

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Illinois Network of Charter Schools (S282A220005)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	27
Sub Total	35	27
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
State Plan		
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	32
Sub Total	35	32
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	3	3

	Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 5			
Competitive Preference Priority 5			
1. CPP5		3	3
	Sub Total	3	3
	Total	110	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - State Entities Panel - 6: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Illinois Network of Charter Schools (S282A220005)

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: 27

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a well-developed narrative that includes supportive research and data to create a high-quality project design and supports the rationale. Specifically, the rationale of the project is for the opening of new campuses, replicating existing high-quality schools, and expanding enrollment capacity of high-quality schools in targeted high-need areas for a total of 17 charter schools (page e29). The applicant provides data to compare the performance of charter schools in the target area as higher than that of their local education agency counterparts (pages e29-e32). For example, in Chicago, nine of the top ten highest-performing high schools are charter schools and 74% of charter high schools earned the highest three Chicago Public Schools or CPS School Quality Ratings compared to just 47% of non-selective district peers (page e31). Research is cited to support these percentages (Gwynn et. al, 2017). The applicant will mirror the programs within highly effective charter schools (pages e32-e33). A logic model (Appendix F, page e123) depicts in the inputs and resources the applicant is bringing to the project. These include existing high performing charter schools, pandemic relief funds, and family and community support. Using such resources will allow for additional support for schools. With activities such as expanding applications for new charters, the applicant expects the outcomes to be 17 new, replicating, or expanding high-quality charter campuses in high-need areas of the state. Specifically, there will be 5 new charters; 6 charters for replication; and 6 charters that will expand.

Weaknesses:

Absent from the narrative is a clear description of how the applicant will identify and serve local education agencies that serve high numbers of comprehensive support intervention or CSI schools. The applicant references including such schools in its project; however, no specific information is included in pages e29-e32 that identifies such schools in the rural areas of the state.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides a fully developed narrative on the objectives to be evaluated as part of the project design (pages e40-e45). All measurable objectives support the goal of expanding to 17 new or expanded charter schools and increasing student achievement of students in charter schools. Each activity that supports the objectives have specific performance measures and performance targets. For example, the applicant will measure the quality of charter operators through a robust application process seeking to gather competitive applications each year and this in turn will support the goals established by the project. For example, for one goal, the applicant will support the opening of 17 new, replicating, or expanding high-quality charter campuses in high-need areas of the state by 2027. Currently, 77% of charters are rated as high-quality. The applicant proposes that all 17 schools (or 100%) will be determined as “high-quality” quality schools as determined by state standards.

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 Entities program (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The fully developed narrative cites the challenges to be experienced by the project (pages e45-e46). For example, because of the reduction in student performance exacerbated by the pandemic, the applicant considers the objective of raising accountability scores, even by 1% point, as ambitious. The goals stated are measurable and clear. For example, the applicant will disseminate best practices to charter schools, district schools, and district authorizers by creating an information webpage.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The well-developed narrative provides information to support the applicant’s plan for 17 new or expanded charter schools. Using statistical data to support this factor, the applicant indicates that there have been increased percentages of students who are underperforming since the pandemic. The applicant will use its high performing charter networks to address the needs of the 14% of students underperforming in the state (pages e46-e48). To this end, the applicant estimates awarding [REDACTED] dollars to 17 new, replicated or expanded charter schools (page e49).

Weaknesses:

The applicant doesn’t specifically quantify the number of requests or demand from community members and families that express a demand for charter schools. While the applicant indicates that it has been “directly by parents from across the state in search of better options for their children, receiving five times as many calls from parents and community members in the past two years ...” no quantifiable number is provided to substantiate this statement. Unclear in the narrative is how the applicant established amounts to be awarded to subgrantees.

Sub

Reader's Score: 13

Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives and improve educational results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a strong narrative that demonstrates how applicant will meet the objective for improving educational results of children by providing a description of the application process with the required application components (pages e49-e58). The scoring rubric and peer review process is provided and supports a competitive process as peer reviewers will be selected from a diverse group of charter leaders, teachers, family members, and board members to review nominations for the annual Charter Excellence Awards (page e59). Applications must score at least 80% of 105 points to receive funding. Additionally, charter applicants must demonstrate sustainability (page e55). Specifically, applicant will need to demonstrate their financial sustainability, as well as the capacity of their operations team to comply with federal grant requirements and manage grant funds, ensuring spending is consistent with their grant application and after funds have ended. Applicants who apply for funds that feature unique school models located in rural communities and that can demonstrate why their programming will meet the needs of their student populations based on the comprehensive needs analysis applicants will receive funding priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

State Plan - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

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

Strengths:

The well-developed narrative provides a robust explanation for monitoring subgrants (pages e59-e63). The applicant includes a process for both program and fiscal monitoring within specified timeframes. For example, subgrantees will report on academic (as reported through authorizer accountability frameworks) and operational performance (compliance in key areas including governance, enrollment, and meeting the needs of diverse learners) and financials (YTD budget vs actuals).

