

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/11/2010 06:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Foundation for a Greater Opportunity -- Foundation for a Greater Opportunity, (U282M100025)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	42
Contribution assisting disadvantaged		
1. Contribution	15	12
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of design	10	4
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	19
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
Total	100	77

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Foundation for a Greater Opportunity -- Foundation for a Greater Opportunity,
(U282M100025)

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:

The first school opened by this applicant has been recognized by the United States Department of Education as one of 7 charter schools nationally that are closing the achievement gap. In addition, the New York State Department of Education has recognized the charter school as a "high performing gap closing" school in 2006. Pg. 26 and 30.

There is a snapshot of comparison scores for the 2006 state test administration between the original charter school, New York City District schools and the state of New York as a whole. This table indicates scores well above either the district or the state in the areas of language arts and math. P. 29- 30

The charter school requires 90% attendance of all students before they are promoted to the next grade level. According to data provided each of the charter schools has average attendance rates well above the target. Pg. 28 and 38

Retention rates among the four charter schools are exceptional. The oldest charter school has 100% retention of students. During the course of growing a charter school, the percentages do not look as good, but compared with neighboring school and the district, they are good. Pg. 38

Weaknesses:

Pieces of the data puzzle are presented in an easy to read format. However, the data does not present a good comparison between the applicant schools and the surrounding and state level schools. In addition, the data is not broken into subgroups nor is divided by grade level in all presentations. Because of these omissions it is difficult to determine if the applicant has indeed closed the gap for underserved populations.

The table provided in page 33 has many gaps. The applicant is seeking to provide an overall comparison from students in the original charter for a 6 year period. The table is intended to demonstrate the significant difference in test scores between the students in the charter school, the district and the state. There is only one year of competitive data listed. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions. Pg. 33

Reader's Score: 42

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:

The applicant has a goal of 75% passing rate for the state required tests. This is the goal set by the chartering authority and in the years since the charter school was opened the students have consistently achieved that goal. Pg. 35

The narrative indicates that 5% of the student population is special education. These students are included in the state testing and the results by grade level are excellent. Pg. 26

This program has many factors including extended school year, extended school day, and Saturday school that will help educationally disadvantaged students make up deficiencies and become successful.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant does prepare the students to be accepted into high quality high schools, there is no mention of preparing these students to enter college. This should be part of the charter school's culture, so that when students leave them to attend high school they will be on the track towards college.

Because the data is not broken into subgroups it is difficult to really assess whether or not the charter school is providing an excellent education to the educationally disadvantaged students. However, it can be inferred through the narrative, but it is always better to present compelling data that can speak for itself.

Reader's Score: 12

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 already successfully replicated the original charter school within the same geographic region with good success. A training program is in place for key staff in the new charter school, so when the schools begins operating the staff members will be ready and confident to take on the challenge. Pg. 11

The narrative suggests that the academic program is based on four very general goals. These goals stress skills acquisition in English language, scientific reasoning and math applications. In addition, the applicant set the bar fairly high for passing the state test.

Weaknesses:

The goals provided are necessary to delivering a good education for all students. However, there are no objectives or outcomes listed for these objectives. There are no guidelines indicating what constitutes mastery of the goals, so with the exception of the test percentage pass rate, there is no way to measure achievement of the goals. pg. 13

There is no evaluation plan in the proposal. It is difficult to identify what needs to be changed if you do not evaluate.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

A timeline is presented that includes areas of responsibility, personnel responsible for the task and a timeframe in which the task should be completed. This is the timeframe that has been utilized during the replication of the original charter school and has, therefore, been proven to be effective. Pg. 52 - 55

The management team has demonstrated that they work well together through the prior replications. All members of the team are qualified for the position they hold and have a sufficient amount of experience in each of those fields. Pg. 50 - 51 and Resumes

The sustainability of the replication charters is dependent upon the charters being fully populated. Given the number of students on waiting lists and the positive reputation of the charter schools within the neighborhood, this will probably not be an issue. Pg. 56

The model provides for support from a central office. Many tasks are taken away from the school level allowing the

school principal to focus on the task of achieving academic excellence. This model will continue throughout the course of the grant period. Pg. 59

The plan for closing a charter school provides for assistance to the charter school in the form of central office personnel and then outside consultants if needed. Pg. 59

Weaknesses:

There is little discussion relating to the financial model for long term operation of the charter schools.

The plan for closure of an underperforming charter school is too vague. There are no timelines given so it is difficult to determine if the process would take years or a few months. More discussion surrounding the whole idea of closing a charter school would have been helpful and made this section of the application stronger. Pg. 59

The narrative indicates that lack of facilities is an issue in the geographic area in which the charter schools will be located. This could prohibit replication or at the very least, slow it down considerably.

