantee can wind down grant activities at the end of the grant period with no detrimental effect to the school (pg. e465). With this statement, it appears the subgrantee is not expected to sustain developed projects or follow systems built during the grant beyond the end of the grant.

The subgrant application does not require a discussion of family and community engagement activities to ensure it is meeting the needs of the students and community it serves or discuss the flexibilities the subgrantee will access as they are afforded to charter schools. It also does not require the subgrantee to perform a needs assessment to determine where it might want to develop its goals related to project objectives (pgs. e455-e469).

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 25

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a monitoring plan for all charter schools that contains a detailed description of activities, processes, responsible parties, and timeframes, with a focus on increasing transparency for all stakeholders, analyzing objective performance criteria to inform clear evaluations, and incorporating authorizing best practices (pgs. e322-e365). There is a second monitoring plan for subgrantees that includes submitting monthly reimbursement requests, quarterly programmatic reports, and exit reports within 30 days of existing each of the planning and implementation phases (pg. e54, e462).

Weaknesses:

The monitoring plan proposed by the applicant for subgrantees monitoring activities does not include how it will identify risk or address deficiencies or how it will monitor subgrantee expenditures to ensure they are using funds for activities to help meet the educational needs of their students, specifically including students with a disability and English learners.

Reader's Score: 7

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 provides a detailed explanation for how it avoids duplication of work for charter schools, as the Council is the sole authorizer. As such, there is no duplication of work for charter schools or authorizers (pg. e55). The applicant has worked to ensure information reviewed as part of the charter school monitoring process provides a one-stop set of academic, fiscal, and organizational performance expectations and information that can be used for multiple applicant and state offices (pgs. e55, e322-e365). In addition, the state has review teams that review all schools in the state, including charters, making review equitable for all public schools (pg. e55).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

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:

The applicant presented a well-developed plan to provide pre-opening technical assistance to support subgrantees in opening and operating new charter schools and in replicating and expanding high-quality schools, which included, for example, a pre-opening handbook, available to all new schools or expansions to use as a technical assistance tool, that includes a list of pre-opening tasks (pgs. e57, e476-e491). If a subgrantee is off track from the pre-opening tasks, the applicant will provide technical assistance and support to ensure the subgrantee meets all required milestones to open or expand including, but not limited to, assistance filing forms with state agencies, creating financial plans, identifying a facility, and connecting with other organizations that can provide support (pg. e57).

The applicant clearly articulated the purpose of project objective 3, which is specific to improving authorizing efforts in the state, is to ensure subgrantees can focus on providing high-quality education to students in the state (pgs. e14-e16, e34-e36). The applicant proposes to do this through streamlining and increasing the efficiency of charter-related operational and bureaucratic process as well as communicating and implementing clear and transparent expectations for charter performance (pgs. e34-e35).

Weaknesses:

The applicant presented an insufficient plan for providing technical assistance to support subgrantees outside of pre-opening tasks.

Reader's Score: 7

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 executes a sound practice for garnering parent and community member input during the new charter school approval process only, through public comment opportunities (pgs. e49-e50, e57). Parent and community input during the approval process can discuss academic, programmatic, and fiscal impacts new charter schools would have on their community (pg. e58).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide any details regarding how or when it solicited parent and community member input outside of the new charter school approval process. As such, the weakness of the applicant's plan is that it does not consider stakeholder input in the operation of the school or implementation of the grant (pg. e57).

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).

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant presented a description of four areas of flexibility afforded by state charter school law, which includes autonomy over curriculum, staffing, finances, and within federal law (pgs. e59-e60).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a description of how it will work to support charter schools with maximizing this flexibility.

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: 10

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 applicant presented a management plan with a clear timeline that is realistic and appropriate for the objectives of the grant. The applicant's management plan includes a clear timeline for when activities will occur, and a clear delineation of which individual will complete each activity (pgs. e65-e68). The Charter School Coordinator is responsible for most Grant management activities, which is appropriate given the percentage of time allocated to the RICSP compared to the other individuals serving as the Project Officer and Director of School Opportunities (pg. e63).

