

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Tennessee Department of Education (S282A220010)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	26
Sub Total	35	26
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	34
Sub Total	35	34
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	10
Sub Total	15	10
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	1
Sub Total	2	1
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
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	1
	Sub Total	3	1
	Total	110	91

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - State Entities Panel - 2: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Tennessee Department of Education (S282A220010)

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: 26

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive logic model that presents the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, performance measures, and end goals for each of the three core project objectives. (e29-e30) The applicant also provides a detailed 5-year plan for opening and replicating new charter schools throughout the grant period, with a focus on replicating at least two high-quality schools each year. (e31)

The 3 priority areas of the project are specifically aligned to the 3 core objectives, start new charter schools and replicate high quality schools, convert poor performing schools, and initiatives to share best practices among authorizers and charter schools) in the logic model. (e31-e32)

The applicant clearly describes ongoing activities and new initiatives to support and enhance the implementation of the three project objectives, with a particular focus on sharing best practices such as TN Authorizer Connect, the Charter Incubator, Dissemination Grants, and monthly Charter School-LEA Liaison meetings. (e32-e34)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not present research, evaluation findings, or evidence of effectiveness of previously implemented best practices that would inform the project logic model. Although there is mention of increased growth and interest in charter schools among Tennessee families, there is no data to substantiate this interest. (e28)

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents three project objectives with specific and measurable performance measures each year throughout the entire five years of the project period. It is clear how quantitative data will be produced from at least two of the project objectives, regarding the number of charter schools that apply and get funded as well as the increases in student achievement scores on state assessments. (e35, e36)

Sub

The evaluation objectives and performance measures clearly align with the core objectives and outcomes included in the project logic model. (e29-e30, e35, e36)

Weaknesses:

There is not an adequate discussion of how qualitative methods and data will be used to assess the performance measures, support the project activities, or evaluate project outcomes. The applicant mentions stakeholder surveys and interviews, but there is no detailed information on how these specific measures will be used. (e35-e36)

Objective 3, Performance Measure 4 is not specific or measurable as it does not include a baseline measure or a target outcome that can be assessed. (e36)

Reader's Score: 3

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 clearly describes the ambitiousness of Project Objective 1, to open 30 new charter schools in the first three years of the project. This objective is based on the number of schools opened in the last 2-3 years, the number of letters of intent received in 2022, and the number of applications received in 2022. (e36-e37)

Weaknesses:

The application would be strengthened by specifically providing the number of letters of intent received, the number of charter applications received, and the number of charter schools opened for each year of the CSP 2016 funding cycle. This would make it easier to determine the trends of charter school applications received and funded as well as shed more light on the ambitiousness of the project. (e36)

The narrative regarding the ambitiousness for objective 2 focused primarily on improving reading/ELA achievement on state assessments. There is no discussion about improving math achievement. The applicant does not adequately describe if a 25% increase is ambitious given the current baseline data in reading/ELA and math. (e37, e340)

The applicant did not report academic achievement in reading/ELA and math specifically for TN charter schools, which makes it difficult to determine the ambitiousness and attainability of the CSP objectives that are focused on charter school student achievement. (e37, e340)

Reader's Score: 2

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 a detailed chart outlining the estimated number of subgrants and average award amounts for CSP grant funds in each of the next five years, including new charter schools, replication schools, and dissemination grants. (page e39)

As evidence of recent demand and need in 2022, the applicant received 25 letters of intent to apply and 17 charter

Sub

applications, with several of those who submitted letters citing the lack of CSP awards as part of the reason for delaying their application (e36).

The applicant presents a sound justification for the award amounts of \$ [REDACTED] for new charter schools and \$ [REDACTED] for dissemination grants based on previous year costs in specific large expense areas, adjustments for inflation, and incorporating enhanced technology needs for students. (page e39-e40)

Weaknesses:

According to the narrative, Appendix III, section2 is supposed to be applications for previous award cycles, but it appears to be only for 2022, when 17 schools were approved (e39, e341). Appendix III, section3 lists 17 schools with no title or heading for the table presented, therefore it is not clear if these were the number of schools opened in the 2016-2017 school year or for the entire 2016-2021 grant cycle (e342). According to page e36, the 2016 CSP Program resulted in 32 new schools opening in Tennessee, but this is not reflected in Appendix III, section3.