Reader's Score: 19

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:

The applicant has been very successful in opening high performing charter schools in the poorest congressional district in America. These students have experienced academic success that is unparalleled to students in their neighboring districts. By providing a more data comparisons the application would have been stronger.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/11/2010 06:24 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/13/2010 09:14 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Foundation for a Greater Opportunity -- Foundation for a Greater Opportunity, (U282M100025)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	42
Contribution assisting disadvantaged		
1. Contribution	15	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of design	10	2
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	20
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
Total	100	77

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Foundation for a Greater Opportunity -- Foundation for a Greater Opportunity,
(U282M100025)

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:

As of the 2005-2006 school year, ICS 1 was 59% African-American and 41% Hispanic, and 84% of current students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Clearly this is a low-income and minority population of students.

Three of the six classes that had more than one year of data increased in academic achievement, page 32. Furthermore, all three groups completed 2009 with 100% of students at or above proficiency in both ELA and Math.

The bar graphs in pages 30 and 31 demonstrate that in 2006 the applicant achieved results for low-income and minority students that were significantly above the average academic achievement results of NYC District 9 and New York State. Higher achievement results are also included on pages 36-37, with 2008-2009 NY ELA and Math Test results. ICS 1 is far exceeding the district and neighboring schools in student achievement.

Weaknesses:

According to the chart on page 32 of the application, 70% of the Icahn 4th graders from 2004 scored at or above proficiency in ELA. Four years later, only 58% of this same group of students scored at or above proficiency in ELA. This decrease was also true of the 4th grade class of 2005, who went from an 86% in 2005 to a 79% in 2009 as 8th graders. Not all students are significantly increasing in academic achievement.

On multiple occasions within the application, charts and tables are included without an adequate explanation of values. For example, the table on page 33 is titled "Test Score Comparison to State and District by Grade," however it does not provide the name of the test, nor if the values are average percentages or average scores of the said test. It can be

inferred that this data relates to the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency, but this information should be on the page and no inferences should be needed.

The application would be stronger with bar graphs showing comparisons with district and state student achievement in more, if not all, years since ICS1's 2001 opening. Likewise, the table on page 33 has an abundant amount of data missing. The application includes bar graphs with NYC District 9 and State data for 2006 on pages 30 and 31; however this data is left missing in the table on page 33.

On page 16, the application states that the Icahn schools had "proven effective for all students (including special needs students)," however there is no data to support its effectiveness with special needs children.

A majority of the graphs and tables in Section 5, Other Attachments: Student Academic Achievement, do not cite the source of the data. This is extremely important, as it directly impacts the level of validity when evaluating such a project.

It would be much more beneficial if the "School Profile: Selected Variables" list on page 26 provided current data, instead of a combination of data from the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. This is one example, out of many, that shows a disconnect and disorganization in the grant application -- making it difficult to effectively evaluate the proposed project.

Student achievement data is not provided by subgroup; therefore, it is more difficult to evaluate the success in closing historic achievement gaps for specific subgroups of students. Furthermore, the demographics of ICS schools for the 2009-2010 school year were not explicitly listed or discussed.

Reader's Score: 42

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:

After-school tutoring is provided every afternoon and Saturday Academic sessions are provided on 17 Saturdays a year, page 15. Also, ICS has an extended school year. These are wonderful aspects of the project that greatly contribute in assisting educationally disadvantaged students.

The Core Knowledge Foundation has been revised to emphasize minority history and culture and connect those areas to math and science.

At the school's math fair, students present research on professions to their parents, and then the parents learn how to navigate Excel spreadsheets to look at the information students compiled, page 29. Learning about professions and developing skills, such as Excel, that are used in a professional environment would assist children in becoming career-ready. Also, students would attend arts programs at Columbia University twice a year, providing exposure to a college campus and atmosphere.

A system of sustained assessment would be utilized in the schools. This system includes ongoing testing using Curriculum Associates, a commercially prepared test series, and previous New York State exams. An error analysis is then conducted, which identifies specific problem areas in ELA and Math. Lessons are then provided to target the specific problem areas. This is a simple, common-sense system that would uncover the holes and work toward filling them.

Weaknesses:

New teachers will be hired "based on their desire to teach educationally disadvantaged children and on their core belief that all children learn," page 13. The project would be stronger if new teachers were hired based on success in the classroom and experience with low-income/minority populations.

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 is experienced in replication and is committed to sharing best practices with other schools.

Weaknesses:

Project goals, objectives and outcomes are not clearly specified. The application should include specific annual goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved that are measurable and attainable.

Reader's Score: 2

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 discusses an adequate plan for continuation of funding after the grant funding period, page 21. According to the applicant, annual per pupil state funding will cover the cost of continued operation.

Responsibilities of key personnel are included in the project narrative throughout the application. Also, some of these responsibilities are listed in the chart on pages 51-55. This chart provides a very clear timeline for the opening of a new Icahn school.

Members of the Foundation Board provide a wealth of experience and expertise in charter school programs, inter-cultural affairs, and academic excellence (page 3).

Weaknesses:

The application does not include a timeline for adding a grade to each existing school.

It is stated in numerous occasions throughout the application that a primary challenge for ICS has been finding and retaining facilities. The NYC DOE has given them space in several buildings, but this is temporary. The applicant does not specify how temporary these spaces are, does not explain how this will affect the proposed project's success, and does not specify where the new ISC School will be located. There are too many facility questions left unanswered.

