

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

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (S282A200005)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	35	33
<b>Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants</b>		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	13
<b>State Plan</b>		
1. State Plan	35	29
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	88
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. CPP3	3	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
1. CPP4	4	2
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 5</b>		
1. CPP5	2	2
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 6</b>		
1. CPP6	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 7</b>		
1. CPP7	4	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	16	10
<b>Total</b>	116	98

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - CSP State Entities - 4: 84.282A

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (S282A200005)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. a. Quality of Project Design

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: 33

#### Sub

##### 1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale;

#### Strengths:

Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCP) provides research evidence that brick-and-mortar charter schools have helped to close the academic achievement gap for Black and Hispanic students in the areas of Reading and Math. The applicant Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools will own the Pennsylvania CSP project, PACSP. The strength of the data provided by PCPCS is that it is from an independent entity, Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University, e35-e36.

This data presents a strong case for the rationale of expanding or replicating 18 high-quality charter schools, which in turn will expand access to economically disadvantaged students and targeting access to Black and Hispanic student populations and the Commonwealth, e16-17. These expansion efforts are supported with additional data, e40, showing the demand from parents for quality educational opportunities, which has swollen the waiting lists of existing schools.

The rationale for this grant is to support an entity with an overarching purview to collaborate with both charter operators and charter authorizers to strengthen a statewide system. The grant funds will have an impact on the Pennsylvania charter school landscape.

#### Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 15

##### 2. (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; and

#### Strengths:

This applicant's strength in the area of performance measures is strategic with proposed outcomes giving a good snapshot of a school's performance. To support their performance measurements, PACSP created the Charter School Authorizer Performance Index (CSAPI), which compares student outcomes from the public charter schools against the traditional public schools in the same demographic area, e42. The premise is a charter school should

**Sub**

outperform the existing traditional school to be deemed "high quality."

To measure students' achievement, CSAPI will incorporate 15 data elements, including proficiency and growth in Reading, Math, and Science. This evidence is valuable because it relies on quantitative data, including measuring growth in curricular areas. Data based-decisions are more valid when using growth as the metric when measuring a school's outcomes, e45.

Measuring student academic progress systematically ties directly to the grant proposal intended outcome of improving Pennsylvania student performance, e45.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal lacks clarity and specifics as to how the applicant will measure the items listed in Table 9, e43. Items in question include the enumerated topics listed in the "Performance Measure" column. A few examples of this mislabeling are: CSP Subgrants Awarded is not a Performance Measurement and neither is Website Materials a Performance Measurement. The grant proposal lacks either the baseline or threshold which will determine success for these itemized performance measures in Table 9, e43.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**3. (3) The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entities program**

**Strengths:**

The grant outlines ambitious goals of opening 18 charter schools by 2025 and by bringing some of the existing charter schools, although not low-performing, to be designated as high-performing quality schools, e48. The strength in setting these high goals is that the grant has a strategic plan to attain these goals across the Commonwealth. The applicant does not limit new charter schools to a specific urban region but opens access to other Pennsylvania regions.

Broad statewide support, Appendix D, not only fuels these ambitious goals but makes them attainable. Evidence exists showing strong support of community leaders across all sectors; government, industry, and education, e50.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants**

**1. b. Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants**

**The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students.**

**Strengths:**

This proposal's strength, which will ensure those receiving subgrants will meet objectives and improve educational results, is the heavy reliance on data. From inception, data collections will gauge whether the subgrant's location and planned student audience will match the demographics where the impact may be highest, e51. School-wide decisions will be made based on data, and data will be sought to ensure high standards meet financial and operational goals. This data might be in the form of artifacts such as organizational charts and budget narratives. Therefore, there is a strong likelihood, that eligible applicants will meet and prove educational results for students across the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania, e48-e49.

**Weaknesses:**

Clarity and more specificity are needed with regards to the Peer Review Team rubrics they will use to score applicants. Such as who will create these rubrics and what the rubrics will be measuring, e55.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**Selection Criteria - State Plan**

**1. c. State Plan**

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

**Reader's Score: 29**

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

According to this grant proposal, there will be adequate monitoring by two entities; the Pennsylvania State Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS), the applicant, e57. Based on the table, e57 outlining the Monitoring Plan, there is evidence the applicant will be doing the in-depth monitoring of those receiving subgrant funding, and this monitoring will continue after CSP funding lapses. This measure ensures the strength of the impact the grant will have.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal is underdeveloped in this area as to how and who will choose the project team members who will be monitoring the program and fiscal compliance of the subgrantees. There needs to be a published checklist for subgrantees to know expectations and for the team members to use as leverage for funding and sustaining their programs, e58.

**Reader's Score: 8**

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

**Strengths:**

This project proposes an aggressive approach to streamlining application and monitoring protocols and, in some cases, eliminating existing duplication reporting, e59. PAPS project provides evidence they will become the oversight entity assisting authorizers in strengthening their relationship with their charters and in having a better snapshot of their charter school's capacity in the areas of academics, financial and operations, e60. This proposal will provide uniformity with Performance Frameworks used in the reporting system and thus provide more equity for charters when renewals are due, e60. The strength in all of these measures is PAPS eliminates duplication of work for both the charter school and the authorizer; thus, allowing each entity to function more efficiently.