The demand and need for the proposed dissemination grants is unclear, as the applicant does not include information on the outcomes and effectiveness of dissemination grants awarded with CSP FY16 grant funds. (e40, e341, e342)

Reader's Score: 18

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 comprehensive discussion of their plans to advertise and notify several entities and organizations about the availability of the CSP subgrants, with a focus on current high-quality operators, developers, and CMOs. (e40)

The applicant presents a comprehensive discussion of how the subgrant priorities and required application components are aligned to the three state project objectives. There are six competitive priorities with preference points for new charter applications, and there are also specific minimum requirements and competitive priorities for dissemination grants. (e42, e44)

The applicant clearly indicates that they will ensure high quality applicants by requiring a minimum score of 80% on the scoring rubric of the charter application to receive grant funds. This is a strong component of the review process that ensures that only high-scoring applications are funded. (e43)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

State Plan - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a comprehensive discussion of the post-award guidance on award requirements, timelines for monitoring expectations, and training on key regulations and components provided. The monitoring process involves standardized monitoring instruments, clearly delineated timelines for the monitoring process, and Compliance Action Plans for schools that receive a Partially Meets or Does Not Meet in a category on the monitoring instrument. (e45-e47)

The applicant clearly describes the two-pronged approach to monitoring awardees, including annual desk monitoring and onsite monitoring as well as providing the documents, policies, and activities that will be monitored and assessed. It is a strength of the application that these documents are provided in advance and technical assistance is available to assist with these documents. (e45-e46)

The applicant provides clear metrics for the state and for authorizers to assess the financial sustainability of charter school applicants with specific measures, indicators, and evaluation ratings (e286, e287, e366).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a fully developed description of several initiatives and documents that will reduce the duplication of work for charter schools and authorizers, including allowing subgrantees to reuse their charter application and charter agreement, not requiring a resubmission of evidence of meeting standards, and providing templates for reports and other documentation. (e47, e48)

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)**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant clearly identifies several initiatives and activities providing technical assistance and support for subgrantees, including technology support on using Tennessee's grants management software system (ePlan), pre-approval assistance with student enrollment policies, and training on behavior frameworks to support students with discipline problems. (e48)

The applicant provides a detailed outline of the formation of a transition team and the steps to be taken to close a low-performing or closing charter school. Templates for an action plan are provided and include templates and documents for notifying and assisting parents with school transfers. (e49, e50)

The applicant clearly demonstrates the implementation of high-quality authorizing efforts through the adoption of Quality Charter Authorizing Standards that are based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. (e17, e20) The applicant also thoroughly discussed several aspects of authorizer best practices including quality and compliance evaluations every two years, incorporating professional development opportunities through TN Authorizer Connect, and standardized new and renewal application review processes and scoring rubrics. (pages e17-e23, e52)

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 clearly identifies a plan to include parent, teacher, and board member input and interviews in the charter school monitoring process and annual site visits. This plan provides feedback into the monitoring and evaluation of the charter schools. (e53)

The applicant presents a robust plan to develop and engage a Charter School Advisory Council in order to share charter school best practices. The council will be comprised of community members from across the state, including charter leaders, authorizing leaders, teachers, advocates, and parents. The council will meet quarterly and provide feedback and input on the policies and programs of the Office of Charter Schools. (e53)

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 specifically presents two Tennessee charter laws that allow for charter schools to maximize their opportunities for operational and financial flexibility in the management of their schools. Charter schools have the full latitude to request waivers and utilize exemptions. There are clear examples of charter school flexibilities in the areas of daily contact hours, use of different curricula and teaching methods, local school spending decisions, and

Sub

participating in the group insurance plan. It is evident these state laws allow a high degree of flexibility and give charter schools the autonomy to operate and manage their schools with fidelity. (e54-e56)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not specifically describe how the State entity will maximize the flexibilities provided by the state law for charter schools that may be funded by the CSP grant. (e55-e56)

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (up to 10 points)

Strengths:

The applicant presents a detailed outline of the recruitment, training, and responsibilities of grant reviewers for new and high-quality charter applications. Each application will have three reviewers, and grant reviewers are expected to read and score each subgrant application thoroughly and independently. (e57-e59)