Weaknesses:

Sustainability is not clear with the applicant even though it is a requirement in the subgrant application. The applicant does not address how program activities will continue once federal funding has ended.

Reader's Score: 7

Sub

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

Strengths:

The fully developed narrative is sufficient to describe how the applicant will avoid duplication of work among by using existing efforts of the two authorizers (pages e64-e65). Specifically, the applicant uses their systems for management systems (i.e., fiscal and assessment) for reporting and other assistance. Specifically, the applicant will utilize Chicago Public School's (CPS) operational scorecard and Illinois State Board of Education's (SBE) assessment as the core components of the Subgrantee Annual Progress Report (SAPR). Consequently, subgrantees authorized under CPS will submit the operational scorecard and ISBE-authorized schools the ISBE assessment. In this way, duplication of work is avoided.

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:

(i)The fully developed narrative substantially describes how the applicant will provide technical assistance to entities before and during the awards process (pages e65-e69). For example, the applicant will provide in-person and virtual training on key areas including: subgrant budget creation to ensure that all proposed expenses will be deemed allowable and how progress monitoring will occur, and the flexibilities offered by Illinois charter law and how charter operators can best take advantage of these flexibilities. As part of technical assistance during administration, the applicant will provide training sessions that will focus on meeting the needs of all students, recruitment and retention, governance, participation in federal programs and receipt of federal funds, school culture and discipline, replication and expansion, school leadership, community engagement, and school operations.

(ii)The fully developed narrative is strong to support this factor (pages e69-e70). The applicant will create an authorizer page on its website to serve as a resource library for authorizers, where they can access information on topics including NACSA's standards for high quality authorizing, steps required to administer an RFP process, and authorizing best practices. The applicant will provide guidance on school closing and share best practices for quality authorizing.

Weaknesses:

(i) No weaknesses noted.

(ii) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 (up to 5 points)

Sub

Strengths:

The narrative provides strong support on how the applicant will solicit and consider input from parents and community members (pages e71-e72). For example, at least one seat on the advisory board must be held by a parent or community member. Additionally, the applicant will engage parents and community members in high-need areas by holding focus group discussion and community surveys.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 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. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The fully developed narrative is sufficient to describe the flexibility particularly under the state's charter school law (page e73-e74). For example, charter schools have the autonomy to construct and set their own curricula for each grade. Charter schools develop their own bell schedules, school calendars, student codes of conduct, and grade promotion and graduation requirements while maintaining the minimum number of credits for core subjects mandated by the state of Illinois.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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: 13

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 well-developed narrative provides the plan for management (pages e74-e78). A detailed timeline is provided with designated responsibilities and dates for completion. The applicant also has a history of sufficiently managing grants previously awarded in 2015 which has resulted in audits with no findings.

Weaknesses:

The proposed budget aligned with the management of the grant and provides adequate resources for all project tasks (page e430 and e431); however, contractors are consultants are not within the management plan. As these items have appeared in the budget, this information is needed for a fully developed narrative.

Sub

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The process for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement is sufficient for the project activities (pages e77-e78). For example, the project will utilize all feedback on both a "live" basis, adjusting course continuously, as well as periodically during INCS' semi-annual CSP step-back meetings. These meetings of the INCS CSP project team are designed to reflect on progress and challenges. Additionally, this is a feature that will be monitored among the subgrantees. The fully developed narrative provides sufficient information to address this factor.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 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 time commitments of the Project Director and other key personnel are sufficiently explained (page e78-e79). The Project Director will be 100% to conduct activities. She has executed previous project activities 2015-2019. The fully developed narrative sufficiently addresses this sub factor.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency, or an Appeals Process. (0 to 1 points)

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it is located in a State that--

(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.

