

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/03/2023 11:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Minnesota Department of Education (S282A230006)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	30
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	80

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	2	2
Sub Total	2	2

Competitive Preference Priority 4

Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2

Competitive Preference Priority 5

Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. CPP5	3	1
Sub Total	3	1

Total

110

88

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - State Entities - 4: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Minnesota Department of Education (S282A230006)

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;

Strengths:

The applicant appropriately seeks to create high-quality/high-performing charter schools that all parents from all communities can access by making informed decisions about the best education choices for their children through empowered access to information (e-14). The applicant demonstrates a clear rationale that effectively corresponds to this overarching goal and the proposed objectives (e-17-21). The proposed objectives seek to increase students' access to charter schools, provide technical assistance to charter schools and support charter school authorizer with evaluation and technical assistance (e-15). The proposed activities, anticipated outcomes, short-term and long-term outcomes provide a solid rationale that supports the proposed project. For example, the applicant effectively proposes to implement an incubator program which will likely increase authorizers' understanding of charter school law, governance, financials, staffing, prior to the completion of new charter school application and thus increasing (e-25).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes effective methods of evaluation including quantitative and qualitative data that are clearly related to the intended outcomes (e-226-230). The performance measures are comprehensive and appropriately correspond to each of the proposed objectives. For example, the number of CSP startup subgrants awarded to new and developing schools will suitably be evaluated using. The applicant effectively proposes to establish baseline data which will be determined by the number of subgrants awarded in the first startup subgrant competition. The estimated performance target of awarding six subgrants each fall will produce quantitative data and will appropriately be measured by projections from the MDE Data Analyst using MDE statewide enrollment data (e-227). Qualitative data regarding the parents and community members having tools/information sufficient to make the best education choices for their students, will fittingly be generated through feedback from council members and

Sub

survey responses solicited via the Charter Center Update (e-229).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides anticipated increases for some of the proposed objectives that indicate sufficient ambitiousness. For example, objective three seeks to provide evaluation and technical assistance to support charter school authorizers' best practices where an ambitious growth in satisfactory ratings via MAPES evaluations occurs. The applicant effectively provides a baseline average of [REDACTED] with an ambitious increase of [REDACTED] after each cohort for an anticipated total outcome of [REDACTED] (e-230).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not consistently provide detailed increases for some of the objectives, and as a result, the ambitiousness of the proposed objectives cannot be fully determined. For example, the applicant anticipates increases in the percentage of students performing at or above the proficient level in the academic areas of Mathematics, Reading, and English Language Arts. However, the applicant does not list previous proficiency levels or baseline data to determine if the anticipated increases are ambitiousness (e-228).

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant somewhat describes how the number and amount of subgrant awarded each year is determined (e-29-33). The applicant appropriately utilizes data from sources such as the Minnesota Department of the State Demographer, the number of applications awarded in recent competitions, and recent Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs projections to aid in determining the demand and need for additional charter schools (e-23 and e-30). The applicant indicates that the amounts of subgrants will be limited to \$ [REDACTED] (e-30). The entities planning subgrants will appropriately receive \$ [REDACTED] for an 18-month planning period (e-30). The applicant effectively demonstrates that the subgrant award amount is based on an objective calculation which is comprised of [REDACTED] of the basic revenue formula allowance as per state law and multiplied by the number of students enrolled by October 1 of each year (e-29-30).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate that it considers the need and demand for charter schools from parents and students to achieve outcomes such as greater school choices. For example, the applicant proposes to create a landscape of charter schools that all parents can access for the best education choices for their children (e-14), however, the applicant does not include parent and student data that supports this. The applicant demonstrates that the number of school children is expected to stay the same or even decline modestly which does not fully support the demand for additional charter schools (e-32). In addition, the applicant notes a slow and steady growth in the number of charter schools operating within the state which does not fully support the adding and expansions of 48 new charter schools to the existing 180 charter schools (e-14).