The applicant provides a detailed description of the responsibilities and milestones for annual monitoring of charter school subgrantees, including using the grants management system to disburse funds, scheduling and facilitating site visits, collecting self-assessments, and reviewing monitoring documentation. (e60-e61)

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

The management plan does not clearly describe a review process or timeline for the dissemination grants. The management plan timeline indicates in September the Director of Charter Schools will develop and finalize the monitoring instrument for dissemination subgrant awardees, and in October the Director of Charter Schools will compile all review scores and consult with the Assistant Commissioner of Choice on final award selections. There is no information about the dissemination grant review process or if reviewers are involved. (e64)

The management plan activities are not clearly aligned to all three of the project objectives, particularly for objective 2 related to improving student test score achievement. There are no responsibilities, activities, or milestones presented in the management plan for collecting, analyzing, and reporting student achievement data. (e57-e66)

Several of the activities mentioned in other parts of the narrative are not accounted for or included in the management plan, such as ongoing technical assistance and support activities for subgrantees, parent and community engagement activities, review and dissemination of annual reports, as well as collection and analysis of

Sub

stakeholder survey data. (e57-e66)

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly indicates that it will seek continuous feedback from quarterly Charter School Advisory Council meetings and bimonthly TN Authorizer Connect meetings in order to collect feedback and provide input on charter school policies and program implementation. (e53, e57)

In order to develop a charter evaluation system and Quality Charter Authorizing Standards, the applicant clearly demonstrates that it gathered feedback from charter school operators, authorizers, and charter school stakeholders, conducted focus groups to review feedback, connected with three other states that have an established authorizer evaluation system, and established a task force for the development of the evaluation process. A pilot evaluation was conducted to gather additional feedback and ensure continuous improvement of the charter authorizer evaluation process. (e17, e18)

The applicant clearly incorporates activities to collect feedback from public school stakeholders across Tennessee regarding the perceptions of productive collaboration among Tennessee public schools. (e63)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not adequately detail the types and sources of feedback that it will gather as well as timelines for collecting feedback from the Charter School Consortium. The application would be strengthened by having more details regarding the stakeholder surveys, including which specific stakeholders would take the survey, the types of questions that will be asked, and how the survey responses will be analyzed. (e57, e66)

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly presents the time commitments of the Assistant Commissioner of Choice (25%), Director of Charter Schools (100%), and Director of Choice Grants (50%), which are the three key positions with the primary responsibilities for implementing grant activities. The time commitments and responsibilities of these three positions are appropriate and adequate to meet project objectives. (e56)

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 provides a detailed description of the (a) additional authorized public chartering agencies that are not LEA's and the appeal process (page e24). Authorizers in Tennessee include local boards of education, the Achievement School District, and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. b) Appeals from charter school applicants are heard by The Charter School Commission. The applicant meets Competitive Preference Priority 1 (a) and 1 (b) (page e24).

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 presented a detailed description of the monthly disbursement schedule for local funds, as well as the timeline for payment adjustments based on changes in revenue, student enrollment, or student services. There is a detailed example of the funding allocations for an LEA that includes an Achievement School District (ASD) that takes into account per-pupil costs for transportation. (pages e25, e320)

The applicant provides an overview of their newly adopted state funding formula that focuses on equitable funding for charter schools. (page e25)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe specific charter school funding allocations compared to traditional public-school allocations. The application would have been strengthened by a specific example of the funding allocation that charter schools receive compared to traditional public schools. (page e25)

Reader's Score: 1

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:

CPP3 was not addressed

Weaknesses:

CPP3 was not addressed

Reader's Score: 0

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 thoroughly describes its process for assisting public charter schools in acquiring and improving property, including purchase, improvements, and lease payment assistance. The applicant clearly explains their process for publishing available district facilities spaces and allowing charter schools the ability to utilize the available spaces before other community organizations. (e26-e27)

The applicant provides their Charter Schools Facilities Fund grant application and scoring rubric with a comprehensive focus on funding for facilities, assistance with facilities acquisition, and low- or not-cost leasing privileges. The applicant also presents a detailed list of the types of expenditures as well as the specific facilities funding amounts for 119 charter schools from the most recent round of funding. (e325-e338)