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

To avoid duplication of work for the charter school, the authorizer must follow the grant proposal guidelines to eliminate duplication of reporting. There is no information on the manner in which the applicant will motivate authorizers to follow their guidelines or compel them to implement these policies. This could be the weak link in an effort to avoid duplication of work, e6

**Reader's Score: 3**

- 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;**

**Strengths:**

Subgrant eligible applicants will be continually receiving technical assistance beginning before submitting their application with webinars and in-person meetings, e60. Subgrant awardees will have access to technical support through grant funds with regards to financial controls, student recruiting, governance board member recruitment and development, and other structural topics that are left to the discretion of the charter school, e61. Providing technical assistance before subgrantees submit an application will strengthen the Pennsylvania charter school landscape because those applicants will thoroughly understand the components involved in launching a charter school. The grant states, e62, PACSP ensures authorizers will have the technical support to manage their charter schools with transparent and consistent oversight. This has value because it offers technical assistance accessible to both the subgrantees and the authorizer.

**Weaknesses:**

Besides providing annual public reports, there is no information as to how often (upon request or at set intervals) technical assistance to authorizers will be available, e63.

**Reader's Score: 9**

- 4. (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; and**

**Strengths:**

This proposal intends to maximize the strength of the parent community for both new and replicated charter schools by utilizing different mediums and platforms, e64. There is evidence of the creation of a state-wide clearinghouse for charter school parents, along with a program designed to capitalize on informal networking. PACSP will be collaborating with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to collect data on where the opportune localities would be for new or expanding charter schools. Additionally, PACSP states they will assist charter schools in forming a parent steering committee, which will contribute ideas on how the school can best meet the needs of their student population, e64.

**Weaknesses:**

Information is needed which will explain the format the PACSP will use to collect parental data, e64.

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 5. (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**

**Sub**

**law**

**Strengths:**

Evidence confirms Pennsylvania charter schools have strong, broad flexibility guaranteed through state statute, e65. These statutes provide charter schools autonomy in the areas of instructional design, staffing qualifications, collective bargaining, and purchasing. PACSP's work will fortify this flexibility through trainings and access to technical assistance, thus ensuring few if any infractions will occur.

There is reliable evidence charter authorizers will have the opportunity to engage in best practices, which will strike a balance between autonomy and accountability, e66.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. d. Quality of the Management Plan**

**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: 13**

**Sub**

- 1. (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; and**

**Strengths:**

Table 16, beginning on e67, verifies and outlines the roles, responsibilities, and the amount of each individual's time, which will be spent to ensure this grant is seamless, transparent and will have an impact. This strategic and comprehensive table articulates the milestones expected along with a timeline to meet these expectations, e58-e71. These facts will allow PACPS to accomplish the project's tasks.

**Weaknesses:**

The timeline is not aligned with the actual project on e68, where it states each subgrantee will submit a performance report beginning summer 2021. This milestone would be before the charter school's opening.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

**Strengths:**

By requiring each applicant to engage in the feedback and continuous evaluative process, the Pennsylvania charter school landscape will be strengthened. Interviews, stakeholder surveys, along with data reviews, will be some of the formats PACSP will utilize to ensure the feedback is relevant, and there is continuous learning leading to

**Sub**

improved educational opportunities, e73-e74.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no mention nor timeline as to how this feedback will be collected, shared, or analyzed with the replicated or expanding charter schools, e73-e74.

**Reader's Score: 2**

- 3. (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.**

**Strengths:**

There is a narrative, e71-e73; a Table 17, e75, and additional tables in the Budget Narrative, p. 6 and 7, which go in-depth to the appropriation of time for the employees involved in this project. There is adequate time provided for these individuals to meet the objectives of this proposal.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

- 1. **CPP3 Competitive Preference Priority 3: Equitable Financing**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.**

**Strengths:**

There is evidence Pennsylvania charter schools do receive no less than the average per-pupil allowance and charter schools have access to block grant programs, e25.

**Weaknesses:**

The grant section was not fully developed to include how charter school funding compares to traditional funding not does it address how the charter school subgrantees will address such funding issues as transportation costs, e25.

**Reader's Score: 1**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 4**

- 1. **CPP4 Competitive Preference Priority 4: Charter School Facilities**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the**

State in which it is located 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; or
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.

**Strengths:**

Pennsylvania provides through state statutes for charter schools to access facility funding, access to public facilities, and also by statute, they can share in bonds, e26-e27.

**Weaknesses:**

Although there are state provisions for facility accessibility for charter schools, there are no provisions for right-of-refusal to a charter, which is leasing a facility. Additionally, there is no information comparing the charter school facility funding in comparison with traditional school facility funding. Since this information is not provided, there is no way to evaluate if the charter school facility funding is equitable.