Sub

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

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

Strengths:

The applicant effectively proposes to conduct one subgrant competition for startup charter schools' applications and one subgrant competition for significant expansion/replication charter schools' applications (e-38). The requirements for startups are to not be currently funded under a Federal CSP grant project, be governed by a school board that includes at least one individual currently licensed to teach in the state of Minnesota and have a commissioner-approved new charter school affidavit (e-38). The requirements for expansion/replication applicants seeking are to be designated as a high-quality charter school and add one or more grades and/or sites in an approved affidavit not previously implemented (e-38). The applicant proposes to utilize a rubric and a peer review system that will increase the likelihood of subgrant applicants to meet the objectives for the quality charter program and somewhat improve education results for students. For example, the subgrant applicant is required to provide evidence regarding its proposed educational program, academic and non-academic outcomes; and parent and community engagement, to be eligible to receive funding (e-43-45).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a clear definition of the quality charter school program to determine the subgrant applicants' capacity to meet those objectives which somewhat diminishes the likelihood that subgrantees will fully meet the State entity's objectives. For example, the applicant proposes an obscured method to evaluate if a charter school meets the definition of high quality through a virtual school comparison method that does not clearly list the factors that contribute to the designation of a high-quality charter school program (e-35). The applicant simply states that measures in the areas of math, reading, science, and graduation rates contribute to high quality charter school program designations but does not list the actual proficiency percentages it expects in these areas to demonstrate improved education results for students (e-35).

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant generally proposes to conduct program monitoring to ensure that activities are in line with the subgrant application, and that policies and practices follow federal and state statutes and regulations (e-48). The applicant

Sub

demonstrates that it requires program and financial monitoring for grants exceeding \$ [REDACTED] (e-51). The monitoring is proposed to be conducted annually through either a site visit or a desk review by the applicant's CSP grants manager (e-51).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe what project-specific elements it will monitor. For example, the applicant simply states that its grant manager will discuss how the school is progressing in meeting their CSP objectives during the site visit which does not include crucial information regarding what will be monitored and how it will be monitored to fully determine its adequacy (e-51).

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes several efforts that effectively avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies (e-53-54). For example, the applicant no longer requires authorizers to provide school assessment data that can be found on the public reporting system which will save time and resources. Charter schools can avoid duplication of work by combining their annual reports with the state-required World's Best Workforce (WBWF) plan reports (e-23).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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;**

Strengths:

- i. The applicant appropriately proposes to provide technical assistance and support for eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State's entity's program. The applicant effectively supports subgrantees through trainings which are posted on its online calendar for easy access (e-56). The training is offered effectively throughout the school year and summer months. Technical assistance will be provided over the phone, by email, in-person at school sites, and via virtual learning. The variety of methods ensure frequent communication and guidance (e-55).
- ii. The applicant appropriately seeks to develop a series of professional development (PD) sessions to be attended by authorizers. Authorizers will receive a stipend to attend the PD which will increase attendance and the quality of authorizing efforts in the State. The PD will effectively be created in collaboration with the applicant's Charter Center and the Minnesota Association of Charter School Authorizers (e-444).

Weaknesses:

- i. The applicant does not explicitly demonstrate that it provides technical assistance to charter schools seeking funds for expansion and replication projects. Instead, the applicant only describes the technical assistance it proposes to provide for the creation of new charter schools (e-55-56).
- ii. No weaknesses are noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant appropriately proposes a solid 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. For example, the applicant fittingly proposes to form a Parent and Community Member Advisory Council (PCMAC) comprised of parents and representatives from parent advocacy and other community organizations (e-67). The council will review the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state, such as statewide accountability assessment results for charter schools and measures/results related to MDE's high-quality charter school methodology. The applicant effectively proposes to meet with parents and students to determine if subgrantees are meeting the commitments outlined in their applications, particularly those commitments related to parent engagement and student success. If the commitments are not being met, MDE will work with the subgrantee to understand the situation and create a plan to address concerns (e-68).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not demonstrate how it will ensure representation of parents and members of the community from underrepresented backgrounds. This would ensure that solicitation and input will be considered from all parents in the implementation and operation of the charter schools in the State.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant appropriately describes the flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and anticipates maximizing the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law by observing the decision-making authority of charter schools by their individual charter boards. The State's charter school law includes many provisions such as the exemption of charter schools from many state statutes and rules applicable to other public schools (e-70).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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: 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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a mostly adequate management plan to achieve the project objectives on time and within budget (e-73). The applicant provides a general timeline that corresponds to activities conducted by key personnel. For example, in support of objective two which seeks to provide technical assistance to and share best practices with charter schools to further increase student academic and operational performance, the applicant lists activities such as creating an RFP for the development of an incubator program during year one of the project which will effectively be the responsibility of the grant manager (e-74).

Weaknesses:

Some of the activities in the management plan are not sufficiently defined to determine if the objectives will be fully achieved on time and within budget. For example, the activity listed as disseminate best practices gleaned from NIC does not fully describe who determines what best practices should be disseminated, what the format of the dissemination entails, and how the best practices will be disseminated (e-74). In addition, the dissemination of best practices during year 4 and year 5 of the grant may be too late into the grant review to achieve objective 2 where best practices are supposed to increase student academic and operational performance (e-14).

