

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2010 04:36 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , (U282M100007)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	50
Contribution assisting disadvantaged		
1. Contribution	15	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of design	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	25
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
Total	100	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , (U282M100007)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students, served by charter schools operated or managed by the applicant.
 - (ii) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II).
 - (iii) The degree to which the applicant has achieved results for low-income and minority students that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.Applicants are invited to submit objective data that they believe would provide relevant information in support of these three factors, along with comparison data for similar schools, where available. In particular, the Secretary is interested in the following data: (1) Performance (school-wide and by subgroup) on statewide tests of all charter schools operated or managed by the applicant as compared to all students in other schools in the State or States at the same grade level, and as compared with other schools serving similar demographics of students; (2) annual student attendance and retention rates (school-wide and by subgroup), and comparisons with other similar schools; (3) where applicable and available, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates (school-wide and by subgroup) of students attending schools operated or managed by the applicant. When reporting data for schools in States that may have particularly demanding or low standards of proficiency (for example, see the report available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/201456.pdf>), applicants are invited to discuss how their academic success might be considered against applicants from across the country.

Strengths:

IDEA Public Schools is a high quality applicant. The network operates eight schools in the most southern part of Texas. Although schools serve students with a high proportion of low income Hispanic students, (p.1-2), the schools have a higher attendance rate than the district and the state (p.2). More impressive, IDEA students have a higher passing rate on average on the state tests than their peers in the district, other charter schools and the state of Texas in each academic subject (p.2-3). When the data are disaggregated, they reveal that IDEA has higher passing rates among Hispanic students and economically disadvantaged students than the district and state (p.3). IDEA students also have a significantly higher cumulative pass rate on exit level exams (p.3) and higher percentages of students passing at the Commended level (p.9). It is not surprising that the system has a waiting list of over 12,500 students and expects to have all of its campuses rated as Exemplary Schools for the current school year (abstract, p.5). All of IDEA graduates have enrolled in college and the majority is still enrolled (p.3). The network has received numerous awards and philanthropic support (p.28).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 50

Selection Criteria - Contribution assisting disadvantaged

1. **The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready.**

Strengths:

IDEA serves students who are predominantly Hispanic and low income. The students score higher, on average, than their peers in the district and the state on state tests (p.3). In a region of the country with a high student dropout rate and low high school graduation rate, IDEA schools have achieved extraordinary student achievement, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates. The network has adopted a strong programmatic model that includes International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement for all students (p.30), frequent assessments (p.35), and college focused culture (p.36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide detailed information and how it supports students in special education or students needing interventions such as tutoring.

Reader's Score: 13

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--**
 - (i) **The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success should address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**
 - (ii) **The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.**

Strengths:

The applicant has three goals for this project that are aligned with its expansion goals (p.37-39). The goals focus on student achievement, organizational capacity and growing to scale. Each includes specific measurable objectives. The applicant's timeline for opening new schools is logical and appears achievable (p.40). The organization has a plan for teacher and leader recruitment and has formed a partnership with Teach for America to help them recruit high-quality candidates (p.42,43).

Weaknesses:

The objectives state that principal candidates must meet standards; however, the application does not include a description of the standards (p.38). It is unclear how the school will evaluate its replication experience to guide future replication.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and expand high-quality charter schools. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers--
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) The business plan for increasing, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools opened under this program beyond the initial period of Federal funding, including, but not limited to facilities, financials, central office, academics, governance, oversight, and human resources of the schools.
 - (iii) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, as well as a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success.
 - (iv) A plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality.
 - (v) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, CEO/organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The application includes a management plan that includes responsibilities, activities, milestones and a timeline (p.46-48). The management plan describes the responsibilities of key positions and the central office (p.48-53). The application also describes its financial and operating model (p.53-58). The description explains how individual schools become financially self sufficient over a five-year period (p.54). IDEA schools have significant philanthropic support that will support them during replication (p.56). The application describes how the organization closes schools that do not meet high-quality standards (p.57). During this past school year, IDEA used its turnaround method to improve a school that had less than acceptable achievement levels. The management plan provides descriptions of key project personnel (p.60-62). These individuals have strong education and financial backgrounds and experience at IDEA schools. The application also lists the required qualifications of the person that will be hired as a project director (p.58).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Please provide a summary of comments for this application. There are no points awarded in this section. Please enter 0 for the minimum and maximum scores.