The proposal cites an example of a charter school leasing a historical building. Still, there is no evidence this school will have right-of-refusal if the building goes on the marketplace, e-9.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 5**

**1. CPP5 Competitive Preference Priority 5: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies.

**Strengths:**

This proposal outlines the Pennsylvania Department of Education use of different formats to promote best practices to assist struggling schools, e27. PDE believes best practices from any school, traditional or charter, will always enhance the educational opportunities for the students in their state, e28. PDE has promoted efforts of disseminating best practices through the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS), the organization which sponsors the PACSP project. PCPCS has hosted conferences and created a website featuring these best practices.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6**

**1. CPP6 Competitive Preference Priority 6: Serving At-Risk Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout

**prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.**

**Strengths:**

This proposal intends to not only expand high-quality educational opportunities for "at-risk" students but to close the achievement gap for "at-risk" students. This proposal receives strong legislative approval to do this by allowing charter schools the capability to design programs that specifically meet the needs of high-need subset students. Charter school policy also allows for targeted recruitment of the at-risk student demographic, e30-e31. The evidence has value by showcasing Philadelphia charter schools using an evidence-based dropout prevention program. Through this showcasing, it becomes easier for other schools to duplicate best practices. The data collected from these schools is made accessible through the Pennsylvania Department of education, e31.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7**

**1. CPP7 Competitive Preference Priority 7: Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.**

**Strengths:**

One of the primary intents of the PACPS proposal is to work with authorizers of the subgrantees. Still, the proposal admits Pennsylvania authorizers, in general, have been fragmented concerning their oversight, and there was little consistency across the state. This proposal hopes to have an impact in this area and with subgrantee authorizers through Toolkit. This Toolkit touches on five areas including creating a performance framework; charter application; charter agreement; annual review and renewal, e32.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the grant proposal offers to put in place avenues for authorizers to access best practices, there is no evidence to ensure all authorizing agencies will be implementing best practices for the charter schools they authorize. There is a financial motivation for subgrantee authorizers to utilize best practices, but no leverage is evident, which can compel all authorizers to use best practices. Thus there is a possibility for continued fragmented oversight across the Commonwealth.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (S282A200005)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	35	35
<b>Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants</b>		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	12
<b>State Plan</b>		
1. State Plan	35	23
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	12
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	82
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. CPP3	3	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
1. CPP4	4	4
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 5</b>		
1. CPP5	2	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 6</b>		
1. CPP6	3	3
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 7</b>		
1. CPP7	4	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	16	12
<b>Total</b>	116	94

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - CSP State Entities - 4: 84.282A

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (S282A200005)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. a. Quality of Project Design

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: 35

#### Sub

##### 1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale;

#### Strengths:

Based on research and evaluation findings from a 2015 and subsequent 2019 Credo studies that demonstrate that the state's charter schools were not only educating a disproportionate number of students from ESSA subgroups but also providing access to high quality educational opportunities, the applicant provided a Logic Model based on sound rationale. (e37) The proposed project promotes two overriding outcomes: (1) increasing the number of high-quality charter schools that educate substantial at-risk populations, and (2) improving student outcomes particularly for at-risk students. (e16)

The proposal prioritizes expanding high quality brick and mortar urban charter schools to provide excellent opportunities to at risk student populations. (e34) The applicant states that based on existing demand from operators' expressed interest in opening new schools, expanding existing schools and replicating their successful models on new campuses, it will encourage prospective sub-grantees in from urban communities. (e21) Additionally the applicant aims to bolster the capacity of authorizers by promoting best practices, sharing performance frameworks and broadly disseminating services that promote excellence and equity. (e33 ) The applicant intends to leverage best practices from charters school to help improve struggling schools, both charter and traditional, and local education agencies through dissemination efforts on its website, through its Charter Operations Conference , the statewide Data Summit, and participation in the state's Superintendent's Academy. (e27-e29, e40)

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 15

##### 2. (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; and

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The project has two stated objectives; to open and expand or replicate at least 18 high quality charter schools and to improve outcomes in the state's charter schools, specifically for at risk students. (e41, e45) Incorporating a SMART goals platform, the applicant provides goals aligned to each objective that generate baseline data and targeted outcomes. (e41-e48) Also included were activities to address qualitative data. (e37)

The applicant's sub-grant application scoring criteria is evenly weighted between qualitative expectations and quantitative measures for academic, organizational and financial metrics. (e53-e54)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were identified.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**3. (3) The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entities program**

**Strengths:**

The applicant plans to spur the growth in the number of high quality charter schools by opening 18 new, replicated or expansion schools over the next five years. This target is focused on three factors: the current pipeline of operators seeking to open, replicate and expand; increase the current supply of available seats demonstrated by high parent demand; and ensuring growth does not come at the expense of quality and sustainability. (e38) The applicant has already identified 12 new schools and 11 existing high-performing charters as probable subgrant applicants. The applicant is confident that current unmet needs will be fulfilled by supporting high quality schools across the state.

In its desire to improve educational opportunities throughout the state, the applicant intends to focus on supporting and driving steady improvement of existing charters that already are relatively successful but whose continued growth is imperative given the at risk populations they serve. This focus is in addition to the 18 new charters it hopes to work with throughout the duration of this grant period and greatly increases the number of students impacted by this project. (e49)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were identified.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants**

**1. b. Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants**

**The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students.**

**Strengths:**

Eleven of the eighteen proposed awards are set aside specifically for existing charters to replicate or expand. (e38) The applicant has already identified a number of potential sub-grantees with demonstrated track records in improving educational results for students. (e39)

Through the hosting of a number of Charter School Fundamental seminars, the applicant has already generated a pipeline of twelve prospective sub-grantees for the seven sub-grants dedicated to new start-ups. (e38)

Included in the sub-grantee application is an opportunity to earn additional points for demonstrating that their projects are aligned to the Logic Model and overall project objectives. Competitive preference priorities include providing services to rural communities, high school students, promoting equity and inclusion, and contributing to the diversity of charter school models in existence across the state. (e53)

The subgrantee application requires not only a detailed budget but includes a detailed explanation of how programming will be sustained after the close of the grant period. (e52)

The sub-grant application will be adapted from the association's existing Framework of Quality Standards (qualitative in nature) and augmented by a highly acclaimed district school performance framework model of evaluating a school's academic success, organizational viability, and financial health (quantitative indicators). (e51)

**Weaknesses:**

It is not clear if the subgrant competition is open to all existing charter schools in the state or just those who have attended the Charter School Foundational seminars and been identified as in the "pipeline".