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The applicant effectively demonstrates that adequate procedures ensure feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. For example, the data analyst periodically observes trends in annual reporting data that may need to be addressed by the applicant and the charter schools. A proven system is in place to make corrective decisions in the continuous improvement of the proposed project (e-75). The applicant appropriately demonstrates that feedback from the Parent and Community Member Advisory Council committee will be used by Charter Center staff to review questions related to parent/community engagement, for example (e-76).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe mechanisms for purposefully soliciting feedback from key personnel such as the CSP grants managers, the alternative and extended learning specialist, the grants specialist coordinator, and grant specialist which would increase the adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project (e-72).

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 appropriately proposes the employment of two full-time CSP Grant Managers who will oversee the CSP award and provide technical assistance and administrative tasks toward the proposed project. Other key staff include .10 FTE Alternative and Extended Learning Specialist who will provide technical assistance regarding credit recovery; .02 FTE Grants Specialist Coordinator who will develop, review, and publish the subgrant applications; .20 FTE Grants Specialist will provide financial oversight to ensure funds are appropriately managed; .20 FTE Data Analyst will provide day-to-day data support toward the project; and .10 Project Director who will complete all required federal reporting (e-435-436).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The responsibilities of key personnel toward the proposed project are minimally described, which makes it difficult to determine if the time commitments are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. For example, the applicant simply notes that the Project Director's (PD's) time commitment is .10 FTE (e-76). The applicant proposes that the PD's job responsibilities are to serve as the ED point of contact and complete all required federal reporting (e-73). The job description is not sufficiently described to determine if .10 FTE is appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (e-73).

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

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

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

(0 or 1 points)

Strengths:

(a) The applicant demonstrates that its state charter school law allows different types of authorizers that are not local education agencies to be authorized public chartering agencies for developers seeking to open a charter school (e-54). These agencies effectively include a charitable organization, a private college that grants two- and four-year degrees, a state college or university, the University of Minnesota, a non-profit subject to chapter 317A, and a single-purpose authorizer formed as a charitable, nonsectarian organization (e-54).

Weaknesses:

(a) No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant appropriately demonstrates that its state ensures equitable financing for charter schools and students in a prompt manner. For example, Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124E.20 to 124E.26, charter schools are eligible to receive general education revenue, referendum revenue, special education aid, building lease aid, long-term facilities maintenance revenue, startup grants, English Learner funding, READ Act funds, and other revenue school districts receive (e-70). In addition, charter schools receive state and federal aid, including ESEA Title funds and National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, which flow through MDE(e-70-72). Charter schools are considered independent districts in the state of Minnesota which supports the equitable financing of charter schools compared to traditional public schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant effectively demonstrates it uses best practices from charter school to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. For example, the applicant provides one partner resource, Minnesota's Regional Centers of Excellence (RCE) which delivers support and services to schools in general. RCEs can provide support in implementation, data analysis, school leadership, and district support (e-61). The applicant appropriately proposes to create a Repository of Evidence-Based Practices on its website to ensure these resources are easily accessible to school leaders, administrators, and educators as they work through their continuous improvement process and/or MnMTSS(e-62). The applicant fittingly indicates that it publishes the Best Practices in High-Performing Schools, an annual legislative report that provides a summary of best practices implemented in Minnesota charter schools and districts that demonstrate higher performance which demonstrates that the state in which the applicant is located, uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs(e-62)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

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

- a) Funding for facilities**
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition**
- c) Access to public facilities**
- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies**
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings**

f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant effectively demonstrates that it is located in a state where low- or no-cost leasing privileges are provided (e-72). For example, Minnesota charter schools are allowed to lease buildings and may apply to receive building lease aid (Minn. Stat. 124E.13 [2022]). Lease aid is available to charter schools with building leases. In 2022, lease aid totaled more than [REDACTED] for the state's 175 charter schools (e-72).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

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

(up to 3 points)

Strengths:

The applicant appropriately proposes a credit recovery plan for at-risk students which is a dropout prevention activity. For example, the applicant generally proposes developing a network improvement cohort focused on credit recovery to provide technical assistance to charter school leaders in the development and implementation of a credit recovery program (e-15).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not sufficiently describe the credit recovery program and how it will be implemented to fully determine to what extent the credit recovery program will serve at-risk students.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/03/2023 11:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2023 04:52 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Minnesota Department of Education (S282A230006)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	30
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	80
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	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	1
Sub Total	3	1

Total

110

88

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - State Entities - 4: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Minnesota Department of Education (S282A230006)

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;

Strengths:

The application offers a specific rationale that is also noted in letters of support as well as in the subgrant application (page 1, e17). There is also a logic model that outlines how the rationale will be the focus of the program with a time range, activities such as convening a Governance Advisory Board, inputs, and outputs. The information provided includes projected numbers of charter schools in the state.