Both key project personnel have demonstrated qualifications to contribute to the project's success and their responsibilities are key to contributing to the oversight of all aspects of grant management (pgs. e63-e64, e74-e77).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's management plan did not include clearly identified milestones, which would ensure project timeliness and success.

The proposed budget does not align with the management of the grant in that there are discrepancies in the salaries of the budget. Specifically, on page e64 the applicant indicates it will use grant funds to support the salaries of two individuals, the Charter School Specialist and Education Specialist. However, the budget narrative shows no funds being used for salaries (pg. e501). As such, it is not possible to determine if the budget provides adequate resources for activities (pgs. e64, e501-e507).

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);**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant's plan demonstrated how it ensured it received feedback from prior grant participants by discussing how it improved funding amounts for this grant cycle's planning and implementation grants accordingly (pg. e42).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provided little information about its plan to collect, analyze, and use feedback from stakeholders for continuous improvement to its proposed grant project. There were no discussions regarding how the applicant would solicit feedback from subgrantees to make improvements to the project outside of the charter approval process.

Reader's Score: 1

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 application provided detailed information on the time commitments of the project director (10%) and other key personnel (Charter School Coordinator - 75%, Director of School Opportunities – TBD). The applicant's management plan discusses the amount of time dedicated by each personnel and it seems appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (pgs. e63-e68).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 meets this competitive preference priority of having at least one authorized public chartering agency and provided documentation in statute that the K-12 Council on Education the sole authorizer in the state (pg. e22). In addition, state law, RIGL 16-39-1 and 16-39-2 allow any party aggrieved by any decision issued under the state's education law the right to appeal (pgs. e22, e142).

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:

The applicant demonstrated the State fully ensures charter schools receive equitable financing in comparison to traditional public schools in a prompt manner. The application provided documentation that Rhode Island education law RI §16-77.2-5 directs that all charter schools are funded using the same state funding methodology and timelines as traditional public schools (pgs. e22, e146-e147). State law RI §16-77.2-5 also guaranties equitable local funding paid directly by the district where a charter student resides in four quarterly payments (pg. e23, e146-e147).

In addition, Rhode Island charter schools are eligible to receive equitable federal funding in the same timeline as local districts (RI § 16-77.2-5, § 16-77.3-5, and § 16-77.4-5) (pgs. e23, e146-147, e152, e156-e157).

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 demonstrated the State is using best practices to help improve struggling schools and local education agencies (LEAs). The applicant provides specific examples that concretely show how the applicant disseminates best practices throughout schools in the State. Specifically, the applicant details the multiple ways it promotes collaboration and the sharing of best practices between and among charter schools and school districts, including (a) as part of the charter school performance framework criterion when evaluating the organization and leadership of the school (pgs. e24, e344), (b) phase 2 of the Charter Support Initiative that provided competitive grants to proposals that two charters co-applied for (pg. e25), (c) all subgrant applicants will be required to include dissemination of best practices to improve struggling schools as part of the application (pg. e26). The applicant will prioritize subgrant applications that focus on partnerships with districts and schools that have struggled with academic achievement, demonstrated persistent achievement gaps, or served large percentages of educationally disadvantaged students (pg. e26).

Several concrete examples of best-practice sharing were provided and included four partnerships between and among charter schools and school districts because of the Urban Core Summit (pgs. e20-e21).

Given the most recent national charter school performance report released by CREDO found that students who attend charter schools in Rhode Island gain, on average, 90 days of additional learning in reading and 88 additional days of learning in math, there are multiple charter school best practices to share, especially with urban centers where most low-achieving schools are located (pgs. e10, e43-e44, e392-e393).

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 demonstrates that the state is actively working to provide charter schools with facilities access, including providing a description of how charter schools can seek state funding for facilities through school housing aid and School Building Authority Capital Fund (pg. e27, e143). Facilities projects that meet the State's School Construction Regulations can seek reimbursement of up to 30% of the approved facility costs (pg. e27).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 demonstrated it fully supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services. Clear examples provided by the applicant

include Rhode Island state law RIGL § 16-77-3.1 requires at least one-half of the total number of charter schools in the state must be for charter school applications designed to increase the educational opportunities for at-risk pupils (pgs. e27, e140). To ensure the applicant met this requirement, it established an authorizing preference for charter schools serving educationally disadvantaged students (pg. e27).