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 describes robust and varied options for school counselor professional development including regional trainings twice a semester and an annual leadership institute. (e27)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not adequately describe the types, content, frequency, or duration of school counseling services that will be provided to at-risk charter school students. There is no discussion of the types or numbers of at-risk students that will be provided school counseling services in charter schools. (e27)

The applicant does not address providing services and activities related to dropout prevention and dropout recovery for at-risk charter school students. (e27)

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each competitive priority. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those priorities.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Tennessee Department of Education (S282A220010)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	30
Sub Total	35	30
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	34
Sub Total	35	34
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	0
Sub Total	1	0
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	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - State Entities Panel - 2: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Tennessee Department of Education (S282A220010)

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: 30

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a detailed description of the logic model on pages e29-30 that outlines goals that focus on academics, the whole child, and educators. The proposed project will provide families with high-quality school options which will improve academic achievement, graduation rates, post-secondary enrollment rates and decrease the achievement gap for educationally disadvantaged students. The project will support the opening of new charter schools and the replication and expansion of high-quality charter schools. The applicant proposes to open 30 new charters schools on page e30, to decrease the number of poor performing charter schools, and to support the improvement of all schools through collaboration and sharing best practices. The applicant proposes strategies to improve struggling schools include utilizing the Achievement School District, recruiting high-performing charter school management organizations, and the conversion of public schools to charter schools (page e32). Sharing best practices will include awarding ten Dissemination Grants, publishing projects on the Department's website, and creating a consortium of charter schools to highlight innovative teaching models across. The system wide strategies to support charter schools include the development of the charter application process, ongoing training and support, resources and implementing best authorization practices (pages e28-e34).

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide adequate research to support the logic model provided (pages e29-30).

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 provides a detailed description of the objective performance measures that are related to the outcomes of the project (pages e35-e36). The objectives include the opening of 30 charter schools by year three of the grant, improving the percentage of fourth, eighth and tenth grade charter school students who are achieving at or above proficient level on math and reading/language arts State exams by year 5, awarding 10 dissemination

Sub

grants, and facilitating the sharing of best practices (pages e35-e36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide adequate performance measures for outcomes for Objective 3 on page e36. The applicant states that charter schools and district run schools will report and increase in collaboration by the end of year five. It is not clear how this goal will be measured and baseline data is not provided to determine whether collaboration has increased.

Reader's Score: 4

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 provides an appropriate description of project goals. The goal of opening 30 charter schools is ambitious and attainable because 32 charter schools opened in Tennessee in 2016. There are currently 25 letters of intent and 17 applications on file which indicates the possibility of approving 30 charter school applications (page e36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide detailed information regarding the strategies that will be used to meet the academic goals outlined in Objective 2. The goals are ambitious however, they are not likely to be attainable based on the strategies presented by the applicant. The goal of objective 2 is to improve the percentage of fourth grade, eighth grade, and tenth grade charter school students who are achieving at or above the proficient level on State examinations in mathematics and reading/language arts. Currently on 34.6% of students are performing at or above grade level. The applicant states that new charter schools will need to bring innovative instructional models to Tennessee to improve student achievement but fails to provide details regarding the instructional models and whether the models will provide an increase in student achievement (page e37).

Reader's Score: 2

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 a detailed description of the supporting documentation regarding the methodology and calculations used to determine the number of proposed subgrant awards. The applicant proposes the award of ten planning and implementation subgrant awards in the amount of \$ [REDACTED] each to for start-up schools. Awards of \$ [REDACTED] per subgrantee were given in 2016 (page e39). The Tennessee Department of Education determined that \$ [REDACTED] is needed for start-up costs due to inflation, the increase in the cost of hiring administrative staff, facilities costs, technology infrastructure, equipment and textbooks, inflation and the focus on student achievement. Two dissemination grants of \$ [REDACTED] each will be awarded each year. The grants will be used to assist all students including educationally disadvantaged students in meeting state academic content and achievement standards. The funds will also be used to promote best practices in student discipline and school climate. Grants of [REDACTED] were provided in the 2016 CSP Program (pages e39-e40).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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 detailed description of the subgrant process (page e41). The process includes a description of the role of authorizer in reviewing charter school performance and operations, family and community engagement activities, flexibilities given to charter schools and a needs assessment. The subgrantee application will be updated and will include items such as the name of the charter management organization (CMO), a description of a business or financial relationship between the charter school developer and CMO, a plan for student records transfer, and the names and contact information of the governing board members and the charter management organization. The application will also include a family engagement plan, a list of waivers, a student transportation plan, and a comprehensive five-year budget (page e41). The application will also include competitive priorities for plans for improving learning for educationally disadvantaged students, closing achievement gaps, replication of high-quality schools, conversion of the state's lowest performing schools, demonstration of a track record of student academic achievement, and innovative school models (page e42). The competition process timeline includes the process for selecting peer reviewers, a description of the eligibility requirements, and the review and awarding subgrants. (page e44)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