Weaknesses:

There are no noted weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The application outlines specific outcomes (pages 2-5, e 18-21) with a time range, activities, inputs, and outputs. Evaluation metrics are also noted, which offer objective performance measures with qualitative and quantitative data. The application includes specific performance measures for each objective such as the implementation of at least one best practice by participating charters. It is noted that the best practices will be published.

Weaknesses:

There are no noted weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant executes specific objectives with specific metrics aligned for each projected outcome (table on pages 2-4). The projected number of subgrants is 6 in the first year, 30 in year 3, and 48 by the fifth year with 200 operational charter schools. These numbers are ambitious yet attainable. There are also specific metrics related to evaluative and technical assistance as well as increasing charter performance.

Weaknesses:

The application did not include specific benchmarks of academic proficiency levels in math and ELA other than noting a baseline increase, particularly among student subgroups such as Students with Disabilities and English Learners.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The application explains the history of charter schools in the state and includes specific numbers of charter schools and subawards (pages 15-17, e31-33) over the past ten years. A new option for significant enrollment increases is also included in the projections.

The MDE anticipates awarding 6 subgrants per competition with 8 competitions over the course of five years for a total of 48 new awards and 200 schools.

The application offers a comprehensive overview of the process for the subgrant competition as well as a mention that the maximum subgrant amount is \$ [REDACTED] (based on a per pupil amount). There is also a request to fund 10 current grantees from the 2017 cohort (page 14, e30) and a note that MDE staff members are aware of the need to increase sustainability and offer a more narrow scope of allowable expenses (page e36).

Weaknesses:

While there is a mention of demographics and a projection for a more racially and ethnically diverse student population on page 16 (e32), the information is high level and not specific. In addition, population information is included but notes that there is a trend of a decrease in school-age children and birth rates. It is noted that the SEA is aware of possible oversaturation and low enrollment in some areas.

Though the maximum award amount is included, additional information about the determination of amounts and allowable expense types would strengthen the application.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

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

Strengths:

The application outlines a robust subgrant application process and review by MDE staff (page 17, e33). The process includes multiple levels of review by different people and a related resource is included. In addition to a thorough process,

the MDE produces a variety of resources, assistance, and oversight that can be leveraged to ensure that charter schools will meet the objectives. In addition to resources provided, the application includes specific partnerships to benefit at-risk students, such as the partnership to support students experiencing homelessness as well as the fact that charter contracts have specific components around historically underserved populations such as SWDs and ELs (page 42).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide enough details of the creation of the virtual school model. This lack of clarity impacts how accountability will be tracked and addressed. In addition, the application lacks a specific definition of how the MDE characterizes a high-quality charter school (e35). There is also not information about targeting charter growth in rural areas (e21-22).

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 28

Sub

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

Strengths:

The application outlines specific ways that the MDE will adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants. It includes specific examples of how MDE provides oversight of subgrantees including site visits, pre-award risk assessment, training and technical assistance, specific reimbursement request processes and documentation, fiscal monitoring, and more (pages 32-33, e48-9). It is also noted that the state agency monitors for compliance with 2 CFR 200 (page 35). Specific fiscal-related documentation must be submitted as part of the monitoring processes (and when seeking reimbursement).

Weaknesses:

The application notes that the state agency might ask for an improvement plan and/or impose "risk mitigation strategies," but it is not clear specifically how the MDE responds to subgrantees that are not making adequate progress or about whom there are compliance concerns. Information about mitigation strategies and progressive responses would strengthen the application. Additional information and specific data about the programmatic monitoring would also be beneficial (page 35, e51).

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

The application includes specific examples of the ways in which various mechanisms are in place to avoid duplication of work, including the MDE's internal review of divisions to improve the quality of information collected (page 36, e52). Concerted efforts to align and streamline required reports and data submission are also noted in addition to trainings as well as resources (such as the specific calendar with a list of due dates and action steps).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are 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;**

Strengths:

The MDE offers a multitude of technical assistance and training opportunities.

