

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2011 11:33 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282M110014)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Low-Income Demographic		
1. Low-Income Demographic	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
School Improvement		
1. School Improvement	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	2
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the eligible applicant		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	45
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Assisting Students	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	8
Quality of the management plan and personnel		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	15
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	3
Total	120	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282M110014)

Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Low-Income Demographic

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that at least 60 percent of all students in the charter schools it currently operates or manages are individuals from low-income families.

Individual from a low-income family means an individual who is determined by an SEA or LEA to be a child, ages 5 through 17, from a low-income family, on the basis of (a) data used by the Secretary to determine allocations under section 1124 of the ESEA, (b) data on children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, (c) data on children in families receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, (d) data on children eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, or (e) an alternate method that combines or extrapolates from the data in items (a) through (d) of this definition (see 20 U.S.C. 6537(3)).

Strengths:

Applicant indicates the current schools and the proposed new schools are in "disadvantaged neighborhoods where public school district schools are underperforming" (p. e18) and goes on to state that the more than 97% of the students served by all CMO schools are minority and 81% are eligible for free and reduced lunch and includes a footnote that references the SEA (p. e26). Also included is a chart (p. e39) showing the percentages of African American and Caucasian students in CMO schools as compared with schools in two other CMO networks and the LEA. This chart demonstrates that the applicant enrolls more African American students than the others in the comparison -- even when compared to the LEA.

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - School Improvement

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more local educational agencies (LEAs) in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for the School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

Strengths:

The application states that one objective of the CMO is to "play a catalytic role in the transformation of urban education in Cleveland" (p. e24). It also says that the CMO has a collaborative relationship with the LEA -- which is the sponsor (authorizer) of its schools -- to open quality schools in neighborhoods where there are only failing schools. A support letter from the LEA verifying this statement is included (pp. e27; e116). This relationship has attracted the attention of the Gates Foundation, according to the applicant, which has asked the district and CMO to consider formalizing the relationship (p. e70).

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding under this grant), taking active measures to--

- (a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
- (b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and
- (c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

In support of this priority, applicants must provide enrollment data as well as descriptions of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken.

Note: An applicant addressing this priority is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

Strengths:

The applicant states that more than 97% of the students served by all CMO schools are minority and presents a chart (p. e39) showing that 92% of the students in its schools are African American and none are Caucasian. Applicant describes the various recruitment and strategies employed by the CMO (pp. e27-e29).

Weaknesses:

The statements and charts regarding percentages of minority students seem contradictory -- if the minority enrollment is 97%, of which 92% are African American and presumably 5% are some other minority, while there are no Caucasian students (pp. e18; e39). The applicant does not identify who the other 3% of the enrollees are and does not show a plan for targeting non-minority students to promote diversity. Also, the application does not identify the number or percent of ELL students enrolled nor does it provide descriptions of any special efforts it will make to recruit SPED and ELL students (pp. e27-e29; e-53-e55).

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Quality of the eligible applicant

In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

(2) Either (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, 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) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or (ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

(3) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).

Strengths:

Applicant provides charts that summarize the students in CMO schools' reading and math performance over a four year period and in comparison to state and LEA performance (pp. e41-e45). Some show data disaggregated by ethnicity, disability, and low-income status. These show not only that the CMO students have improved in both areas over the four years, but that these students have significantly higher performance rates than students state-wide and in the district schools. Moreover, the applicant shows that the CMO schools have closed or eliminated achievement gaps between Caucasian and African American and high-income and low-income students (pp. e46-e47). The applicant notes its attrition rates are 14.1% versus 30.7% for the district schools and that the attendance rates -- across demographic categories -- are two-five percentage points higher than the local district. The chart included showing attendance and mobility also shows CMO schools mobility rates significantly lower than the districts and decreasing over the last three years (pp. e48-e49).

Weaknesses:

Applicant shows that the CMO schools serve a lower percentage of SPED students than the state (p. e165). The applicant does not provide data showing ELL performance and the application does not provide graduation rates for their 8th graders (pp. e-48-e51).