To continue providing high-quality education to at-risk students, the applicant requires each existing charter that applies for expansion to include the dissemination and partnership practices that will result in collaboration with a sending district that serves predominantly educationally disadvantaged students. For charters seeking new authorization, their application must include a plan for partnering with their sending districts focusing on educationally disadvantaged students or communities. Finally, each subgrant application must include the specific dissemination activities that the grant funds will help facilitate, with preference given to applications that focus on sharing dropout prevention, dropout recovery, and counseling services at the school level (pg. e15).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/16/2024 03:07 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/16/2024 01:20 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Education (S282A240008)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	34
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	8
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 #1 - State Entities Panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Education (S282A240008)

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: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a strong rationale and proposes to open a reasonable number of charter schools during the grant year. The applicant includes historical data about charter school applications for expansion and new schools and their average approval ratings to support their rationale. (page e41) The number of subgrants proposed is also proportionate to the size of the state and their public education system. (page e41) The applicant further supports their rationale by presenting the number of applications received for charter schools (32,403) compared to the number of seats available (2,942). The logic model in the application includes several projects that, if achieved, would support the opening of high-quality charters, help struggling schools, and collect and share best practices across all schools. The strategies, key activities, outputs, and outcomes are clearly aligned and address needs identified by the state including a need for more high-quality education options and the need to improve application support to lead to more approved expansion and new school applications. (page e41)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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 and targets included in the application are aligned to the objectives and would reasonably lead to increasing the number of high-quality charter seats and increasing educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students through improvements to authorization processes and building capacity of those in the charters sector if achieved. (Obj.1, 3, 4) The application mostly includes measures that will adequately track the performance and progress toward objective outcomes. The applicant has a sufficient plan for measuring progress through performance targets that are measurable and use quantitative data from multiple sources and can be measured annually. (pages e32-e40)

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 includes detailed explanations that demonstrate a sound process for how each target was set for the performance measures. The applicant sets targets for each objective that are ambitious yet attainable. The historical data that is provided clearly demonstrates that the objectives that have been set will significantly expand (by 33% at the end of the grant/ page e41) and improve charter projects in the state at a level that is reasonable but impactful. (pages e13-e19)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 presents extensive data to justify their requested number of subgrants and the proposed amount per subgrant. The applicant includes an explanation for the number of subgrants they are proposing to award each year which is supported by the number of students on their charter school waitlist and the need to improve educational opportunities in areas with a large number of schools identified for improvement (pages e 41 and e42) The explanation, which includes historical data and projected growth data, demonstrates the demand for charter schools and provides a strong rationale for the number of subgrants that the applicant is requesting. . (page e41) The applicant also includes adequate reasoning for the proposed funding amounts, which are based on past successful grant amount with a slight increase due to increased costs and expectations. (page e42) The funding amounts for subgrant are aligned to the proposed budget and will reasonably support the number of proposed grants. The applicant includes ample supporting data in the narrative to demonstrate how additional charter schools would meet their identified need of more educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students. (page e42)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include a specific break down of each subgrant type for each project year, so it is unclear how many grants will be start-up versus expansion. The pipeline plan for the different types of charters that will be supported through subgrants is incomplete.

Reader's Score: 19

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:

Most subgrant application requirements were present in the New Seats Request document or the CSP subgrant application, which demonstrates a strong application to evaluate the quality of subgrantee applicants. (Appendix F3 and F13) The narrative describes key activities, including the timeline for posting and evaluating, which clearly outline the process for submission and review of the New Seats Request document. (page e48-e53) There is a focus in the New Seats application on high-quality education outcomes, serving educationally disadvantaged students, and collaboration with traditional public schools, which address priorities of the CSP grant and will further increase the quality of subgrantee applicants by awarding those who address these areas of concern. The applicant proposes adequate support for potential subgrantees and states that to be eligible for the CSP grant, they must have an approved New Seats Request for either expansion or new schools which is a rigorous process including a peer review from an outside expert and demonstrates that those who are eligible for CSP subgrants are required to meet a high standard (page e45) Additionally, the applicant states that expansion grantees must demonstrate a proven track record of success to be eligible for the grant meaning that only those charters who have a clear record of providing quality education will be awarded under the grant. (page e45)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide adequate details, including a CSP grant timeline, regarding the CSP subgrant competition to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process. Additionally, there are no application questions about the autonomy and flexibility granted to charter schools, which is a requirement of the CSP grant. The narrative also lacked information related to requirements for receiving a grant award, leaving gaps in the information provided about the CSP subgrant process, so it is unclear what applicants have to achieve to be awarded a CSP subgrant. Overall, the narrative largely focuses on the New Seats Request application process and not the CSP subgrant process.

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 provides some details about the plan to monitor subgrantees through quarterly reports that will be used to monitor progress toward goals and grant activities. The grantee also details a strong plan to monitor fiscal progress through these reports and through the review of documentation submitted for reimbursement. (page e54) The applicant states that they will use information from the report to provide targeted support and assistance as a way to address needs and areas of concern with the grantees. (page e54)

Weaknesses:

The monitoring plan is vague and does not include a specific timeline or milestones related to monitoring. The monitoring plan does not adequately describe how sustainability plans will be monitored. The monitoring plan does not include specific details related to corrective action plans and how quickly deficiencies will be addressed if found.

Sub

Reader's Score: 7

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 presents sufficient details related to how the chartering agency avoids duplication of efforts. As the sole authorizer, the applicant does not experience duplication of efforts from other authorizing agencies but does work with other departments in their agency to not duplicate efforts while supporting charter schools including collaborating on evaluations and providing one set of expectations for charters to understand. (page e55)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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 presents a sufficient plan for providing technical assistance to applicants receiving subgrants. The narrative includes specific details about technical assistance provided with the New Seats Application document to assist with start-up and expansion. The applicant provides new and expanding charters with a comprehensive and detailed pre-opening handbook to support strong foundational practices as part of their technical assistance support plan. (Appendix F15) The applicant has clearly outlined a plan to provide support to school leaders through BES. (page e503)
- ii. The applicant has a well-developed plan to support charter applicants with quality authorizing practices by providing support and technical assistance through the New Schools application process. The state also uses their EnrollRI system to collect data and evaluate charter authorizing practices to improve authorizing efforts. (page e30)

Weaknesses:

- i. Other than application support, the applicant does not include enough details of a plan to provide grant-related technical assistance to subgrantees. The technical assistance plan lacks evidence of activities for ongoing support of subgrantees.
- ii. The plan to support quality authorizing practices in the state lacks some details related to the plan. The applicant does not include a timeline for when charter authorizing practices are evaluated and how that data is used to establish needs for quality authorizing support. The plan to support quality authorizing efforts in the state by clearly identifying a timeline for evaluation and a process for using data to determine areas of need.

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequate plan for soliciting and considering feedback during the authorization process. The narrative includes a description of a variety of ways family and community feedback is collected during the authorization phase. (page e57) Families and community members are allowed to submit written or verbal comments for new/expanding charter proposals. Community members are also invited to participate in the impact study that is conducted for all charter applicants looking to open in the community. (page e58)

Weaknesses:

The plan to collect and solicit feedback from parents and community members is underdeveloped. The plan lacks a timeline or plan for collecting feedback from parents and community members beyond the application phase. There is no evidence of gathering input specifically about the implementation and operation of charter schools. The applicant does not include information about how input is used and how the feedback that has been gathered is 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 state provides sufficient flexibility and autonomy to charter schools through state law. The applicant provides a description of flexibilities offered by the State's charter law, such as autonomy over curriculum, staffing, budget, and some federal law.(pages e59-e60)

Weaknesses:

Beyond the state laws, the applicant does not include a description or plan of how it will work to maximize charter school flexibility and autonomy.