Strengths:

The applicant sufficiently addresses this competitive preference priority by meeting (a) under this priority. Specifically, the applicant cites state law that supports the state's department of education as the only authorizing authority (page e19). Under its authority, the agency has authorized eleven charter school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that 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. (up to 2 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant provides an explanation of its equitable funding formula for charter schools (pages e19-e20). Specifically, the state funds 97% of per student cost for each student across all school districts. This is an improved percentage from the original 75%-103% range which led to limited dollars provided to charter schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. (up to 1 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant provides substantial narrative to support this competitive preference priority to share best practices for improving struggling schools of local education agencies (pages e20-e24). The applicant indicates that collaborations that focus on teacher development, data collection, district leadership, and curriculum are used to share best practices used by charter schools. The applicant has paired "exemplary" performing charter schools and LEAs with those that are underperforming. In so doing, best practices are shared across the state.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

- 1. To be eligible 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: (up to 3 points)**

- 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 addresses this competitive preference priority to provide support to charter school facilities. The applicant cites funding for facilities The state has established a new law providing direct facilities funding to charter schools (pages e25-e26). The charter school facilities fund is an annual allocation of [REDACTED] that will be distributed on a per-pupil basis. Chicago charter schools have low- or no-cost leasing privileges and pay only [REDACTED] to lease CPS buildings.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. **To be eligible 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. (up to 3 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant sufficiently addresses the competitive preference priority for serving at-risk students (pages e26-e28). Specifically, the applicant provides necessary funding and collaboration to support programs within the charter schools for struggling students through state law. Additionally, the charter schools will serve specific categories of at-risk students. For example, in Chicago, Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS) is an alternative charter school network serving students ages 16-21 who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out. YCCS operates 19 schools serving 3,057 students, representing one of the largest dropout recovery charter networks in the nation.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Illinois Network of Charter Schools (S282A220005)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	27
Sub Total	35	27
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
State Plan		
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	32
Sub Total	35	32
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	3	3

	Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 5			
Competitive Preference Priority 5			
1. CPP5		3	2
	Sub Total	3	2
	Total	110	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - State Entities Panel - 6: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Illinois Network of Charter Schools (S282A220005)

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: 27

Sub

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

Strengths:

The narrative details a comprehensive rationale supported with research from both the Consortium on School Research and CREDO (e31) documenting that both Chicago's charter high schools and Illinois charter schools outperform their district peers and a higher percentage of charter students demonstrate strong growth in both reading and math (e32). Additionally, 4 of 5 the key priorities are addressed through the following:

- The Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS) "Paving a New Path" guidebook (e33 and e135-e364),
- A clearly defined number of proposed schools (e34),
- Leveraging the existing Chicago Public School's "Charter School Quality Policy (e36 and e365), and
- Through sharing of best practices with other charter schools and LEAs (e38).

In addition, the logic model presented on page e123 supports the project as described in the narrative and references resources and inputs identified in by the Consortium on School Research and CREDO.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant presented data identifying "LEAs with a significant number of schools identified by the state for comprehensive supports and improvement" (e34,e46-e47), the narrative did not adequately address the key priority addressing "how the applicant will support charter schools in LEAs with a significant number of schools identified by the State for comprehensive supports and improvement."

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant has presented six SMART Goals aligned with the intended outcomes of the project. These SMART Goals include clearly defined activities with baseline data, performance measures, and annual targets including:

- Opening, replicating, or expanding 17 charter schools (e41)
- 80% of those 17 schools will be in targeted high-need communities (e41)

Sub

- Increase educational outcomes for low-income students in ELA and Math (e43)
- Increase educational outcomes for Black students in ELA and Math (e43)
- Increase educational outcomes for Hispanic students in ELA and Math (e44)
- 80% of Illinois charter schools will earn Summative Designations of Exemplary or Commendable (e44)

To support the SMART Goals, the narrative includes a table of Activities, Performance Measures, and Annual Targets for Goals 1.1 and 1.2 (e41 – e42) and Goals 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 (e44 –e45). The performance measures representing qualitative data include outreach, information sharing, websites, surveys, and disseminating best practices. The quantitative measures include number applications, participation, and meeting/group frequency to support the annual Smart Goals.

