

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2010 10:18 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Success Charter Network (U282M100037)

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	46
<b>Contribution assisting disadvantaged</b>		
1. Contribution	15	13
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of design	10	7
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	17
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282M

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Success Charter Network (U282M100037)

## 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:

STRENGTHS:

The applicant indicates its currently operating schools serve high percentages of low SES and minority students in communities consistently identified in census data as chronically poor (8-10). The application presents 2009 achievement data from a variety of sources (state test comparisons, independent norm-referenced tests, and a study conducted by the U of Penn) that shows high achievement levels in comparison to state and district schools with comparable enrollment demographics for all grade levels and subgroups (pp 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-15). Three year trend data is also presented that shows achievement has improved over the years and in some cases matches or beats achievement in affluent neighborhoods in the district (p 3, Appendix 5). In addition, the applicant shows that all the schools have consistently high attendance rates (p 9).

#### Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES:

The applicant presents achievement data for one year and for one school and it is difficult to assess the trends this data shows in the absence of data from earlier years (pp 7- 11).

Reader's Score: 46

### 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:**

STRENGTHS:

The applicant indicates the proposed schools will be opened in other neighborhoods of the same communities as those where the current schools are located and therefore serve the same demographic (Abstract, pp 9-10). The applicant credits the standardized educational and support system program implemented in all schools for much of the current success and explains this same program will be implemented in the proposed schools (pp 1, 17-21). The application includes evidence that the current schools began showing important achievement gains within three years, which seems to be a likely timeframe for the proposed schools to show gains as well given the intention to implement the same educational and support system program (p 1).

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES:

The absence of data showing earlier achievement levels makes it difficult to project how long results similar to that presented will be accomplished (pp 7-11). Further the applicant has a very ambitious expansion plan but does not indicate whether the scale of this plan might affect the pace of achievement success or present contingencies should the pace vary significantly among the new starts (pp. 15-16).

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:**

STRENGTHS:

The applicant presents a set of student goals that are specific and ambitious yet realistic given the current successes described for the schools (p 22). In addition, the applicant has identified a group of highly respected and experienced evaluators to assess the student achievement results: in comparison to other city schools, by student subgroup, and keyed to elements of the educational program and its delivery. An outline of the evaluation design and methods is included (pp 22-26). The applicant is developing a play book that guides program implementation and can be used as a guide for further replication (pp 26-27).

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES:

The applicant does not present goals, objectives, and outcomes for program implementation; that is, ones that show exactly how the proposed schools will be presented to the authorizer, chartered, planned, staffed, populated with students, opened, and run (pp 22-27, 42-43).

**Reader's Score:** 7

**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:**

STRENGTHS:

The applicant presents what seems to be a management plan outline in narrative form that lists steps for school start-up including monthly timeframes and general descriptions of activities and personnel responsibilities as well as a description of the philosophy and operations of its centralized management approach (pp 34-39). The staff identified to carry out management and evaluation activities is appropriately qualified (Appendix 1, Appendix 7). The application includes a reasonable and clear multi-year operating budget and model (Budget Narrative). The applicant notes that a significant amount of foundation and private money has been raised and this money can be applied to continuation beyond the grant period (p 32).

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES:

The applicant does not adequately show the level of local stakeholder support; rather the number of student applicants to the current schools that were turned down for lack of space is offered as an indicator of interest and demand (p 32). The management plan narrative lacks detail as regards objectives, benchmarks, milestones, and the composition and leadership of the various task teams (pp 34-39). The application does not provide enough detail about the monitoring and assessment strategies for the proposed schools and does not include a plan for closing underperforming schools (p 43).

The application includes resumes but does not indicate who is responsible for which project tasks (pp 34-39, Appendix 1). The Budget Narrative refers to a subcontract that will be responsible for professional development, but the application does not name the contractor or provide either the qualifications of the sub contractor or specifications for the subcontract itself.