The applicant supplied a list of specific information each subgrantee applicant must address (e52) but it is not clear where on the scoring rubric provided (e53) this information will be evaluated. The rubric also included a weighting component but does not provide detail on how they are broken down to align with the standards and metrics being used.

The applicant states that subgrantee applications will be reviewed by a five-member panel composed of recognized experts in the state's educational community and appointed by the Co-Directors (e54) but does not describe any process for how these reviewers are chosen. A detailed explanation of the qualifications for membership and how the Peer Review Teams will be empaneled was not included in application. Without the information on qualifications it is not entirely clear that peer review will result in a selection of schools that will improve educational results to students.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - State Plan**

**1. c. State Plan**

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

Reader's Score: 23

Sub

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

**Strengths:**

The monitoring plan is comprehensive with activities and time lines provided. (e57-e58) The periods of monitoring include pre-award through completion of grant at appropriate intervals. (e57-e58) The applicant plans to calibrate the intensity and frequency of oversight activities and technical assistance opportunities based on evaluation of each subgrantee's risk of noncompliance identified through monitoring intervals. (e57)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant identifies an external partner that will be responsible for monitoring subgrantee programmatic and fiscal compliance. Other than to say they have extensive experience administering federal grants programming for charter schools, their identification and qualifications are not fully detailed. More information about other projects they have worked on, the length of time they have been involved in charter schools, and personal qualifications would have strengthened the response. (e58)

Reader's Score: 7

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant states that its sub-grant application and monitoring protocols have been intentionally designed to reduce burden of work for schools and authorizers. (e59) Curated technical assistance and adaptation of a quality standards and performance framework disseminated to authorizers should provide strength to their monitoring efforts of their subgrantees to quickly identify and remediate programmatic and fiscal risk before they are noted by applicant monitors. (e60) They will coordinate data accessibility efforts with school authorizers and state agencies, and share academic, operational and financial data to facilitate the authorizer's oversight activities that will avoid duplication. (e60)

**Weaknesses:**

As spelled out in the applicant's management plan (e67-e71) it is not clear where the state plan intends to take on responsibilities generally obligated to authorizers, thus resulting in a potential duplication of efforts.

The applicant's process describes activities, monitoring and remediation that are normally the purview of the state membership association, which the applicant will be housed under, the individual authorizers or an independent contracted evaluation team, and give the impression of a duplication of work.

Reader's Score: 2

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;

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant is committed to providing eligible sub-grantee applicants trainings during the application window provided by the state association partner. (e60) In addition to the technical assistance provided pre-grant award, a different project partner will provide trainings covering effective program designs, student recruiting, governance, participation in federal programs, and school culture and discipline, the development of trauma-informed schoolwide systems and positive behavioral supports that deemphasizes the use of exclusionary practices and reduce disciplinary disparities. (e61)

Relying on the efforts of a third partner, support of quality authorizing efforts will be undertaken by providing technical assistance with authorized public chartering agencies. These efforts are to focus on conducting oversight duties with transparency and consistency that promote equity and excellence. (e62) Technical assistance will be provided to all authorizers whose portfolios include CSP sub-grantees with broader dissemination through open sourced materials. (e63)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant clearly states that state's authorizer landscape has historically been characterized by fragmentation, variable quality, and limited capacity. (e32) Although the applicant states it will broadly disseminate capacity building services and be available to all authorizers irrespective of their relationship to the grant program, it is not clear if the selection of sub-grantees is limited to authorizers already recognized as a quality authorizer.

The applicant, the statewide membership association to which the applicant is connected and two outside, yet tightly connected, contractors will provide all of the technical assistance to sub-grantees, authorizers and state agencies. The monitoring plan provided includes activities and timelines but does not clearly identify which entity is responsible for activity. Many of the descriptions of technical assistance appear redundant and without a clear delineation of who is responsible for specific assistance there is little way to ascertain the degree of duplication of efforts undertaken.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**4. (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; and**

**Strengths:**

There is an expectation that sub-grantee budgets include discussion on how schools intend to inform communities of their educational offering. The applicant will offer trainings to awardees on implementing governance models using parent board members, structuring parent leadership councils and using parent input to drive continuous improvement cycles. (e64)

**Weaknesses:**

It was not clear in the application who is responsible for what facet of the soliciting and considering of input from parents and community members. The applicant states that the state will rely on the associations existing informational clearing house and its Ambassador Program as a starting point collecting, using, and disseminating information about the CSP program. It further states that the state "will collect and use information from parents to determine where unmet need for high-quality schools exists and what types of schools these communities are seeking." (e64) It is not clear to what extent the applicant is relying on state generated data to assist them in the

**Sub**

implementation and operation of the CSP.