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 Entities program (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

Based on the data presented related to historical Charter growth (e33) and academic performance (e43 and e44), the objectives to attain by 2027 are both ambitious and achievable:

- to open 17 new, expansion, or replication schools,
- 80% of those 17 in high-need areas,
- increase Math and ELA performance at charter schools statewide by 3 to 4 points, and
- have 80% of charter schools in Illinois be designated as high quality.

Based on the leveling off of charter growth in Illinois since 2015-16 and the applicant proposing a shift to targeted expansion a 17-school expansion is ambitious. Although last five-year period that exceed growth of 17 schools was from 2010-11 to 2014-15 (e33), the targeted outreach and expansion is likely to achieve the anticipated outcomes.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant’s narrative clearly defines the rationale for the number of subgrants based on Charter growth (e33) and the applicant’s ability to provide technical support (e48). Additionally, the applicant noted they are receiving five times as many calls from parents from across the state to express their desire to open high-quality charter schools in their communities (e46) and from school districts expressing their desire to better understand the process for starting new charter schools (e46). Due to these inquiries, the applicant conducted a needs assessment analyzing statewide data and similar process specific to Chicago Public Schools. The analysis presented provides an adequately developed response addressing both the demand and need for subgrant awards.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicants request for [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] per subgrantee is undocumented and lacks supporting methodology and calculations (e49), resulting in this portion of the prompt being poorly developed.

Reader's Score: 13

Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives and improve educational results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant describes a plan to notify high-quality charter operators of the availability of funds (e50), describes a plan to contact all current charter operators in the state of Illinois (e33), as well as other potentially eligible community-based organizations (e33). This targeted approach is likely to meet the stated objective as potential applicants already have a demonstrated record operating high-quality charter schools and improving student educational results.

The narrative provides an overview of the subgrant application content and subsections (e52) that would demonstrate a comprehensive application. The narrative references Tier II of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Request for Proposals (RFP) including beginning on page e383 as the basis for the subgrant application for applicants outside of CPS. For applicants within CPS their CPS RFP response will be submitted in lieu of completing INCS' subgrant application (e64) The narrative further details how subgrant applicants representing Diverse School Models, Rural Schools, and High Schools will be prioritized in the subgrant review process and provide additional targeted supports to these subgrantees (e57).

As required, the applicant demonstrated prior experience with selecting peer reviewers (e58) and outlined the process to recruit and select participants for the "Peer Review Committee" including three school leaders, a charter board member, a charter parent, and an external expert on school development for a total of six peer reviewers (e58).

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement as an element of the subgrant application is thoroughly described and references the requirements under Illinois law (e55). Additionally, under Illinois law each charter authorizer must present a viable plan for student transportation (e56).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

State Plan - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant’s narrative thoroughly addresses the process that will be used to monitor subgrants including regular reporting (e60), financial monitoring (e60-61), and serving diverse populations (e62 -63). Additionally, the applicant outlines how identified risks will be monitored, mitigated, and targeted assistance provided (e61).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant has stated subgrant applications and financial monitoring will be used to demonstrate project sustainability (e43), it is not evident how that will be achieved beyond the submission of a five-year budget (e43).

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 has proposed a process to avoid the duplication of work that leverages the use of existing processes and timing. Specifically, the use of the Chicago Public School’s RFP to Establish New Charter or Contract Schools (e46) and ISBE’s Summative Designations are key components of the annual reporting process. Additional information that is needed for Subgrantee Annual Progress Report (SAPR) and not a part of the CPS RFP or ISBE’s accountability system will be submitted through a brief reporting template addressing specific objectives of their subgrant (e65).

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:

(i) The applicant’s narrative outlines a framework of technical assistance beginning prior to subgrant application submission (e65) and continuing throughout the eligible grant period. This assistance includes a mentorship program that partners subgrantees with high-performing school leaders (e65). Additionally, the applicant acknowledges the importance of student enrollment, recruitment, and retention as a key area for monitoring new and growing schools (e66) and has plan for ongoing monitoring along with support in discipline practices that may affect student retention (e67).

(ii) To address quality-authorizing efforts in the state, the applicant proposes to leverage existing resources from NACSA on high quality authorizing and authorizing best practices and the development of an authorizer toolkit (e69). Additionally, the applicant proposes quarterly authorizer convening’s to facilitate sharing of authorizer best practices and for INCS to provide one-on-one individual support for authorizers (e69). When school closure is the remedy for an underperforming charter school INCS proposes to work with the local authorizing agency to assist with identifying higher quality schools with additional enrollment capacity (e70).