**Reader's Score:** 17

**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 provides ample evidence that it has successfully established and is operating several schools that target underserved students and more significantly help those students achieve at very high levels that exceed those of most state and local schools. Furthermore, the applicant proposes to open additional schools to serve the very same student demographic by installing what appears to be an effect program of education and support services. The application includes an outline plan and a five year operating model and budget for doing this.

However, the applicant has not provided trend data that shows the achievement levels over the time the schools have been open. This makes it difficult to ascertain the timeframe for similar achievement results for the proposed school, an especially important consideration given the ambitious nature of the scale up plan.

Additionally, there is not very much detail as to what precisely are the project goals, objectives, benchmarks, and outcome measures. Moreover, the management plan lacks important details of what specifically will be done, in what order, and exactly who will be on and lead teams tasked with key nuts-and-bolts start-up and early implementation activities. Lastly, the application does not describe the strategies to be employed for monitoring and assessing school performance in sufficient detail and does not provide a closure plan for underperforming schools.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/17/2010 10:18 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2010 03:50 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Success Charter Network (U282M100037)

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	42
<b>Contribution assisting disadvantaged</b>		
1. Contribution	15	11
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of design	10	9
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	22
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
<b>Total</b>	100	84

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282M

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Success Charter Network (U282M100037)

## 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 applicant has operated three charter schools since 2006 in Harlem and will add four more (three middle and one high school) charters in Harlem and Bronx area in August 2010. Even though the applicant is new, some of the applicant's schools have demonstrated impressive success in raising student achievement and attainment in these economically and educationally disadvantaged areas of New York.

One of the applicant's schools, Harlem Success Academy, demonstrated outstanding success in state standardized tests in 2009. 100% of 3rd graders in this school passed math exam, with 71% achieving the top score of "4." Similarly, 95% of the school 3rd graders passed the Language Arts exam. This school outperformed the neighboring district schools 25 percentage points in Language Arts. The school ranked #1 out of all charter schools in the state and captured the attention of media.

The proposal presented several external research findings and internal test results on student learning gains in the select applicant's schools. A University of Pennsylvania study included the applicant's schools. The findings of this randomized control group study demonstrated significant strong comparable gains in all subjects in favor of an applicant's school included in the study. Across all categories, including special education children, applicant school outperformed neighboring regular public schools (p. 3). Specifically, the applicant school students outperformed 58 scale score points higher in math than their peers in demographically and geographically matched/similar schools. Similarly, the applicant's schools outperformed 40 scale core points higher in Language Arts than the other comparable schools in 3rd grade (p. 3; 9-15). The applicant also administered two different internal tests to assess yearly learning gains in the applicant's schools. The Fountas and Pinnell test is a reading assessment given to all students starting Kindergarten through 4th graders. This pre- and post-test used by the applicant both for diagnostic purposes and measurement of learning gain purposes. The pre-tests results for applicant's school students were significantly low, supporting the disadvantaged start

of students to school life. While 394 kindergarten students were reading below on the pre-test, only 73 were reading at the same level on the post-test (p. 5). The upper class results of the test indicating improvement in reading of the applicant school students.

The norm-referenced Terra-Nova test results demonstrated significant learning gains in applicant schools. The results of this test also showed the grade-level learning of the students in applicant's schools compared to national group of their peers. These students exceeded their peers when they stay in the applicant schools and move to the upper classes (p. 7-8).

The proposal provided discussion and relevant data on attendance in applicant schools. The applicant schools averaged 96% attendance rates across the schools. This rate was higher than neighborhood regular public schools in the last two years (p. 8-9).

### **Weaknesses:**

One of the biggest weaknesses of this proposal was its lack of references about the data and studies which were used in the narrative to support the proposal. Data without any references has very little value and validity.