The application on page 38 (e54) notes that support is provided in a variety of ways (email, calls, site visits, and virtual learning).

Additional specific examples include the work by various staff members as well as offerings such as the monthly Charter School Boot Camp, the NIC focused on Credit Recovery, and more (pages 39-41, e 55-57).

Two of the provided letters from charter schools in Minnesota reference the state agency's support.

These specific and diverse examples offer a thorough overview of the technical assistance and support provided to subgrantees.

Weaknesses:

The applicant lacks supports and how technical assistance topics are determined to expanding or replicating schools.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The application notes that the MDE will form a Parent and Community Member Advisory Council (PCMAC) and interest will be solicited from the SEA's Division of Public Engagement and through the Charter Center Update (directly from the charter schools) (page 51, e67).

The proposed budget narrative (page e445) includes projected expenses for contracted interpretation services for the members of the CSP Advisory Committee; the services are to be provided for the top ten languages, including American Sign Language (ASL). Translator services will also be provided based on the information in the budget narrative (e445).

It is also noted that the MDE will publish a charter school resource guide and update its website to serve as sources of information for parents (p. 51, e67).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The application did not outline specific ways in which the MDE would oversee the PCMAC and solicit formal feedback from a wider group of parents and stakeholders beyond the PCMAC other than during the monitoring process. In addition, it is not clear the specific ways in which the MDE would work to ensure the participation of a diverse group of parents and members that represent the charter school community other than the general information on page e8.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The application includes references to specific state statutes that outline the flexibility given to charter schools, which is much more than traditional public schools have (pages 52-4, e68-70). Recognition by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is also cited, in addition to the specific flexibilities noted in state law (page 53, e69). Also included are examples of supports and documents with parameters offered by the MDE. Specific charter assurances were provided (page e417) as well as a detailed reporting calendar (pages e421-433) and other resources with hyperlinks.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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: 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

Strengths:

The application offers an adequate overview of a management plan to achieve the objectives, including a table listing the related tasks, timelines, and MDE staff responsible (pages 57-9, e73-5). The budget appears to align with the activities listed in this section.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides information that research will be published in year 5 of the grant program. However, the applicant would benefit in sharing the publication of data earlier and on an on-going basis in order to share information prior to the end of the grant cycle.

Sub

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The application offers an overview of the process to ensure feedback and continuous improvement through professional development offerings, TA, workshops, monthly Charter School Boot Camp, published resources, quarterly check-in meetings, and site visits (page 39, e55).

Weaknesses:

The application does not clearly indicate the ways in which the MDE would solicit and utilize feedback from internal staff or the subgrantees to identify needed changes to the program and process.

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 application notes that 6 staff members will be funded in part by the grant with one additional staff member's time in kind (page e 435-7). Two full time equivalents (FTE) will be charged with managing the grant program. Based on the provided resumes and CVs, the MDE staff have a wide variety of experience in related areas; there appears to be deep knowledge and expertise of charters in Minnesota among the staff members who would be funded by the grant. MDE Charter Center staff have years of experience in K-16 education and post-secondary. Some of the staff members have held various roles in charter schools and have experience working with the CSP grants.

Weaknesses:

Specific job descriptions would strengthen the application. While .02 FTE grant specialist is included in the budget and related narrative, it is not clear that the time is sufficient as this position is charged with ensuring "funds subgranted are appropriately dispersed and managed" (page e436; pages 56-9).

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

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

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

(0 or 1 points)

Strengths:

The applicant states that charter schools are considered to be independent LEAs (p 53, e69). State statutes allow charters the authority to function as an autonomous and independent school (LEA). It is noted that the Charter Center is responsible for conducting evaluation and approval processes, among other activities to support authorizers (p 47, e63). Additionally, the applicant includes 7 different types of authorizers (e54).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The application notes information about various funding sources available to charter schools and related state statutes (page 54, e70). Specific examples of access to equitable funding are included as well as sources that are available only to charter schools (e 54-5, e70-1). In addition, it is noted that the MDE makes charter schools aware of federal funding and related resources such as trainings, requirements, Title I plan exemplars, support for school nutrition programs from USDA, and more (pages 41-2, e57-8).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The application lists multiple ways in which the MDE assesses, monitors, and provides examples of best practices. The MDE publishes a report of best practices and shares it with charter schools (page e62). Other reports include a Repository of Evidence-based Practices and an annual legislative report. The MDE provides technical assistance in a wide variety of ways across many topics; the MDE's Regional Centers of Excellence employ specialists who offer support in topics such as English Language development, math, equity, data analysis, and more (page 45, e61). In addition, there is a state MTSS framework as well as a partnership with the University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement.