An additional strength of the applicant’s likelihood of success is their demonstrated record of accomplishment with

Sub

legislative initiatives to support high-quality charter schools including an increased renewal term of 10 year (e70). Initiatives like this provide operational stability for high-performing charters school and allowing them to focus on student achievement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

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 (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant’s plan to solicit and consider public input benefits for INCS’ prior data analysis of high-need areas (e46-e47) provides the applicant the ability to target parents and community members in those areas (e70). In addition to the input solicited on the implementation and operations of charter schools, and parent advocacy trainings (e71), the applicant proposes a process requiring a comprehensive needs analysis and urge developers to “have as many meetings as possible with community members” to ensure developers are meeting the needs of the community and ensuring meaning full engagement (e72).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 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. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The flexibility provided under Illinois State law in (105 ILCS 5/27A-2)(c) and (105 ILCS 5/27A-5)(g) referenced on pages e72 and e73 when coupled with the equitable financing referenced in response to Competitive Preference Priority 2 (e19 – e20) demonstrates the significant autonomy of charter schools in Illinois. The autonomy in addition to the applicants plan to provide technical assistance on charter flexibility (e74) support the likelihood of subgrantees maximizing the use of that flexibility in their subgrant and operation beyond the term of the subgrant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

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: 13

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 proposed management plan aligns and supports the narrative presented with activities, timelines, and responsible parties identified. The management plan also aligns with the Illinois Impact Initiative – Logic Model presented on e123 including the required elements of the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA) for fiscal year (FY) 2022 for CSP Grants to State Entities, Assistance Listing Number (ALN) number 84.282A. The management plan is presented in a manner the supports initial recruitment, communication, and grant administration (e75) while also identifying defined opportunities for technical assistance (e75) and continuous improvement (e76); this presentation supports the intent of the CSP to provide high-quality charter schools.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's budget on e430 and e431 identifies contractual services although the management plan does not adequately address the management or oversight of contractual partners (e75-e77) by INCS.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

Throughout the applicant's narrative feedback and continuous improvement tasks are identified (e21, e22, e72) as well as being a key part of both the "Paving a New Path" guidebook (e135) and the CPS 2022 Request for Proposals (e368) as part of the process for charter developers. This same mindset is evident in how the applicant will ensure feedback and continuous improvement of the subgrant application (e75), grant management (e76), and monitored through subgrantee surveys (e78).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 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 exhibits included in the application resumes (e91-99) provide evidence of key personnel's experience with both the CSP and Illinois charter schools. Their experience and data analysis of charter school growth support the time commitments of the Project Director (70%) and INCS President (15%) identified on page e78. Additionally, the applicant has identified the need for a CSP Project Manager who will be 100% dedicated to administering the subgrant competition (e78).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. **At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency, or an Appeals Process.**
(0 to 1 points)

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it is located in a State that--

- (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.

Strengths:

To receive a Competitive Preference Priority 1, the applicant needed to demonstrate that the state has either "one entity that is not a local education agency (LEA) to be an authorizer" or "if LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the state has an appeals process." The applicant has demonstrated that the state of Illinois meets both requirements and therefore are eligible to receive priority point based on the following.

- The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is identified as a non-LEA public chartering agency (e19)
- In accordance with charter law (105 ILCS 5/27A-7.5) schools can appeal district decisions to ISBE and all renewal decisions. (e19).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. **To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that 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. (up to 2 points)**

Strengths:

The applicant's narrative for CPP2 provides evidence that INCS fully meets the requirement for CPP2 demonstrating equitable financing by:

- The state of Illinois has a Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC) that is monitored by ISBO through review of each schools independently audited financial statements (e19), and
- Charter schools must be funded between 97-103% of PCTC that students would have otherwise received by attending a local district managed school (e19). The percentage of PCTC is required by 2017 legislation and paid quarterly (e20).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. (up to 1 points)

Strengths:

The applicant's narrative for CPP3 provides evidence that INCS fully meets the requirement for CPP3 demonstrating Best Practices through:

- Schools and Districts that received Exemplary or Commendable summative designations were invited to become approved providers to work with low-performing schools (e22), and
- Providing specific examples of INCS best practice sharing detailed on pages e22-e24.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. To be eligible 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: (up to 3 points)

- 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's narrative demonstrates how the state of Illinois assists charter schools with facilities fully meeting the requirement of CPP4. Strengths of the INCS application include:

- [REDACTED] annual allocation distributed on a per pupil basis to each charter school (e25),
- The Charter School Revolving Loan funds expanded to allow use for start-up facilities cost and was increased to \$ [REDACTED] per pupil (e25),
- Capital funding for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) with 59% of funds distributed to charter schools (e250), and
- PCTC funding budget for facilities operations outside of CPS (e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. To be eligible 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. (up to 3 points)

Strengths:

The narrative for CPP5 clearly demonstrate the applicants current and planned support for charter schools serving at-risk students. This is based on:

- Illinois statutory intent to serve At-Risk students (e26),
- The higher percentage of At-Risk students served by charter schools (e26),
- Examples of specific charter schools and programs supporting At-Risk students (e27), and
- Existing supports identified on page e28 including partnering schools with other high-performing schools serving At-Risk students (e28).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant identified that schools “will also have the opportunity to partner with other high-performing schools” (e28), having the opportunity does not ensure access, whereas an identified assignment or required partnering would better demonstrate a successful plan.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/22/2022 01:18 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/19/2022 08:52 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Illinois Network of Charter Schools (S282A220005)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	27
Sub Total	35	27
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	15
Sub Total	15	15
State Plan		
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	32
Sub Total	35	32
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	3	3

	Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 5			
Competitive Preference Priority 5			
1. CPP5		3	2
	Sub Total	3	2
	Total	110	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - State Entities Panel - 6: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Illinois Network of Charter Schools (S282A220005)

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: 27

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a project that demonstrates a rationale as seen through the research-backed logic model (pg. e123). The applicant presents a logic model with resources and inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes for both of its objectives. The comprehensive logic model provides details to show how the resources and inputs eventually provide the outcomes, such as the Federal CSP administrative funding allowing for increase grants awards resulting in more high-quality seats at new and expanding schools. Additionally, the applicant addresses the key priorities in detail. For example, the applicant will open 17 new, replicating, or expanding charter schools during the project period (pg. e34). The applicant also includes activities to expand a cohesive statewide system of support through authorizer convenings, which will allow for networking opportunities and resource sharing. The applicant will share best practices between charter schools and Local Education Agencies (LEAs), support charter schools in LEAs with a significant number of schools, like Chicago Public Schools, support the use of charter schools to improve struggling schools through sharing best practices, and participate in strengthening a cohesive statewide strategy. (pg. e37-e40). The applicant's project has the components necessary to be successful.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the applicant will support charter schools in LEAs with a significant number of schools identified by the state for comprehensive support and improvement.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents two fully developed objective performance measures that are specific, measurable, relevant, and timely. For example, the applicant will support the opening of 17 new, replicating, or expanding high-quality charter campuses in high need areas of Illinois by 2027. The applicant's second objective centers on improving the quality of the charter sector by measuring charter student and school performance with specific point increases broken down by demographics. Additionally, the applicant includes activities, performance measures, and annual targets for reaching the objectives. (pg. e41-e45)

Sub

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 Entities program (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents two fully developed objectives that are attainable and ambitious. The applicant includes baseline data for each of the goals. For example, the applicant's first objective of opening 17 new, replicating, or expanding high-quality charter campuses is ambitious when compared to the baseline of 75%, or 99, of the current 132 charter schools that meet the high-quality definition. This is ambitious because the 100% of the charter schools opened, replicated, or expanded will be high quality. This objective is also achievable because the applicant presents a plan to open, replicate, and expand an attainable number of charter schools each project year. Additionally, the applicant provides baseline information for all the goals tied to objective two. Through the planned activities and strategies, the objectives proposed are ambitious, yet attainable (pg. e41-e48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequately developed plan that includes the proposed number and type of subgrants by each project year. The applicant will award one new, one replication, and one expansion subgrant each year for years 1-4 and one new, two replication, and two expansion subgrants in year 5, which has the potential to add 8,500 new seats for the project (pg. e48). The applicant provides evidence of need based on the Illinois State Report Card Summative Designations reporting that over 260,000 students are currently in underperforming schools (pg. e47). The applicant specifies that [REDACTED] will be award to subgrantees opening or replicating campuses based on their needs and application quality, and a base of [REDACTED] will be awarded to subgrantees applying for expansion (pg. e48-e49).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant provides the amount for the subgrants depending on if the charter school is new, replicating, or expanding, it is unclear how the applicant has developed the amount for awards. It is difficult to ascertain if these amounts are based on a per pupil expenditure or if another formula is used to determine award amounts.