The applicant's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community appears fragmented. It states that the "CTAC will feed information from parent data collection back into the program through annual formative evaluations that the project team will use to inform iterations to its approach over the life of the grant period," (e65) but does not provide the process for CTAC to solicit this parent information.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**5. (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**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a clear synopsis of the state's chartering law and the flexibility it allows to its schools including the school's autonomy to define their missions, set educational goals and select curricular materials. Technical assistance for sub-grant recipients will cover instructional systems design; staffing structure and the cultivation of nontraditional talent pipelines; financial policies and procedures; and the design of employee benefits systems that prioritize portability and incentivize longevity. (e65-e66)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant describes the legislative intent behind the state's charter school law that includes the "use of different and innovative teaching methods" (e10) but has limited itself to only solicit brick and mortar schools. (e38) There is no discussion of supporting innovative methodologies, pedagogies, or diversity of educational delivery models to lend credence to maximizing the flexibility provided under the law. The technical assistance referred to throughout the application makes it appear that there is only one model being shared that guarantees improving at risk students' academic achievement. (e65-e66)

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. d. Quality of the Management Plan**

**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. (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; and**

**Strengths:**

As described in the CSP sub-grant process the Project Team intends to implement a robust sub-grant program and design a rigorous monitoring system to identify and remediate programmatic and fiscal risks. The applicant provided a clearly defined management plan which included milestones/benchmarks, timeline and responsible parties that covered the scope of the grant. (e67-e71) The Project Directors and contracted services providers possess experience in their defined roles as evidence through provided resumes/curriculum vitae. (e81-e112) and the projected budget appears adequate to fund the project.

**Weaknesses:**

It appears that technical assistance and evaluation of the project is being provided by the same contractor. At the same time the applicant is providing technical assistance to sub-grantees, authorizers and parent groups it will design and conduct its own formative evaluation to inform and modify its own project. (e66-e71) The plan lacks independence of duties and responsibilities.

Reader's Score: 7

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

**Strengths:**

The Feedback and Continuous improvement plan will provide an annual formative evaluation based on the project's Logic Model. (e37) A description of the components of the evaluation data collection was included and involves team members, sub-grantees, authorizers, parents and community members. (e74) The timelines provided appear to be timely and allow for adjustments throughout the sub-grant cycle. (e74)

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 3

3. (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.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided information for the key personnel, project roles and project time commitments. The experience and expertise of key personnel and their specific time commitments align with the provided budget and appear to adequately meet the objectives of the proposed project. (e75)

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

**1. CPP3 Competitive Preference Priority 3: Equitable Financing**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.**

**Strengths:**

Charter schools receive no less than the district per-pupil budgeted expenditures from the previous school year and there is a remedy for charters to pursue if districts do not pay promptly. (e25)

**Weaknesses:**

While the base level support received by the charter is no less than the district per-pupil support, the applicant does not explain if or how charter schools support additional expenditures such as student transportation services, special education services or facilities maintenance funding on an equitable basis as districts. (e25)

**Reader's Score: 1**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 4**

**1. CPP4 Competitive Preference Priority 4: Charter School Facilities**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located 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; or**
- f) **Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant describes the variety of methods that are available to charters for acquisition and funding of facilities. State law permits for reimbursement for lease payments, sharing of public buildings, and a school's availability to apply for bonds. The applicant provided examples of existing charter schools that have availed themselves to this assistance. (e26-e27)

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score:** 4

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 5**

**1. CPP5 Competitive Preference Priority 5: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant states that the statewide association hosts an annual conference where best practices in human capital development, finance, parent outreach, and data use are broadly shared. This conference is publicized on its publicly assessable website, open to all attendees and encourages public school LEAs to participate. (e28) The state department of education has invited charter school representatives to participate in its annual Data Summit and Superintendent's Academy. (e29)

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant describes many examples of how the state charter school association has collaborated and shared best practices with charter operators from across the state, there is no description or discussion as to what extent best practices have been shared with struggling schools or local education agencies. There are no examples provided as to how the state and local education agencies have responded to implementing best practices from existing charter schools and to how these practices have improved academic performance. (e27-e29)

**Reader's Score:** 1

## Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6

### 1. CPP6 Competitive Preference Priority 6: Serving At-Risk Students

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.**

#### **Strengths:**

The entirety of the project is intentional in design and plan to only select school participants that already or plan to serve at risk students. Subgrantee applications must include a detailed description of how the school plans to enroll significant numbers of at risk students. Applicants are able to earn additional competitive preference points for being a school located in a QOZ, providing services in rural (underserved) communities, and serving at risk populations. (e53) The applicant provides examples of targeted technical assistance that will be provided to subgrant awardees that focus on building capacity of schools that meet the needs of all students, particularly those in designated ESSA subgroups. Trainings will include covering instructional supports, dropout prevention and intervention, and inclusive and affirming program design. (e61)

#### **Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses identified.

**Reader's Score: 3**

## Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7

### 1. CPP7 Competitive Preference Priority 7: Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant provides strong evidence of its past, current and future endeavors to work with the state education agency and authorizers to that promote best practices and available to all public chartering agencies. These endeavors include state adoption of a nationally recognized Tool Kit for Authorizers (e32), promotion of best practices through workshops and conferences (e32-e33), and the use of a district's high quality performance framework. (e33)