State Plan - State Plan

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

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive monitoring plan on pages e45 e47 that includes the following components; 1) to assess the extent to which grantees are implementing their approved grant projects in compliance with

Sub

statutes, regulations, and guidance; 2) to examine effective uses of CSP grant funds in Tennessee charter schools; and 3) to support the overall strategy for increasing the number of high quality charter schools in the state. The applicant clearly described a process that will provide monitoring timelines, guidance and technical assistance for subgrantees. The monitoring process will include Desk and onsite monitoring. Desk monitoring addresses the management of grant funds and onsite monitoring of subgrantees will take place at least once a year. A detailed description of the corrective action plan and availability of information for families and the public is presented (pages e45 e47).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a detailed description of the steps that will be taken to ensure that there will be a reduction in the duplication of the work done by charter schools on page e48. Charter school applicants will be able to submit their new start application as part of their CSP application. Charter schools will not need to resubmit evidence that has met standards in a previous site visit and schools that are compliant will be able to complete follow up monitoring virtually. The applicant will provide new start up materials and documents for charter schools. Charter will not need to resubmit evidence that has already met standards in the previous site visit. Charter schools that comply will be able to complete the follow-up monitoring virtually. New start application materials, templates and documents for Vacant and Underutilized Report, , Authorizer Fee Report, and Annual Authorizer Report will be provided for charter school applicants. The applicant reduces duplicative reporting requirements by providing guidance and the template for the Annual Charter school Report which is submitted to the Tennessee Department of Education and the authorizer (page e48). The applicant also provides a provides a model school performance framework that can be used by authorizers for their charter monitoring purposes (page e48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 provides a comprehensive description of the technical assistance that will be provided for charter schools (page e48). The technical assistance includes webinars and grants management and software support. Charter schools will receive training regarding student enrollment policies, student discipline, the implementation of the RT12-B Framework and behavior intervention plans. Technical assistance and support for educationally disadvantaged and students with disabilities will be provided by the special education team. Professional development resources and training for English Learners, family engagement, IEPs and postsecondary transition will be provided. A training series that includes the steps of the application process will also be provided (page e47-e48).

ii. The Division of Choice will be using the Quality Authorizing Series to develop a training series for new

Sub

authorizers. The training will provide the steps for completing applications for opening charter schools in the state. Webinars and office hours are currently available for applicants who need information regarding the application process and will be expanded during the planning year phase (page e49).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 provides a detailed description of the plan to engage parents and the community. Parents have been part of stakeholders' committees and the CSP monitoring process (page e53). Parents participate in interviews and provide feedback that is used to evaluate the grant process. The Division of Choice will create a Charter School Advisory Council that will meet quarterly and provide input and feedback on charter school policies. A survey will be developed to collect data from charter school stakeholders (page e38).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 provides a detailed description of the steps that they will take to ensure maximum flexibility offered by the State's charter law. Waivers and exemptions may be requested. Examples of previously approved waivers include changes to student/teacher contact hours, duty free lunch periods, and hiring licensed principals (page e54). Charter schools have the autonomy to manage and operate as needed to meet student achievement goals. The process for requesting waivers includes applying to the charting authority or commissioner of education. The requests can be made at the time of application or any time during the charter term. Waivers are granted on a case-by-case basis by the authorizer or the commissioner of education (page e54).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each competitive priority. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those priorities.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide a description of the steps that the state entity will take to maximize flexibility that the state law provides for charter schools.