General:

IDEA Schools is an exceptional organization that is making a major difference in the lives of young people in southern Texas. The network has submitted a well written grant application to support its ongoing replication efforts.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2010 04:36 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2010 03:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , (U282M100007)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	50
Contribution assisting disadvantaged		
1. Contribution	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of design	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	25
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
Total	100	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , (U282M100007)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students, served by charter schools operated or managed by the applicant.
 - (ii) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II).
 - (iii) The degree to which the applicant has achieved results for low-income and minority students that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.Applicants are invited to submit objective data that they believe would provide relevant information in support of these three factors, along with comparison data for similar schools, where available. In particular, the Secretary is interested in the following data: (1) Performance (school-wide and by subgroup) on statewide tests of all charter schools operated or managed by the applicant as compared to all students in other schools in the State or States at the same grade level, and as compared with other schools serving similar demographics of students; (2) annual student attendance and retention rates (school-wide and by subgroup), and comparisons with other similar schools; (3) where applicable and available, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates (school-wide and by subgroup) of students attending schools operated or managed by the applicant. When reporting data for schools in States that may have particularly demanding or low standards of proficiency (for example, see the report available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/201456.pdf>), applicants are invited to discuss how their academic success might be considered against applicants from across the country.

Strengths:

Individuals Dedicated to Excellence and Achievement (IDEA) Academy is located in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas along the border with Mexico. IDEA operates 16 schools with an enrollment of over 6,800 students. IDEA serves a student population that is 94% Hispanic and 76.4%, economically disadvantaged.

Since 2001, IDEA has grown from 150 students to over 6,800 students. IDEA has a waiting list of over 12,500 students from all over the Rio Grande Valley.

Given the location of IDEA schools, the economic condition of the area it serves and the demographics of the student population served, IDEA has demonstrated tremendous success as demonstrated by the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAK). IDEA students have outperformed the region/district, all Texas charter schools and the state in all core subject areas tested. Additionally, two of the subgroups (Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged) are outperforming the region, all Texas charter schools and the state. The Black students only scored lower than the region by one point, and White students scored lower than the region and the state. It is important to note that the student population is only 1% Black and 4% White (Project Narrative, Pages e8-e9).

Performance data are also presented by grade level. IDEA is not only demonstrating success overall and by subgroup, they are also demonstrating academic success by grade level as demonstrated in the Project Narrative (Pages e17-e20)

The attendance rate of over 96% for all subgroups is higher than all comparison groups. Retention rates at the lower grades are somewhat lower or the same for students in grades KG - 7. However, they are higher in the 8th grade (Project Narrative Page e21).

Currently, IDEA graduates more college-ready students in each subgroup than the region or the state. The Donna, Texas flagship school has graduated four classes of seniors. Of those seniors, 100% enrolled in a four-year college/university. Of those who enrolled, 97% are still enrolled (Project Narrative Page e23).

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 50

Selection Criteria - Contribution assisting disadvantaged

- 1. The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready.**

Strengths:

IDEA offers a college preparatory curriculum that offers, IB, Pre-AP and AP courses. Their students visit over 25 colleges and universities before graduating from high school. As part of the graduation requirements, IDEA requires all students to be accepted into a four year college/university.

IDEA graduates more college-ready students in all subgroups than the region or state (Project Narrative Page e23).

By the end of their sophomore year, all IDEA students have taken an AP course. Over 70% of the students have passed a minimum of one AP test.

IDEA is committed to serving all students and they are successful in increasing the academic achievement of all subgroups in all grade levels.

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 15

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--**
 - (i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success should address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**
 - (ii) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.**

Strengths:

IDEA uses a planning model called Understanding by Design infused with the IB Planning Process to focus on preparing disadvantaged students from underserved communities for college. The IB model, small class size, and parent partnerships are important components of their model. They offer focused professional development for their staff.

Using data to make informed decisions as it relates to curriculum and student achievement is paramount to their success.