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant intends to widely disseminate best practices for authorizers, the applicant does not demonstrate to what extent steps it will take ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 06/26/2020 11:41 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/26/2020 08:07 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (S282A200005)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	35	32
<b>Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants</b>		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	13
<b>State Plan</b>		
1. State Plan	35	27
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	85
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
1. CPP3	3	1
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
1. CPP4	4	2
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 5</b>		
1. CPP5	2	2
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 6</b>		
1. CPP6	3	2
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 7</b>		
1. CPP7	4	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	16	10
<b>Total</b>	116	95

# Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - CSP State Entities - 4: 84.282A

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (S282A200005)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. a. Quality of Project Design

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant presents a rationale for grant funding that includes an increase of high-quality brick and mortar charter schools to students identified as at-risk by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The program will utilize funding to open, expand, or replicate a minimum of 18 schools by 2025 to serve economically disadvantaged, African American, and Hispanic students. The proposed rationale is supported by research conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) in 2015 and 2019 (e pg. 17-18), which examined the performance of urban charter schools throughout the state. The research identified the positive impact of urban charter schools, on the three targeted groups (e pg. 18). The Logic Model submitted (e pg. 19) clearly describes inputs for the project team, charter school and school district operators, parental demand, policies, and standards. The Model also highlights the planned activities to identify high-quality operators and at-risk students, timelines for technical assistance, and short-and long-term outcomes with supporting percentages.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant did not present precise details regarding the selection process for potential charter school subgrantees. The applicant's Logic Model (e pg. 19) does not include timelines for short-medium- and long-term outcomes.

Reader's Score: 13

##### 2. (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; and

#### Strengths:

The application provides performance measures related to the program's two outcomes: increasing the number of high-quality charters to educate at-risk students and improving outcomes for enrolled students (e pg.23). SMART goals were included to provide in-depth details to support each objective. Objectives outlined baseline and targeted data with timelines for student subgroups (pg.24). Table 9. (e pgs. 25-26) included that described activities, performance measures, and targets. The Charter School Authorizer Performance Index (CSAPI) Baselines and

**Sub**

Targets by Student Subgroup (e pg. 24) compared student outcomes at public charter and traditional schools with a median and average index scores for economically disadvantaged, Black, and Hispanic groups. Table 11. Activities, Performance Measures, and Performance Targets in Support of PACSP (e pg.29) outlined the activities from the Logic Model, along with performances and targets.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant provides activities, performance measures, and targets to support the Pennsylvania Charter School Program, Table 9. (e pg. 25-26) does not include detailed information regarding evaluating and assessing performance target outcomes to ensure progress or areas of improvement.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**3. (3) The ambitiousness of the State entity’s objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entities program**

**Strengths:**

The application clearly describes how the program proposes to achieve the objectives outlined in its project design. They anticipate the opening of 18 new or expanded schools by 2025 to support learning among targeted subgroups. The CREDO Research supported program objectives, and SMART goals were developed based on each objective. Table 12. (e pg. 31) represents the number of charter schools opened from 2015-2019. The application proposal also outlined how the program would align community leaders, local, state, and federal governments, charter school operators, and partner organizations. The applicant’s performance measures and objectives are ambitious and attainable and were based on previously identified trends and their research-based Logic Model (e pg. 19).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants**

**1. b. Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants**

**The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant outlined the process for subgrantees. The subgrant application was based on six domains that included; Academic and Continuous Improvement, Effective and Ethical Leadership, Culture, Community, and Relationship Building, Operations, Governance, and Finance (e pg. 32). The requirements of the subgrant application included a description of plans to enroll at-risk students, detailed budget narrative, an organizational chart (outlining the staff roles and responsibilities), a written charter, documentation of parent engagement, and how the charter school will collaborate with local districts. Subgrantees will be required to describe how services will be provided in qualified opportunity zones, rural communities, educate high school students, serve at-risk students, promote equity and inclusion, and contribute to charter schools’ diversity (e pg. 34). Table 13. PACSP Subgrant Scoring Criteria (e pg. 35) provided details of the scoring criteria and included a rubric for each application section with weighting based on new school and expansion applicants. The process will also include a five-member peer review team that will analyze and score applications. Table 14 (e pg. 37) described grant award timelines and competitive preference priorities. The program also provided measures to inform the public and applicants of subgrant availability. Measures include the program’s website, email newsletters, calls, in-person

sessions, and webinars.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the application described the requirements and information required by subgrant applicants, there were no details regarding how the program will ensure that subgrantees will meet objectives to improve educational results for at-risk students.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**Selection Criteria - State Plan**

**1. c. State Plan**

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

**Reader's Score: 27**

**Sub**

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

**Strengths:**

The monitoring plan contains some information on how the program will conduct ongoing desk and onsite reviews of programmatic and fiscal components of subgrantees. Monitoring will assess programmatic data, such as enrollment, academics, operations, and disciplinary information), and fiscal data that includes budgets and amendments, expenditures, and reimbursement requests to ensure compliance to federal grant requirements and regulations. Monitoring of subgrantees will be conducted by Charter Choices team members, who will identify strengths, risks, technical assistance needed, and additional reporting. Table 15. PACSP Monitoring Plan (e pgs. 39-40) outlines the activities and timeline for the proposed monitoring plan, which includes a timeline for each programmatic and fiscal monitoring activity.