Reader's Score: 4

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 a detailed description of the management plan that includes the responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The staff will include the Assistant Commissioner of Choice, the Director of Charter Schools, the Director of Choice Grants, and the Choice Coordinator. The duties and responsibilities and amount of time to be contributed to the project by each staff member are clearly described in a chart (pages e47 e48) The project timeline is

outlined on and includes milestones for accomplishing project tasks such as the announcement of the subgrantee competition, call for reviewers, granting of awards, training for subgrantees (pages e57 e66).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide a detailed description of the timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project objectives for student achievement. (page e62).

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a strong and detailed description of the procedures that will be used to gather feedback and ensure continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. Feedback will be provided through quarterly Charter School Advisory Council meetings, bi-monthly TN Authorizer Connect meetings, and the collection, analysis, of stakeholder survey data (page e57).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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.

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides a detailed description of the time commitments of the key personnel that will meet the objectives of the proposed project. The Assistant Commissioner of Choice will contribute 25 percent of their time to the program, the Director of Charter Schools will contribute 100 percent of their time to the program, and the Director of Choice Grants will contribute 50 percent of their time to the program (pages e56-e57).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

(a) The applicant provides a detailed description of the additional authorized public chartering agencies that are not LEA's and the appeal process (page e24). Authorizers in Tennessee include local boards of education, the Achievement School District, and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission.

(b) Appeals from charter school applicants are heard by The Charter School Commission

The applicant meets Competitive Preference Priority 1 (a) and 1 (b) (page e24).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 comprehensive description of the funding formula that is used to ensure charter schools receive equitable financing (page e25). Tennessee law requires LEA's to provide charter schools an amount equal to the per student state and local funds and federal funds such as Title I and ESEA money. The LEA distributes local funds in nine

equal installments. Adjustments to payments to the charter schools can be made based on changes in revenue, student enrollment, or student services. Tennessee will provide equitable funding under new Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement funding model in 2022 (page e25).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 does not address the priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address the priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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 provided a detailed description of the strategies used to provide support for charter school facilities (page e26). The public charter schools facilities program assists charter schools with purchasing property, capital improvement of existing facilities, the purchase and leasing of underutilized or vacant property, and provides assistance with debt repayment for projects associated with capital improvement. The applicant provides a list of the awards given for charter school facilities for new school expansion needs and facilities renovation in fiscal year 2022, the applicant supported charter schools by awarding ██████████ in facilities grants for expansion needs and facilities renovations. page e26

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 provides a convincing description of counseling services provided for charter schools (page e27). School counselors and college access professionals provide college and career readiness, academic, personal and social support for all students including at-risk students. Training for counselors is provided through the School Counselor and Administrator Leadership Institute (page e27).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/24/2022 01:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/24/2022 02:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Tennessee Department of Education (S282A220010)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	29
Sub Total	35	29
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
State Plan		
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	33
Sub Total	35	33
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	14
Sub Total	15	14
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	1
Sub Total	2	1
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	1	0
Sub Total	1	0
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 #2 - State Entities Panel - 2: 84.282A

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Tennessee Department of Education (S282A220010)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant has an adequate rationale that is supported by a comprehensive logic model. The logic model illustrates the inputs, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes, medium-term outcomes, long-term outcomes, performance measures, and end goals of the proposed project (e28). In the state of Tennessee, there has been growth and community interest in other types of free, public-school options. The Department, therefore, is committed to supporting the expansion of charter school availability in Tennessee via the Charter School Expansion Grant, Charter Schools Facilities Fund, and the new Charter School Incubator.

Weaknesses:

The research on which the logic model is based is not clear. References to the rationale for selecting the various components of the model are not adequately identified.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The evaluation methods are appropriately related to the three objectives and the overall outcomes of the project as listed on the logic model (e29). The evaluation will include the use of both quantitative and qualitative data-collection methods, including surveys and interviews.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not clearly and completely discuss the qualitative evaluation methods that will be used to collect data regarding the project activities and outcomes.