Reader's Score: 13

Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives and improve educational results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant presents a fully developed plan to determine that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the objectives and improve educational results for children. The applicant addresses how the subgrant

process will support diverse school models, serve rural communities, and prioritize the opening of higher schools. For example, during the subgrant application, subgrantees will have the opportunity to address competitive preference priorities, and three of those include addressing rural communities, diverse school models, and opening high schools (pg. e52). Additionally, the applicant provides extensive information how it will publicize the availability of subgrants, which includes email communications and meetings with community partners. Furthermore, the applicant provides comprehensive details of the subgrant application requirements, including a student transportation plan, how it will encourage projects to have a community-centered approach, and the peer review process. The applicant's fully developed plan for subgrant applicants will ensure a successful project. (pg. e49-e55)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

State Plan - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a sufficient plan to monitor eligible applicants receiving subgrants. The applicant presents a timeline with an outline of activities for subgrantee monitoring (pg. e59-e60). For example, the applicant will collect Subgrantee Annual Progress Reports (SAPR) annually to assess and approve subgrantee performance. Additionally, site visits will be conducted semi-annually or more frequently depending on risk assessment. The applicant will also implement a corrective action plan immediately if an area of risk is identified through monitoring. Furthermore, the applicant will require all subgrantees to provide data about their diverse learners' performance to demonstrate that they are serving that population adequately (pg. e63). The applicant's monitoring plan will ensure subgrantees serve their students well.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant will require subgrantees to submit a five-year budget forecast for sustainability, the applicant does not fully describe a sustainability plan (pg. e61). It is unclear what other strategies the applicant will use to determine sustainability.

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 demonstrates a thorough plan to avoid the duplication of work for charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies to reduce the burden for both in a significant way. The applicant will allow for subgrantee applications in Chicago to use the Chicago Public School (CPS) Request for Proposal (RFP) application rather than

Sub

completing the applicant's subgrantee application, and the applicant will release the application at the same time as the CPS RFP release. Additionally, the applicant will align its SAPR with information in CPS' operational scorecard and the Illinois State Board of Education's assessment to avoid duplication of efforts (pg. e65). The applicant presents reasonable ways to avoid duplication of work for charter schools.

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:

(i) The applicant presents a comprehensive plan to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants receiving subgrants. The applicant will provide technical assistance prior to the subgrant application release, which will include training on subgrant budget creation and flexibilities offered by state law (pg. e65). The applicant will also provide technical assistance through a mentorship program, quarterly trainings, and facilitated opportunities to share best practices (pg. e65-e66). The extensive training provided by the applicant will be vast – from developer and operator needs to teacher hiring support to building a transportation plan (pg. e66). Additionally, the applicant provides extensive details focusing on the technical assistance provided for recruitment, enrollment, and retention (pg. e66-e67).

(ii) The applicant provides an extensive plan to support quality authorizing efforts. For example, the applicant will provide technical assistance to subgrantees to ensure they are fully participating in eligible federal programs and receiving appropriate funding as well as budgeting these allocations, particularly Title I funding (pg. e67). Additionally, the applicant will offer technical assistance in furtherance of high-quality authorizing by creating an authorizer page on its website as a resource. Furthermore, the applicant will work with charter schools that must be closed to ensure that every student impacted enrolls in high-quality public school (pg. e70). The applicant proposes a robust plan to provide technical assistance.

Weaknesses:

- (i) No weaknesses noted.
- (ii) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents a fully developed, comprehensive plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools. The applicant will conduct focus groups in areas that are high priority for charter school expansion to learn what type of school models will most benefit the community (pg. e71). Additionally, the applicant will host parent advocacy trainings in high-need communities to elevate the voices of current charter school parents and creating opportunities for charter parents to connect with elected officials (pg. e71). The applicant demonstrates the importance of learning a community's