**Weaknesses:**

The plan does not provide in-depth details regarding the education and experience of the team members from Charter Choices, who will be conducting monitoring activities with subgrantees. Without this information, it is not possible to ensure the members have the experience and knowledge of the uniqueness of public charter schools to support effective monitoring. The program did not include documentation of how subgrantees will provide evidence of their ability to leverage funding to sustain their program in the event of funding lapses. The applicant does not provide clear evidence of how programmatic and fiscal evaluation components will ensure the sustainability plan of subgrantees. (e pg. 41).

**Reader's Score: 7**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a plan with information on ways it hopes to prevent the duplication of work. The program will leverage Quality Standards (qualitative) and the Philadelphia School District's Charter School Performance (quantitative) performance frameworks. They anticipate collaboration with each school's authorizer to conduct

**Sub**

oversight (programmatic and fiscal) activities and communicate with the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding data access to ensure duplicative documentation is not submitted (e pgs. 41-42). The program will also provide technical assistance to alleviate authorizers' need to seek other supports and will establish memoranda of understanding with authorizers to promote data-sharing.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide in-depth details regarding coordination with school authorizers to plan onsite scheduling, timelines, and financial reporting. The applicant did not explain the methods it would use to communicate with the State's department of education (e pg. 42).

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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;**

**Strengths:**

The applicant outlines the methods the program will utilize to support technical assistance to awarded subgrantees. Technical assistance will be provided with in-person and webinar training during the application window and after award, funding facilitated by Charter Choices. Technical assistance will also target identified areas of need, such as meeting students' needs, recruitment and retention, program governance, participation in federal programs, and school culture and discipline, replication and expansion, instructional leadership, and school operations. Materials include guidance manual, webinar slides, and videoconferencing meetings will also be available to subgrantees (e pgs. 42-43).

The applicant presents a plan to support the quality authorizing efforts will be based on local capacity and national expertise (e pgs. 44-45). The program will leverage the SDP Performance Framework and the Equity-Focused Charter School Authorizing Toolkit and the Community Training and Assistance Center for local resources and technical assistance. Specific technical assistance will include, the development of performance frameworks that prioritize inputs, student achievement data to guide decision-making, creating incentives with schools to promote education at-risk students, setting clear standards providing annual reports, establishing data collection policies, assisting schools with financial reporting requirements, and assisting families with students attending charter schools and implement an effective enrollment process.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not include timelines for providing technical assistance (if needed) during the application window and ongoing during the grant cycle to ensure subgrantees have the needed support to provide high-quality charter schools to identified populations.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**4. (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; and**

**Strengths:**

The applicant outlines an adequate plan of its efforts to involve and receive input from parents (e pgs. 46-47). The program will utilize the 143K Rising as a means of providing information to parents across the state. They created an Ambassador Program that shared information on local public education. Assistance will be provided to subgrantees on the implementation of parent steering committees and best practices on using parent input to meet

**Sub**

education needs. The CTAC will also provide training on topics that include implementing governance models utilizing parent board members, analyzing parent input to guide program improvement and to develop parent leadership councils. The program will share parent data with lawmakers during the annual Charter Advocacy Day and conference. The program will also analyze budget data to determine how subgrantees will market their programs in the community.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not state the types of information to be collected from parents. The applicant did not describe what type(s) of collection methods it would utilize to gather input from parents (e pg. 46).

**Reader's Score: 4**

**5. (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**

**Strengths:**

The applicant (PACSP) demonstrates the flexibility in designing its mission, educational goals, and curriculum (e pgs. 47-48). They will have the option of hiring up to 25 percent of uncertified staff, and will not be obligated to collective bargaining as required by traditional school districts. The charter schools will be exempt from the state’s public procurement provisions and will not be mandated to participate in the public schools’ retirement system. Technical assistance for charter authorizers will focus on best practices to support a balance between autonomy and accountability.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. d. Quality of the Management Plan**

**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: 13**

**Sub**

**1. (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; and**

**Strengths:**

The applicant’s management plan included clear and detailed information on milestones, timelines, and responsible persons. Table 16. PACSP Management Plan (e pgs. 49-53) outlines benchmarks for the state’s charter school program’s subgrant process, communication strategies, technical assistance, parent engagement, and project management with timelines and accountable staff. The plan also provides information on key project staff with their

**Sub**

experience, education, and title. All key personnel had the qualifications to contribute to the project's success.

**Weaknesses:**

Table 16. PACSP Management Plan states that the applicant will collect, review, and approve financial reports for each subgrantee in the Summer of 2021. The applicant did not provide detail of how this will be completed if subgrantees do not receive their award until the fall of 2020.

**Reader's Score: 9**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a plan in Table 16. (e pgs. 49-53) with information on how the Project Team will collaborate to ensure continuous improvement throughout the grant period. The Evaluation Lead will conduct annual formative evaluations based on their Logic Model. The intent of the evaluations is to determine if the program is reaching the intended subgrantees, program operations meet the funding requirements, and if inputs effectively led to outputs. Data from interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, surveys from grant-funded schools, and administration data will be analyzed to identify findings and make adjustments to their established process.

**Weaknesses:**

The plan does lack in-depth detail regarding the specific steps of the formative evaluations, how the program will ensure subgrantees comply with evaluation activities, and how the Project Team will analyze collected data (e pgs. 52-53).