Two issues surfaced on this criterion. The first was that there was no evidence of long term performance the trends on applicant's success in raising student achievement and attainment. The data on this was limited with only one year, 2009. The second issue was about the proposal's limited presentation of school performance on state standardized testing for its "all" schools. The proposal presented the achievement data of only one of its school. The narrative was misleading about the data presented on student achievement. Even though the last paragraph on page 3 referred to all schools' performance, the next paragraph on page 4 was about only one applicant school (p.3-4). There was no data about the performance of other applicant's schools on state standardized tests (p.3).

The attendance rates by student sub-populations in applicant schools were missing. Even a very high overall" attendance rate, 96%, may hide important information. The 4% of students might be the members of a certain student population. A 4% in general population might represent a high percentage of a certain student population.

No direct and relevant data on the school's performance in closing achievement gaps were presented. The discussions were developed around the high percentages of minority students in neighborhood schools. Even though this may be relevant to some degree, the proposal could have looked at the issue internally and examine the situation for its own schools (different student populations) and externally between its schools and other schools. In both cases, the discussions and conclusions should have been based on concrete relevant data focusing on the schools.

Like in the discussions for closing achievement gap, the proposal had similar weakness in the discussion of serving low-income students. No direct and relevant data were presented to support the discussions.

**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 proposal identified the mission of applicant's schools as "...eradicating the achievement gap by educating students early and teaching families and communities what it means and how to be college and career- ready in today's society" (p. 17).

The proposal offered demographic and educational statistics on Harlem and Bronx, NY, to establish a foundation about the need for the quality charter schools to meet the needs of students in these disadvantaged metropolitan areas in New York City (p. 17).

The programs, strategies, and means to close the achievement gap were discussed in detail in the proposal (17-20). The applicant considered it kindergarten program as a crucial step in "eliminating" the achievement gap when it starts. The kindergarten program teaches four year olds essential cognitive literacy and math skills that will help them succeed in core subjects in later grades. This program also develops the emotional and social readiness of students (p. 18). Reaching out families and visiting their homes is another listed strategy to help educationally disadvantaged students. Family reading night as well as arranging student readings in public institutions such as public libraries was also considered as strategies to include parents into their children's education (p. 19). The proposal called these activities as "meaningful family engagement" (p. 20). The college prep nature of the program was emphasized and related program activities were discussed and throughout the proposal (p.20).

#### **Weaknesses:**

Even though the proposal made a good presentation of activities towards helping disadvantaged students, no specific discussion was offered about how these activities will guide the sub-student populations to succeed. The proposal was expected to offer more specificity about the outcomes of the school services for the disadvantaged student populations. Rather than offering discussion about the services for disadvantaged students, the proposal discussed applicant's services to general student populations.

**Reader's Score: 11**

#### **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--**
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  - (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:**

- i. Goals, objectives, and outcomes specified, measurable, and attainable:

The proposal was designed to fund 12 new schools, two research projects, and a comprehensive evaluation on the efficacy and effectiveness of project schools (p. 22). The goal of project schools is to offer college prep education to disadvantaged children in Harlem and Bronx, NY. Four main measurable outcomes were identified for each project school. The outcomes are comprehensive and related to various aspects of the project. Two of these outcomes are related to student achievement, one outcome is about student attainment (attendance), and one outcome about family engagement (p.22). The academic outcomes look ambitious but still attainable. The proposal brought additional clarification on the goals and outcomes in the evaluation plan. The evaluation plan identified academic goals; programmatic goals; and operational goals (p. 42).

- ii. Implementation, Evaluation, and Dissemination

The proposal includes a very strong evaluation component which will be run by Dr. Caroline Hoxby, who is the prominent scholar in charter school evaluation research. The proposal offered a detailed overview of evaluation plan (p. 22-25). The

program evaluation has multiple purposes (p. 24) and would yield useful findings not only for the applicant but also for the entire scholarly community in the field of charter schools.