Other examples of best practices include the proposed Network Improvement Cohort (Credit Recovery program), the Incubator initiative, the creation of a PCMAC, and supports to comprehensive support and improvement (pages 6-7, e22-3). Participation in national and state charter organizations is noted as well and such involvement (including conferences) allows opportunities for learning and sharing best practices.

The application mentions the fact that the state has years of experience working with charters as the state had the first charter laws in the country and established the first authorizer review process (page 48, e64). Also, a comprehensive approval and oversight process is outlined (pages 49-50, e 65-66) as well as the Governance Board to address identified challenges from previous years

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

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

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The application demonstrates that the state provides funding for charter school facilities via lease aid. Another option is the creation of nonprofit building corporations. Related state statutes are cited (page 56, e72).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

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

(up to 3 points)

Strengths:

The applicant listed various ways in which departments at MDE support charter schools that serve at-risk students, such as Voluntary PreK programs, local literacy plans, post-COVID COMPASS system to accelerate student learning, early warning interventions, universal screening, and the MnMTSS framework (page 47, e63). Additionally, collaborations with

organizations, including the Regional Centers for Excellence, (page 45, e61), offers support, as does the proposed NIC credit recovery program.

Weaknesses:

The application does not sufficiently provide a detailed or fully-developed discussion of the credit recovery services that would be the focus of the NIC credit recovery program.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2023 04:52 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2023 04:29 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Minnesota Department of Education (S282A230006)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	30
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	28
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	80
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	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	1
Sub Total	3	1

Total

110

88

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - State Entities - 4: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Minnesota Department of Education (S282A230006)

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;

Strengths:

The applicant provides specific detail around the supports that will be provided for the opening of new charter schools including guidance documents related to the development and opening of new charters (P 6). The applicant effectively described activities that will build the foundational practices, including finances, and staffing, that are required for opening of new charter schools such as the Incubator (P. 9) and working with Regional Centers of Excellence (P. 6) that have a track record of success. The use of learnings from preoperational charter school that dissolved prior to serving students (P. 9) is a sound practice for determining topics to be addressed through the Incubator. Additionally, the topics described as part of the Incubator program include key components needed for launching charter schools. (P. 9-10) The Logic Model (P. 2-5) includes activities and outputs that are necessary to the grant project and the outcomes are reasonable to ensuring that the goals are met by the end of Year 5.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

All measures that the applicant included in the application can be reported annually and are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. Of particular strength are measures related to governance, implementation of practices from technical assistance, and parent needs (P. 11-12). The data collection and reporting methods included in Appendix F – CSP Objectives starting on page e226 are appropriate for each performance measure. The performance targets that are also in Appendix F specify what the applicant wants to accomplish each year of the grant. The performance measures correlate to activities from the project plan. Measures include qualitative measures such as feedback (P. e229) and quantitative measures including student data (P. e227-e228) and the number of schools that will open (P. e226).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes data about charter schools in the state and the enrollment numbers for 2022-2023 with the numbers indicating that the number of charter schools has increased (P. 12). Justification for performance measures for governance, technical assistance, and best practices dissemination were included (P. 13) with the applicant identifying past challenges and the need to address them. The performance targets related to the number of charter schools, subgrant awards, and MAPES evaluations are ambitious, yet attainable.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include the rationale for not specifying the percentage increase wanted to see each year. Pages e227 and e228 state that the percent of students at or above the proficient level will increase each year. By not specifying a specific percentage increase each year, any increase, including a [REDACTED] increase, would be considered as meeting the goal. A specific increase would provide more clarity and create a more ambitious goal that would better support the applicant's overall goal of quality charter schools (P. 13).

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides extensive data to support their expected subgrant awards. The analysis of the child population data (P. 15 and 16) and the longitudinal data of new and expanding charters over the past ten years (P. 16) are included. Additionally, the grant request includes funding for a new type of expansion subgrant focused on significant enrollment increases (P. 17). Also included in this narrative are the projected award amounts including a thorough description of how Implementation 1 and Implementation 2 award amounts are calculated (P.14-15). The applicant has implemented a competitive review process to ensure that high-quality charters are receiving grant funds (P. 15) and has measurable goals that must be met for the continuation of funding (P. 14-15) to ensure grantee success throughout the duration of the grant.