**Reader's Score: 2**

**3. (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.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided detailed information on the time commitments of co-Project Directors and other key personnel. Table 17 (e pg.57) outlined the name, project role, and time percentages for each key personnel involved in the project proposal. The time allocated for key personnel to the project is appropriate to meet the goals and objectives of the grant.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 3**

**1. CPP3 Competitive Preference Priority 3: Equitable Financing**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides minimal information regarding the State's plan to ensure equitable financing for charter schools in comparison to traditional schools. Charter schools will receive no less than the traditional schools' per-pupil budget expenditure. Charter schools will also have access to Ready to Learn Block Grant programs and pro-rata payments based on the state Fiscal Code formula (e pg. 7).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant provides little details on how funding will occur in a timely manner, how barriers will be addressed, and how the funding flow is similar to traditional schools. The applicant does not explain the amount of the average district per-pupil budgeted expenditure or the formula allocation amount from the Ready to Learn Block Grant to which charters are entitled (e pgs. 7-8).

**Reader's Score: 1**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 4****1. CPP4 Competitive Preference Priority 4: Charter School Facilities**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located 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; or**
- f) **Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant describes methods to ensure charter schools are provided adequate facilities. Charter schools will receive state reimbursements for building leasing equal to their annual lease payments or \$160 per-pupil for elementary schools and \$220 per for secondary schools. Charter School Law allowed schools to be located in existing public-school buildings (e pgs. 8-9).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant provides minimal information on their methods and attempts to assist charter schools in obtaining facilities. The information provided no details if the methods listed will fully help subgrantees access facilities. The applicant did not address how the State will provide funding for conventional purchases (e pgs. 8-9).

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 5****1. CPP5 Competitive Preference Priority 5: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies.**

**Strengths:**

The State's entity (PACSP) will utilize best practices from existing charter schools to improve struggling schools. The Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools will use communication tools to ensure best practices are disseminated. The program will highlight schools, such as Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship's MicroSociety Initiative, Nittany Valley Charter School Environmental Education Program, and AgWorks at Commonwealth Charter Academy, to spotlight best practices. The Coalition will also provide an annual conference, public website, annual Data Summit, and a Superintendent's Academy in collaboration with the National Institute for School Leadership. Subgrantees will be required to identify and share effective instructional, operational, and financial practices, which will be disseminated by the Coalition through site visits, walkthroughs, conferences, policy briefings, webinars, and newsletters (e pgs. 9-11).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 6****1. CPP6 Competitive Preference Priority 6: Serving At-Risk Students**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which 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 describes how at-risk students will be supported. The State's Charter School Law allows schools to limit admission to "at-risk" students (dual language learners, impoverished, truancy, academic difficulties, and economic disadvantaged). The applicant will utilize incentives and accountability structures to ensure equitable access to needed supports. They will use data reports to identify school progress and the Philadelphia School District's Charter School Performance Framework's rubric to assess school academic success, organizational compliance, and financial sustainability. Data will also be used to identify success among student subgroups to ensure equitable learning opportunities and services. Information will be disseminated to ensure best practices are shared to develop innovative models to support at-risk students. Data will be used to provide technical assistance to operators and authorizers (e pgs. 12-13).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide clear details regarding targeted requirements to ensure successful outcomes with "at-risk" students (e pgs. 12-14).

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Competitive Preference Priority 7****1. CPP7 Competitive Preference Priority 7: Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing**

**To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant developed a Charter School Authorizing Toolkit that consolidates best practices from authorizers nationwide. The toolkit will be available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website. The toolkit will focus on pre-authorizing, new charter applications, charter agreements, annual reviews, and renewals. Best practices were also discussed during the annual Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools Conference. The applicant will provide technical assistance to authorizers that include oversight, alignment of human capital, organizational structures, resources, and policies (e pgs. 14-15).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address all types of authorized agencies and how the implementation process will occur and how subgrantees will utilize the best practices provided. (e pgs. 14-15).

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 06/26/2020 08:07 AM

## Technical Review Form

Reader: CSP Staff

Applicant: Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools (S282A20005)

**Total CPP1 and CPP2 Score** **6**

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**CPP1 Score (select the score)** **4**

### Competitive Preference Priority 1: Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the area in which the applicant proposes to provide services overlaps with a Qualified Opportunity Zone, as designated by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 1400z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). An applicant must--

- a) Provide the census tract number of the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s) in which it proposes to provide services; and
- b) Describe how the applicant will provide services in the Qualified Opportunity Zone(s).

**Note:** In responding to this priority, an applicant is encouraged to explain how it will encourage prospective subgrantees to open, replicate, or expand one or more charter schools in a Qualified Opportunity Zone and how that might align to the application requirement response for (I)(C)(i).

#### Strengths:

The applicant states that they will encourage replication and expansion subgrant potential applicants to target Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZs). (e21) They will incentivize subgrants in the QOZs through a competitive preference priority awarded to applicants that are located in an QOZ or drawing a large percentage of the school population from a QOZ and only those that meet that criteria will be eligible for the full funding of \$1,500,000. (e23-24)

The applicant provided a list of QOZs that currently have charter schools, providing QOZs for the two major cities Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. (e22)

#### Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Competitive Preference Priority 1: One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a LEA, or an Appeals Process**

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

- a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or
- b) In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for 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 appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

**Strengths:**

Pennsylvania has a State Charter Appeal Board that hears appeals if the LEA authorizer denies the initial charter school application and therefore meets [b]. (e24)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**