The proposal reflected applicant's intention to run continuous assessments and evaluations even at the conclusion of the grant period (p. 26). The first year of school level activities and their implementation were discussed on pages 35-37. The proposal stated that dissemination is one the main goals of the project. To reflect this firm belief, the applicant already developed four "playbooks" about various aspects of the applicant's model. They included presenting school design; replication and scaling; human resource development and recruitment; and public policy and advocacy have been developed. Similarly, the applicant "...speaks at education conferences, collaborations with other school operators, and develops resources to share with other schools." (p. 26-27).

**Weaknesses:**

The measurable outcomes lack some required information. For instance, the first two academic outcomes do not state when they were expected to be achieved (p. 22).

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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:**

- i. Adequacy of Management Plan:

The applicant has a centralized governance structure. All start-up operations, most non-instructional functions such as facilities management, finances, external affairs, human resources, and instructional support were considered as the responsibility of central office. The school personnel, including principals, will be exclusively responsible with teaching and learning (p. 33).

It appears that the applicant has a strong and specialized management team. Development, human resource, advocacy are some of the areas of expertise of the applicant central office. Leadership Residence Program and professional development and training of teachers are all well organized by the central office. The applicant uses some innovative methods, such as EduTube for the professional development of teachers (p.35).

- ii. Business Plan Ensuring the Operation after the CSP Ceases

It appears that the central management which is experienced in advocacy, growth, and growth has been successful in raising around \$20 million since 2006. This demonstrates applicant's capacity to sustain project schools when the CSP funds are no longer available. Having focused on Harlem and Bronx is considered by the applicant as one of the strengths of their business plan. This is "clustered growth" in the proposal (p. 41). The applicant plans to use existing idle school buildings (42). This appears to be a smart business plan to reduce costs. One of the strength of applicant's business plan is the established good relations with the authorizing entity, a local university. Lastly, the applicant offers 25% matching funds for the project.

iii. A Multi-year Financial & Operating Model & Evidence of Broad Support & Partnership

The applicant has a contract with state Department of Education for the improvement of a failing public elementary school. This reflects the applicant's competency and capacity in running multi-year specialized programs (p. 13-16).

iv. A Plan for Closing Unsuccessful Schools

The applicant expressed its commitment to close failing schools (p. 43).

v. Qualifications of Key Personnel:

The central office key personnel were introduced in the proposal. These individuals appear to be qualified.

**Weaknesses:**

i. Business Plan Ensuring the Operation after the CSP Ceases

The applicant has three existing and four new start-up schools which are scheduled to open in August 2010. The applicant has proposed to open 15 new additional schools in five years. This means that the applicant is planning to grow more than 200% in five years. This does not appear to be a healthy growth plan. The proposal did not offer sufficient discussion on how the applicant will maintain quality in such an aggressive scaling up process.

ii. A Plan for Closing Unsuccessful Schools

Even though proposal indicated that the applicant was committed to close unsuccessful schools, the presence of such plan was not confirmed (p. 43).

**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:**

The applicant demonstrated success in raising student achievement and attainment as supported by internal and external assessment measures. Both internal assessment measures (e.g. norm-based Terra Nova) and external assessment measures (e.g. independent research and state performance rankings) supported applicant's contribution to student achievement and attainment significantly and substantially.

The proposal also did a great job in recognizing the distinction among the absolute requirement, invitational priority, the competitive preference priorities, and competitive selection criteria of the CSP grant! The proposal successfully addressed each area separately and successfully.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/20/2010 03:50 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/16/2010 04:58 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Success Charter Network (U282M100037)

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Eligible Applicant	50	47
<b>Contribution assisting disadvantaged</b>		
1. Contribution	15	13
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of design	10	7
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Quality Management Plan	25	19
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
1. Overall Comments	0	0
<b>Total</b>	100	86

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282M

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Success Charter Network (U282M100037)

## 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:

Strengths

The applicant presented very persuasive evidence in support of its proposal to expand and replicate its schools to over 20,000 students in New York City. The applicant has demonstrated that its students outperformed students in neighboring schools in 2009 and showed remarkable achievement in some of its schools. Some schools even outperformed New York City's wealthier schools. One school saw 100% of its third grade students meeting or exceeding standards in math. The performance of the students attending applicant's schools has been consistently strong. The success of applicant's schools in closing the achievement gap has been confirmed by an independent study. That study found that students attending applicant's schools increased their academic achievement by 13-20%.