Weaknesses:

The applicant included the fixed amount that would be granted for the planning period (P. 14) but did not provide an explanation of how this amount was determined. While, the applicant included information related to decreasing enrollment (P. 15) which does not justify the opening in 48 charters over the next five years.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

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

Strengths:

The applicant described a stringent process for subgrant applications including eligibility requirements, financial checks, application review using a rubric, capacity interviews, and risk assessments. This process will fully vet applicants to ensure they meet all requirements and qualifications before being awarded grant funds. The application is detailed and asks for narratives to describe ways in which the applicant's goals and the State Education Priorities will be achieved using grant funds. (P. 27-29) Subgrantees can earn priority points centered around meaningful and ongoing engagement which encourages these activities by giving a competitive edge as applications are awarded based on points. (P. 29) To be eligible to apply for an expansion/replication grant, the applicant must achieve the HQCS status which focuses on both academic performance and operational wellness (P. 18-19) which improves the strength of applicants. In addition to strong eligibility requirements, the process for recruiting and training peer reviewers is thorough, and applications are reviewed by three reviewers who engage in a 5-step review process. (P. 24) The communication strategy is both targeted in that the information is sent to people specifically connected to charters and broad in that it is posted on the state's grant management webpage to be accessed by anyone. (P. 21) It is evident that the development of the application and the review process were well thought out and if implemented with fidelity will lead to a strong pool of applicants to improve student performance. Lastly, the state has statutes in place that ensure that the transportation needs of students are met. Training focused on transportation is also provided by MDE to support the fulfillment of the requirements.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states "MDE does not prioritize high schools in CSP subgrant competitions" and shared that "of the 47 most recent 2017 CSP subgrantees, ten included high school grades" (P. 22). There was also a lack of detail about how the subgrant supports models that serve rural communities, and the application included no differentiation of communication about grants to target the growth of high schools and rural charters (P. 21-22) The subgrant application does not explicitly address how subgrantees will explain how autonomy for charter schools will be will be afforded. The applicant also does not address this in the narrative about the revisions made to the subgrant applications. (P. 20) The information included in the narrative about "virtual schools" as comparison schools to determine HQCS (P. 18 and 19) is difficult to understand.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Reader's Score: 28

Sub**1. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;****Strengths:**

The applicant provided a comprehensive annual monitoring plan for program and financial monitoring. (P. 35) The monitoring protocols are tailored to the subgrantee based on the project period and the type of grant they received. (P. 32) The monitoring plan includes invoice analysis, on-site visits, and desk audits with risks being address through a plan for improvement (P. 36) or through training and technical assistance offered throughout the subgrant award period. (P. 31) There are specific personnel assigned to provide technical assistance to subgrantees and to review submitted reimbursements in a timely manner to catch risks early. (P. 33) The applicants included details for funding to support the educational needs of students with disabilities and English learners. MDE also provides an implementation framework for charters to support the development of standards-aligned English Learner programs. (P. 34) To prepare subgrantees for success after the grant ends, charter schools are asked to provide a detailed financial sustainability plan following the completing of the CSP grant. (P.33)

Sub

Weaknesses:

While the applicant shared a little about how additional managers will receive training on grant processes, they did not include a fully developed training plan or specific details related to implementation of the training. (P. 36) The narrative also did not include a fully developed plan to monitor how subgrantees are meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities and English learners beyond how the charters can received supplemental funding. (P. 33-34) There was also no evidence that corrective action plans are made available to families and the public.

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

MDE has worked with authorizers to reduce the duplication of data entry for required reports. This has been supported by state statute 2022, section 124E.05 and section 124E.16. MDE ahs also combined their annual report with the continuation request to help subgrantees reduce the amount of time spent on monitoring reporting requirements. (P. 38) This improvement to reporting processes still collects the same information but in a more efficient way.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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;

Strengths:

i. The applicant provides technical assistance in a variety of ways to meet the needs of the subgrantees. (P. 39) Trainings and web-based recordings are available year-round to provide support when the subgrantee needs it. Detail around the delivery of technical assistance is included. A CSP Grants Manager provides technical assistance related to grant management and processes. Three new technical assistance offerings are being added in the future including one to address governance which has been identified as a challenging area for charters. (P. 40) Detail about the three new technical assistance offerings is included.

ii. The applicant indicates that they will co-develop a series of sessions for authorizers. (P. 40) These sessions will focus on best practice for charter school authorizing and attendees will received a stipend to attend.