There is no plan for closing charter schools within the project that do not meet high standards of quality, nor is there a multi-year operational model provided.

Reader's Score: 20

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:

No overall comments.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/13/2010 09:14 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/12/2010 02:29 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Foundation for a Greater Opportunity -- Foundation for a Greater Opportunity, (U282M100025)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	47
Contribution assisting disadvantaged		
1. Contribution	15	14
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of design	10	3
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	22
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
Total	100	86

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Foundation for a Greater Opportunity -- Foundation for a Greater Opportunity,
(U282M100025)

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.
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Strengths:

To an excellent degree the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students. The applicant presents clear evidence that it serves high proportions of educationally disadvantaged students and is beating the odds for these students. Applicant serves high percentages of minority students and reports that the low-income figures for their four schools are: 84%, 77%, 84%, and 87%. The academic achievement test results are extraordinary when comparing applicant students to district and state performance. At nearly every grade in both reading and math, applicant students are surpassing state and district proficiency averages. In many grades and subjects, applicant's students are 100% proficient (p. 33; p. 36). The applicant is accurate when it states that it has proven that academic success need not be tied to family income (p. 34). Annual attendance and attrition rates are also exemplary. Attendance rates are 95% on average, and the attrition rates at the schools for which there are data were 0%, 6%, and 12% (p. 38).

Weaknesses:

The applicant might have made an even stronger case had it provided external validation of student achievement using more student performance data from nationally normed assessments. There appears to be a considerable drop in 8th grade ELA performance in the cohort from 2004, but the applicant fails to provide good explanation for this drop (p 32). The tables and data are not well labeled, and data from all years are not available. These gaps make it difficult to verify all of applicant's claims.

Reader's Score: 47

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:

Through the proposed project, the applicant will make an excellent contribution to 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. The long wait lists for applicant schools attests to the applicant's quality and the need for it to serve even more educationally disadvantaged students, and the proposed project has the key elements it needs to build on the network's tradition of success. Aspects of the program that will serve educationally disadvantaged students well include the use of The Core Knowledge instructional approach, longer school days, after-school tutoring, and small class sizes. The applicant reports: "Each class has eighteen students. There are two classes per grade. The size of the school enables children from the inner city to learn in an intimate setting where not only his/her own teacher knows the child well, but every staff member in the school knows the child. The culture of a small school permeates all elements of the school. There is no anonymity. Children do not get lost or opt out" (p. 10). In addition, the Targeted Assistance Program provides students with individual attention and remediation as necessary to ensure that each student can maximize his or her learning potential. As an open-enrollment public school, the applicant understands its responsibility to special needs students and has a strong program of supports, but with rigorous expectations. Applicant reports: "When children enter the schools with IEP's, it is the practice to provide these support systems on the path to decertification--recognition for achievement, the celebration of success, an array of after school programs and parental involvement ensure that our students will not be among the statistics of minority children in special education"(p. 25).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant demonstrates that it is creating a culture of excellence, it does not adequately speak to the criteria regarding college- and career-readiness.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

To a poor extent, the applicant specifies the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project. The main project objective of having high-achieving students is reinforced throughout the application, and the applicant devotes considerable attention to explaining program's general theory of action. In addition to its description of other interventions it intends to adopt, applicant also describes the intent to increase the use of technology for identifying student academic weaknesses and for involving parents in their students' educations.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provides a description of some interventions and programs to be adopted as a part of the project plan, the applicant generally does a poor job of identifying outcomes of each intervention. The metrics for identifying whether or not the programs to be adopted will be successful are not clearly articulated. Furthermore, it appears as though the applicant overlooked evaluation criteria in the grant instructions. This lack of detail about program evaluation severely limits 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.

Reader's Score: 3

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 applicant presents an excellent management plan, and its success in replicating the flagship school with fidelity demonstrates that the applicant has the skills, capacity, and experience to undertake the outlined expansion project. Because the implementation plan outlines the tasks and the responsible parties, it is clearly adequate to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. The financial models appear sound, and the operating budgets run primarily on public revenues (p. 29). The goals of adding an additional school and expanding the existing schools to serve many more educationally disadvantaged students are reasonable and attainable. 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, are more than adequate. The board has distinguished and capable leaders who provide sound oversight over the organization's quality. Applicant reports that the Superintendent and Principals of each school report monthly to the Board on the attendance, retention, and achievement progress being made by each school (p. 8).

Weaknesses:

The applicant addresses the plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality, but does not make clear the trigger that will in fact result in closure. The applicant identifies the lack of public space as a threat to replication but does not provide a good resolution for these problems.

Reader's Score: 22

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:

This applicant provides outstanding educational services to educationally disadvantaged students. The applicant has replicated with fidelity, and its new schools are contributing to closing historical achievement gaps, even the first year of operation. The largest flaws in this application relate to failures to pay adequate attention to the selection criteria and to present complete data to support claims.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/12/2010 02:29 PM