Sub

Reader's Score: 4

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 provided one clear, measurable objective (objective #1), and it is ambitious based on the baseline data provided by the applicant. This objective states that the applicant plans to fund 30 charter schools, which is approximately a 26% increase in the amount of charter schools in Tennessee. The current 114 charter schools are mostly located in high-performing areas (e31), so it is ambitious to increase schools in other areas without these schools. This objective is also attainable, objective #2 has 7 relevant performance measures, and Objective #3 has 2 relevant performance measures (e36).

Weaknesses:

Although there are performance measures for objectives #2 and #3, the performance measures are not all measurable. Baseline data for these objectives was not provided, therefore, the ambitiousness of these objectives cannot be fully determined.

Reader's Score: 2

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 Department provided convincing evidence that shows they received 25 letters of intent to apply for the subgrants and 17 completed applications (e36). This demonstrates strong demand from the community and other stakeholders. Based on this community demand, there is a plan to award ten planning and implementation subgrants annually for the first three years of the grant period, two of which may be replication of high-quality charter schools. Furthermore, the applicant stated that only 36.4% of Tennessee students met grade level expectations in English Language Arts this past academic year (e37), and only 3 in 10 Tennessee students are meeting grade level expectations in math (e340). Therefore, there is a need for new charter schools to offer programming to increase student performance.

The applicant provided strong evidence that supports the demand and need for opening new charter schools and the budget that is needed for the planning and operation of them. The state of Tennessee estimated that a total of \$ [REDACTED] per award to 30 subgrantees will be divided out as follows: \$ [REDACTED] in year one, which is the planning year; \$ [REDACTED] in year 2, which is the first year of operation; and \$ [REDACTED] in year 3, which is the second year of operation (e431). The applicant also plans to award at least two dissemination grants per year during the grant period of \$ [REDACTED] each, which will equal 10 dissemination grants during the grant period.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 20

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 has adequately presented how the Department will work with the Charter Incubator to encourage high quality candidates to apply for the subgrants as well as offer technical assistance to applicants. The Department will encourage diverse applicants to apply, including rural communities, high schools, and career technical schools (e40). This assistance includes support with the application-completion process and offering workshops to answer questions about the grant. The Department will require that the subgrant applicants provide strong evidence that the funds will assist their schools in meeting the identified needs of the students, and that school-level project objectives and performance measures are comprehensive, well-defined, and realistic.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not discuss how they will ensure the subgrantees are likely to meet their state entity's objectives, nor how the subgrantees will improve educational performance of charter school students. It is also not clear why a score of an 80% would allow the subgrantee to be awarded the grant (e43). This appears to be a good score, but an excellent score of a 90% or higher would be a better determinant of a high-quality candidate for the subgrant.

Reader's Score: 13

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

Reader's Score: 33

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

The applicant provided a detailed timeline of the planned monitoring activities, which include annual monitoring. The amount of monitoring activities is appropriate to ensure applicants get the guidance and feedback they need. Onsite monitoring of subgrantees will occur at least once yearly during each year of the grant period, with an optional virtual site visit in years two and/or three if performance is good (e45). Subgrantees will complete a self-assessment that includes a section on organizational compliance, with opportunities to reflect on their relationship with the authorizer. They will also be able to assess their progress toward specific school goals. On page e366, the applicant provides a thorough evaluation rubric that shows how they will evaluate the subgrantees' plans for sustainability once the funds are no longer available.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided excellent strategies to prevent duplication of efforts for the charter schools. For example, charter schools will not need to resubmit evidence that demonstrates they have met the standard in the previous site visit. Furthermore, a site visit will not be required for compliant charter schools, and their follow-up monitoring meeting can be completed virtually or via desktop (e47).

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 provided a strong plan for offering technical assistance for applicants of the subgrants. A full-time Director of Charter Schools provides technical assistance for eligible applications via webinars on the application process, post-award trainings on the program and its implementation, and support using Tennessee's grants management software system (ePlan) (e48).

ii). The applicant also has a sound plan to offer technical assistance via the Division of Choice for new authorizers. A Quality Authorizing Series will be provided to assist new charter school applicants through the process of opening a charter school in Tennessee (e49). Currently there are webinars and office hours regarding these components, and offerings will expand to include supporting authorizers in their work to help open new charter schools.