IDEA understands the challenges associated with expansion; especially, the need for highly qualified teachers in an economically, disadvantaged area. To help with this challenge, IDEA has developed a teacher recruitment plan. A key component of that plan is their partnership with Teach for America.

By the end of the grant, IDEA will expand from operating 16 schools to 30 schools. The expansion will increase their enrollment from just under 7,000 students to 26,000 students.

IDEA has measurable goals and objectives to guide their expansion and the academic achievement of their students (Project Narrative, Pages e36-e44).

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and expand high-quality charter schools. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers--**
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 - (iii) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, as well as a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success.**
 - (iv) A plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality.**
 - (v) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, CEO/organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

IDEA has a quality management plan and growth strategy. Their founders were former Teach for America interns. Impressive is the history of the founders (Torkelson and Gama), they fought for the students in the area along with a group of teachers and parents. They have outlined an extensive plan to manage the growth of their expansion from selecting the communities, selecting new sites, to teacher recruitment. Most notably, are their partnerships with 27 million in pledges (Project Narrative, Page e55).

IDEA has received numerous awards and accolades for its model. Bill Gates indicated that model should be replicated. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan pointed to IDEA success (Project Narrative, Page e55).

IDEA's growth plan also outlines the need for superior administrative staff. Resumes of the project director along with key staff members are present.

The budget appears sound and no funds are used for construction.

IDEA uses the "Turnaround" school model as described by the US DOE for closing schools in need of improvement.. Coincidentally, IDEA has used the plan with one of their schools.

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 25

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Please provide a summary of comments for this application. There are no points awarded in this section. Please enter 0 for the minimum and maximum scores.

General:

Individuals Dedicated to Excellence and Achievement (IDEA) Academy is located in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas along the border with Mexico. IDEA operates 16 schools with an enrollment of over 6,800 students. IDEA serves a student population that is 94% Hispanic and 76.4%, economically disadvantaged. By the end of the grant, IDEA will expand from operating 16 schools to 30 schools. The expansion will increase their enrollment from just under 7,000 students to 26,000 students.

IDEA students have outperformed the region/district, all Texas charter schools and the state in all core subject areas tested. IDEA is not only demonstrating success overall and by subgroup, they are demonstrating academic success by grade level.

IDEA graduates more college-ready students in each subgroup than the region or the State.

IDEA founders are to be applauded for the academic achievement of their students, their management pan, their teacher recruitment plan and their partnerships.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/20/2010 03:32 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2010 03:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , (U282M100007)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	50
Contribution assisting disadvantaged		
1. Contribution	15	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of design	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	25
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
Total	100	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools -- , (U282M100007)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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Strengths:

IDEA operates 16 schools in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. 96% students are latino and nearly all quality for FRSL. The recent organizational growth and achievement levels over the past few years are impressive and the waitlist of nearly 12,000 students is evidence that IDEA schools are in high demand throughout the region. The academic program is sound and is adequately structured for the target student population. The organization boasts higher graduation rates than district and state averages and 97% retention among college going students.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 50

Selection Criteria - Contribution assisting disadvantaged

1. The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready.

Strengths:

IDEA has established a strong college going culture for a predominantly low income, latino population. The program has proven successful for this largely underrepresented subgroup by exceeding district and state averages for academic

performance, college acceptance and college persistence. The organization uses data to guide instruction and drive student achievement.

Weaknesses:

The application provided little focus on special education and intervention.

Reader's Score: 13

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--
 - (i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success should address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.
 - (ii) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

Strengths:

IDEA presented three goals which were aligned to objectives and measures. IDEA provided a clear plan for growth and articulated a well conceived teacher pipeline. IDEA has a strong partnership with Teach for America that will allow for growth of human capital.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and expand high-quality charter schools. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers--
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 - (v) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, CEO/organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

IDEA provided a quality management plan and achievable growth strategy. Success and quality substantiated by the receipt of \$27M in donor pledges. The resumes of leaders demonstrates significant experience in their areas of responsibility.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 25

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Please provide a summary of comments for this application. There are no points awarded in this section. Please enter 0 for the minimum and maximum scores.

General:

IDEA is a proven performer that is ready to replicate.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/18/2010 03:57 PM