Sub

needs before establishing a school model; therefore, the applicant encourages developers to conduct numerous meetings with community members to gain a true understanding of the needs and priorities of the community (pg. e72). The importance of parent and community member feedback to the applicant is evident.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 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. (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant clearly describes the flexibility offered by the state's charter law and a comprehensive plan of how the applicant will work to continue to maximize flexibility. The applicant must administer state and federal assessments; however, the charter schools in the state can set their own curriculum, schedules, calendars, and codes of conduct (pg. e73). Additionally, they can contract with vendors, develop budgets, and administer revenues. Charter schools also have flexibility in hiring and up to 25% of charter school teachers are not required to be licensed, while still maintaining the minimum of a college degree and ability to pass a background check. The applicant has a policy team and in-house legal expert that monitors state law and district policy execution to ensure the best interests of the children are served (pg. e74). The applicant works with subgrantees to ensure charter operators maximize the autonomy offered to charter schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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: 13

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 details about the management plan that includes a clear timeline, responsible personnel, and milestones that are realistic and appropriate for the objectives of the grant (pg. e74-e77). For example, upon notice of award, the applicant will announce Charter School Program subgrant competition.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant's management plan is ambiguous regarding the management of the work external partners. The applicant has contractual services listed in the budget, such as webpage development and TA resource development, but the management plan fails to fully describe the management of these types of services (pg. e430-e431).

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes a comprehensive plan for how they will receive and document feedback to make improvements on the project. The applicant will utilize progress and performance monitoring, feedback from subgrantees, authorizers, and other stakeholders, and make modifications as areas for improvement are identified (pg. e77). The applicant will monitor the completion of subgrantees' milestone, grant requirements and reporting, and school data and statistics. Additionally, the applicant will solicit verbal feedback from subgrantees to determine their needs and how the applicant can strengthen its support. The applicant will use feedback on a live basis and during periodic meetings. The applicant will also look for improvements in the subgrantee survey year after year to indicate successful adaptation and strengthening of its program.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 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 presents detailed information on the time commitments of the Project Director and other key personnel, including the to be hired Project Manager and INCS President. The Project Director has extensive charter school experience and will commit 70% time. The Project Manager will commit 100% time, and the INCS President will commit 15% time. The time commitment to the project is appropriate to meet the goals and objectives of the project (pg. e78-e79).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. At Least One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency, or an Appeals Process. (0 to 1 points)

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that it is located in a State that--

- (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.

Strengths:

The applicant meets this competitive preference priority through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) being an authorized public chartering agency that is not a Local Educational Agency (LEA). Additionally, under the law, the state has an appeals route mechanism for charter schools to appeal district decisions to the ISBE. (pg. e19)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that 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. (up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant fully demonstrates that the state ensures equitable financing for charter schools as compared to traditional public schools. The applicant's funding structure is designed on a Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC), which is a per-pupil level of spending monitor by the state. The state's law requires that every charter school receive 97% of the per pupil funding that would otherwise be received by a local district-managed school. The remaining 3% covers the costs of authorizers' administrative duties. Additionally, state law mandates that charter schools receive quarterly funding installments. Therefore, the state ensures equitable financing for charter schools. (pg. e19-e20)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. (up to 1 points)

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates that the state uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. The applicant provides specific examples to show how the applicant is disseminating best practices throughout schools in the state. For example, IL Empower, which is the school improvement initiative, pairs lower performing schools with higher performing school for support in multiple areas, such as curriculum and instruction. The state uses an annual report card to assess school and district academic progress, demographics, and environmental data to develop a comprehensive summary of the progress of schools. The annual designations allow for determining lower performing and higher performing schools. Additionally, the applicant regularly releases issue briefs to promote and disseminate charter school best practices. The applicant fully addresses the competitive preference priority by sharing best practices of charter schools to help improve struggling schools. (pg. e20-e24)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. To be eligible 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: (up to 3 points)

- 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 fully demonstrates that the state provides charter schools with access to facilities for charter schools. The state provides funding for facilities on a per-pupil basis, which is approximately \$█ per pupil per year. Additionally, the state provides interest-free loans to charter schools for acquiring new facilities. The applicant presents sufficient information to justify that the state supports charter school facilities. (pg. e25-e26)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. To be eligible 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. (up to 3 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents an adequately developed plan to demonstrate that the applicant supports or will attempt to support charter schools that serve at-risk students through dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling. The applicant provides some examples of individual charter schools that cater to dropout prevention and recovery. Additionally, the applicant notes that it ensured that Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) dollars were used for at-risk students. (pg. e26-e28)

Weaknesses:

The applicant's plan to support at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services is not complete (pg. e26-e28). The applicant provides limited evidence that

these activities will occur. It is unclear how the applicant will serve at-risk students in future charter schools.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

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