Moreover, the demand for seats in applicant's schools far outpaces the supply. The applicant reports that over 66% of the students in Harlem applied to attend the applicant's schools. The applicant received over 7,000 applications for 1,100 seats available at Success Academies.

#### Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant's submission could have been improved if it had included additional data showing the performance of its students over time. Much of the data provided reflect academic achievement from 2009 only, even though some of the applicant's schools have been in existence for several years.

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:

##### Strengths

The applicant has explicitly stated its intention to expand and replicate its schools in order to serve a larger number of high need students from low-income and high minority communities in New York City and reduce the achievement gap. The applicant's schools are currently located in Harlem and the Bronx and the student population served approximately 75% low income (as measured by students participating in free and reduced lunch program). Applicant is pursuing an ambitious growth plan that if implemented as proposed, would provide services to some of the most educationally disadvantaged students within the area. In addition, the applicant has shown great success in serving special education students.

Additionally, results from an independent study demonstrated that the applicant is serving students who are similar to those students who apply to Success Academies but who do not secure a seat and who ultimately attend neighborhood schools. That same study showed that applicant's students performed 48 points higher in math and 35 points higher in English/language arts than students who applied to the applicant's schools, but did not secure admission.

Moreover, the applicant includes a substantive discussion of the need students have for substantially improved educational options in Harlem and the Bronx and how its schools will be able to meet that need. Applicant also indicates that it intends to measure and evaluate its progress with special education and ELL students and adjust its program as needed to better serve those students.

#### Weaknesses:

##### Weaknesses

The principal weakness is that applicant has not provided a comprehensive set of data to prove that it has been successful with educationally disadvantaged students over time. The data that has been provided, while impressive and helpful does not enable the reader to analyze data trends over time. In addition, the application would benefit from a greater discussion of how specific strategies will work to benefit educationally disadvantaged students.

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:**

Strengths

The application contains very specific goals that are measurable and attainable. The applicant has included operational as well as program goals. Particularly remarkable was the applicant's plan for family engagement. Also, critically, the applicant has indicated that it will be conducting an evaluation of its program and has already identified persons who have the capacity to conduct an independent evaluation (p. 22-23). The application includes a strong evaluation component, which is warranted given the ambitious growth plan and rigorous goals applicant has set.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant's submission could have been clarified to better define the "wealthy schools" it references when comparing the performance of its schools against other schools. In addition, given the aggressive plan for expansion, the application would have benefited from having a broader range of goals to address issues related to the process of scaling up.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**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:**

Strengths

The business plan and management structure presented provide significant support for the applicant's aggressive growth plan. The budget also appears to be a responsible one. The applicant expects each school to be self-sustaining at the time the school enters its fourth year. Moreover, the applicant has a proven record of success in raising funds from private sources. The applicant is prepared to raise funds to match grant money received for replication at 25%.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The application lacks detail in certain areas. Applicant provides information about the management structure but does not indicate who will be responsible for various aspects of the business and management plan. In addition, the application does not discuss how the applicant expects to meet its ambitious enrollment goals in light of the existing cap on charter schools. Nor does applicant demonstrate that it has local stakeholder support beyond the information relating to the waiting list and parent demand for existing seats. Moreover, the application does not provide information on how management will handle those schools that consistently under perform.

**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 proposal submitted by Success Academies is ambitious, thoughtful and well supported by data. Although the applicant has developed an aggressive plan for growth and expansion, the parent and student demand for additional seats in applicant's schools seems sufficient to justify the plan. The substantial attention paid to evaluation and ensuring that the project is continuously reviewed by independent sources provides additional comfort that the ambitious plan is reasonable and achievable.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/16/2010 04:58 PM