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: 8

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 applicant outlines a moderately developed management plan that includes a basic timeline for each grant year for each objective. (pages e65-e68) The applicant provided broad details about some job responsibilities for key personnel listed in the management plan. (page e64) The qualifications that were provided are relevant to the project tasks and to achieving the objectives of the project. (page e63)

Sub

Weaknesses:

The management plan lacks critical details related to milestones, budget, and external partners. The management plan that was provided does not provide a clear timeline, beyond the grant year, for the milestones listed in the table. The management plan narrative and the budget narrative do not align regarding budget or personnel, as the narrative states that personnel funds from CSP will be used, but the budget narrative does not include these funds (page e64) There is no plan or details about how external partners will be monitored. It is also unclear in the monitoring plan who will handle the administrative and fiscal duties of the grant.

Reader's Score: 6

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 presents limited details about the plan to collect feedback on the project. The narrative states that feedback will be collected during monthly meetings to collect feedback from internal team members. (page 61)

Weaknesses:

The application lacks sufficient details related to procedures to collect and use feedback for continuous improvement. The applicant provided no information related to steps to collect feedback outside of the monthly meetings, the type of feedback to be collected, and a specific plan to use feedback to make project adjustments as needed. Overall, the plan is incomplete and does not currently reflect effective practices to use feedback for continuous improvement.

Reader's Score: 1

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 provided limited details about time allocations for key project personnel. The narrative states that project director will work on the project 10% of the time supporting various activities. The applicant also provides a time allocation a staff member who will work on the project 75% of the time to support New Seats and subgrant applications. (page e63)

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides incomplete information for staff time commitments as it relates to their responsibilities to the project. There will be four key personnel working on the project, however time allocations are only provided for two. Not all key responsibilities are listed for staff members, so it is not possible to determine if the time allotments are adequate and appropriate. Additionally, the narrative states that the CSP personnel budget will be used to support two salaries (page e64), but no personnel budget is included in the budget narrative form leading to misalignment between the management plan and the budget.

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 state serves as the authorizer for charter schools and provides a sufficient plan for an appeals process for applicants who were denied approval during the formal review process which is available to all denied charter schools. The appeals process is also solidified by being written into state legislation (page e 22)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 provided a comprehensive plan detailing how charter schools are funded using the same state funding methodology and timelines as traditional public schools ensuring equitable funding for charter schools in the state. The applicant provided details related to how the state funding per-pupil allotment is calculated for charter and traditional public schools demonstrating that the state provides equitable financing for both. (page e23) A timeline for payment is also included and shares that both traditional and charter schools received payment on the same schedule of twelve monthly payments. (page e22) The application included details of state laws that are in place to guarantee that charters receive equitable state and federal funding.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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:

It is evident that the applicant has greatly encouraged charter and traditional public schools to engage in and report on best practices to improve struggling schools through their funding of projects related to academics, learning loss, and data-driven decisions. (page e25-26) The state has created a comprehensive framework for charter schools which encourages the dissemination of best practices. (page e24) Additionally, the applicant presents a sufficient plan to include strategies for the statewide dissemination of best practices in the subgrantee application and grantee requirements. (page e26)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 clearly demonstrates support to charter schools for facilities by providing state funding through a specific fund for school housing. The applicant included specific data points about how many charter schools have utilized this program and how much has been provided which further demonstrates that the state sufficiently supports charter schools to acquire facilities. (page e27) The amount of funding that has been provided to charter schools for facilities is significant, demonstrating the state's commitment to providing charter schools with facilities support.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 demonstrates a strong process during authorization to prioritize charters that will serve educationally disadvantaged and at-risk students through its state laws and charter authorization preferences, which includes reserving at least one-half charter schools for those designed to increase educational opportunities for at-risk students. (page e27)
The applicant has a targeted plan to provide support to students in their four urban districts, which serve a higher percentage of at-risk students, through encouraging charter schools which have a proven record of high-quality student outcomes to open in these areas and serve at-risk students. (page e27)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not present an adequate plan to support charter schools who serve at-risk students during the implementation of the charter school. The narrative lacks clear examples of activities that the state entity uses to support charter schools who serve at-risk students beyond the authorizing process. The applicant does not provide a clear plan to provide ongoing supports specific to at-risk students for charter schools.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
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