Weaknesses:

i. It is unclear how expanding/replicating charters will receive training and technical assistance on topics that are not related to grant management and specific program supports (P. 38). There is no indication that the majority topics are based on need of subgrantees.

ii. No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 8

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

Strengths:

The applicant included clear activities to gather input from parents across the state. Parents will be recruited to form the Parent and Community Member Advisory Council (PCMAC). (P. 51) The plan clearly details how input will be gathered and used to improve the CSP activities and processes. Data that is collected through meetings with parents and community members will be made available to all parents across the state.

Weaknesses:

With parents being recruited from specific organizations and contact lists, it is unclear how the applicant will ensure that the parent group representatives reflect the demographics of parents of all charter students. (P. 51).

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The statutes and laws described in the application indicate that charter schools are provided with maximum flexibility and autonomy. The state law also establishes that only a charter school board is authorized to operate the school (P. 53) providing further protection for charter school autonomy. The applicant continually reinforces what authorizers can and cannot do to ensure autonomy for charter schools. The State's charter school law supports flexibility for charter schools in the state.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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: 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

Strengths:

The personnel and job descriptions align to what is needed to manage the grant and accomplish the project tasks. The timeline for the project is realistic. The attached resumes show that the key project personnel have the qualifications to ensure that the project is successful. (Attachment 2) Job descriptions for the key grant personnel are included in the budget narrative (Attachment 1).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The milestones listed in the timeline are vague and lack detail related to responsibilities associated with each milestone beyond who will be involved. The applicant does not include sufficient detail to describe how work of external partners will be handled. The applicant does not plan to disseminate best practices from the NIC until Years 4 and 5. (P.58)

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes a plan to collect data internally and adjust as needed to ensure that performance goals are met. (P. 59-60) The plan to engage with parents and community members is detailed and includes how feedback will be used by MDE to implement changes.

Weaknesses:

The plan does not include a collection of feedback from subgrantees or external partners to improve processes. There is no indication that qualitative feedback about the proposed grant project or its activities will be collected, analyzed, or implemented.

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 provides adequate information related to grant-funded personnel including time commitments, wages, and brief job descriptions in the Budget Narrative (Attachment 1) which provides a clear picture of personnel budget needs.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear if the time commitments are appropriate and adequate to meet the goals of the objectives of the grant as some positions have low time commitments in the budget narrative, but support many responsibilities in the timelines/milestone chart.

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

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

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

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

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

(0 or 1 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides opportunities for several entities to be an authorized public chartering agency including charitable organizations, private colleges, state colleges or university, and nonprofit corporations to authorize charter schools (P. 38).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant states that state statute is written so that charters are eligible for the same revenue that school districts receive. Charters also receive state and federal aids including, but not limited to, general revenue based on enrollment, transportation aid, special education revenue, and long-term facilities maintenance revenue. The state clearly provides equitable financing for charter schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

Minnesota works with their Regional Centers of Excellence (RCE) to deliver specialized support in subject areas or for special populations (P. 45) They also implement the MN Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework which relies on districts and charters to reflect upon and capture best practices related to improvement. (P. 45) MDE created a library on their website that includes the resources from the MnMTSS framework. Additional MDE published an annual Best Practices in High-Performing Schools report that summarizes best practices that are being implemented in charter school

and districts that have been identified as higher performing. (P. 46) The applicant has clearly demonstrated that they are using best practices to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

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

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

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant stated that the state provides building lease aid to charter schools which has totaled more than \$ [REDACTED] and assisted 175 charter schools. Charters may also organize nonprofit building corporations for renovations or construction of facilities (P. 56). This plan meets the bar for CPP4 as charters are provided with assistance with facilities acquisition.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

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

(up to 3 points)

Strengths:

Statewide resources are available to all districts and charters in the state. These resources focus on identifying students who are behind and accelerating learning to get them where they need to be. (P. 47). Early intervention programs have been put in place to address literacy and early identification of learning concerns in hopes of preventing students from disengaging with school at the secondary level. (P. 46) These services are available to all schools and students in the state. Throughout the application the applicant also discusses credit recovery as a program that will be implemented. The applicant has demonstrated that there are some supports in place for at-risk students.

Weaknesses:

The narrative does not fully address supports that would be implemented at the secondary level such as career counseling and dropout recovery. Many of the academic supports listed under this CPP are provided by MDE's Division of Early Learning and focus on literacy development for students up to the third grade level. (P. 46-47) Similar supports for students beyond third grade were not evident in the application. Additionally it is unclear which students will benefit from the credit recovery program and how that program will support dropout recovery and prevention.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted**Last Updated:** 06/28/2023 04:29 PM