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

Sub

the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State; and (up to 5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provided a strong plan to ensure the applicant will have input from parents and community members. First, there is a panel of parents as well as a panel of students and/or alumni that share feedback and communicate with the Board of Directors twice a year. Currently, parents and community members are included as part of the school monitoring process, including during the annual monitoring site visit. A Charter School Advisory Council will be developed to include parents as members, and it will meet quarterly to allow parents to provide feedback and input on the policies and programs of the Office of Charter Schools (e53).

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 state of Tennessee provides a great deal of flexibility to charter schools in their charter school law. Charter schools have the autonomy to operate and manage their individual schools (e54). Waivers, fiscal independence, audits, and charter school powers are available to ensure school flexibility. For examples, flexibility in waivers include the ability to have variations to student/teacher contact hours per day, duty free lunch period, licensed principals, school year commencement, and the use of approved textbooks. The schools also have autonomy regarding their budget/expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum offered.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not state how they will assist subgrantees with the operationalization of the flexible components they will offer. The application would have been strengthened by discussing some actual processes for ensuring subgrantees understand and utilize the degrees of flexibility.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:**

Reader's Score: 14

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 provided a sound management plan. The Director of Charter Schools will oversee the announcement of the CSP subgrant competition and call for reviewers and oversee the tracking and management of the grant review process. In collaboration, the Director of Charter Schools and the Assistant Commissioner of Choice will work with the Charter Incubator to strategically encourage high quality candidates to apply for the subgrants (e57). Other duties of the management team that are listed on a detailed timeline include seeking continuous feedback, providing technical assistance to grant applicants, monitoring, and managing the departments grant management software (e60). The budget is appropriately aligned with the management of the grant and allows for necessary resources for all project tasks. Based on the elements on the timeline, it is highly likely that this project can be accomplished on time and in line with the budget.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

- 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 provided a strong plan for providing feedback and continuous improvement during the grant period via a detailed timeline. The Department will seek continuous feedback through quarterly Charter School Advisory Council meetings, bimonthly Authorizer Connect meetings, the Charter School Consortium, and the data collection and analysis of a stakeholder survey data (e57). A monitoring instrument will formatively collect input from subgrantees that will be used to make changes that benefit new and existing schools in future years. Those who will provide feedback include parents, community stakeholders, subrecipients, etc.

Weaknesses:

The instruments for collecting the anticipated feedback were not clearly defined or discussed by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a complete description of the time commitments of key personnel. The leadership team will include the Assistant Commissioner of Choice, who will serve as 25% effort, the Director of Charter Schools, who will serve at 100% effort, and, a new Director of Choice Grants, who will serve at 50% effort (e56). The amount of time that each administrator will commit is appropriate for the duties they plan to complete, which are also clearly discussed. A full-time director, along with a half-time and quarter-time administrator, should be able to effectively and efficiently manage the project.

Sub

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 clearly stated that the state of Tennessee has two authorized public chartering agencies other than an LEA. These include the Achievement School District ("ASD"), and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission ("Charter Commission"). The state of Tennessee also has an appeals process. The applicant has completely addressed both of the components of the criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

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 stated that Tennessee law requires local education agencies to provide charter schools with an amount equal to the per student state and local funds received by the LEA. The Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) Act funds charter schools equitably by using a student-generated funding formula (e25).

Weaknesses:

A clear comparison of the cost per student for the state and the charter schools is not provided. Without this comparison data, it is not clear how equitable financing will be ensured.

Reader's Score: 1

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:

This priority was not addressed.

Weaknesses:

This priority was not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

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 has provided clear evidence that Tennessee has awarded charter schools throughout the state funds for facilities through per-pupil allocations and competitive grants. In 2022, they awarded [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to 119 charter schools for facilities usage (e26). The state also encourages authorizing districts to make some of its district facilities available to charter schools.

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 stated that they support college and career advising initiatives that benefit at-risk students, which include supporting the professional development of counselors that provide services to these students. Counselors that serve at-risk students complete professional development via school counselor regional trainings twice a semester. The Department also sponsors the School Counselor and Administrator Leadership Institute for Tennessee school counselors (e27). These are sound strategies that will improve the skills of the counselors.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not state what activities and services they would provide directly to at-risk students, only what they will provide to the counselors of the students. Nor is there a plan for ensuring equitable access to services for at-risk students.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/24/2022 02:04 PM