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. (1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

Strengths:

The application includes a support letter from the Charter School Growth Fund that provides a chart showing the CMO schools have a much higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards than both city and state schools (pp. e107-e108).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant notes that some of the schools in the CMO network received the highest ratings from the SEA "going back ten years", it also notes that this CMO has been operating the schools for only one year (p.e18). Applicant shows that the CMO schools serve a lower percentage of SPED students than the state (p. e165).

Reader's Score: 18

2. (2) Either (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the

Sub Question

applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or (ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

Strengths:

Applicant provides charts that summarize the students in CMO schools' reading and math performance over a four year period and in comparison to state and LEA performance (pp. e41-e45). Some show data disaggregated by ethnicity, disability, and low-income status. These show not only that the CMO students have improved in both areas over the four years, but that these students have significantly higher performance rates than students state-wide and in the district schools. Moreover, the applicant shows that the CMO schools have closed or eliminated achievement gaps between Caucasian and African American and high-income and low-income students (pp. e46-e47).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide data showing ELL performance.

Reader's Score: 14

- 3. (3) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant includes charts (pp. e41-e45) that summarize reading and math performance of students in the CMO schools over a four year period and in comparison to state and LEA performance. Some showing data disaggregated by ethnicity, disability, and low-income status also show that the CMO students have significantly higher performance rates than students state-wide and in the district schools. In addition, there is a letter from the Charter School Growth Fund that includes a chart that also shows the CMO schools have a much higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards than both city and state schools (pp. e107-e108). The applicant notes its attrition rates are 14.1% versus 30.7% for the district schools and that the attendance rates -- across demographic categories -- are two-five percentage points higher than the local district. The chart included showing attendance and mobility also shows CMO schools mobility rates significantly lower than the districts and decreasing over the last three years (pp. e48-e49).

Weaknesses:

The CMO schools are K-8 and the application describes in some detail the steps taken to ensure graduating 8th graders are successful in high school; but the application does not provide graduation rates for their 8th graders (pp. e-48-e51). The applicant does not provide data showing ELL performance.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. Contribution in assisting economically disadvantaged students

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. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.

Strengths:

Applicant provides charts that summarize the students in CMO schools' reading and math performance over a four year period and in comparison to state and LEA performance (pp. e41-e45). These show not only that the CMO students have improved in both areas over the four years but that these students also have significantly higher performance rates than students state-wide and in the district schools. As additional support, the application includes a letter from the Charter School Growth Fund showing the CMO schools have a much higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards than both city and state schools (pp. e107-e108).

Applicant states the three existing schools in the CMO network that have been operating long enough to be eligible have received the highest ratings from the state department of education and provides a chart comparing CMO schools' average performance index -- API -- with LEA and other charter CMO schools. This comparison shows applicant's API to be better than the others listed (pp. e18; e27-e28; e39).

The application indicates that the CMO intends to place its proposed schools in neighborhoods where between 67% and 100% of the regular public schools have been identified as failing by the SEA. Furthermore it states the CMO will "make a concerted effort" to place the schools in the lowest performing feeder neighborhoods. A map showing the targeted areas of the district is also included (pp. e51-e52).

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 10

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 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 must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides an overview listing goals, expected outcomes, and some outcome measures to be employed for the project as part of the Abstract (p. e18). Applicant provides an overview summary of the CMO's three-phase growth plan including the implementation plan for the expansion with timelines and student enrollment targets. The overview and accompanying narrative indicate one phase is complete (p. e25). Also presented is the CMO's design philosophy consisting of five goal-like statements (p. e60).

The application provides some detail regarding the goals arrayed according to critical activities in each of the two remaining phases of expansion. The focus of these goals is opening new schools and expanding capacities of existing schools with particular emphasis on acquiring the funds necessary to open schools that are fully equipped and ready to be fully functioning. The applicant provides a timeline for accomplishing the openings and expansions as well detailed breakdowns of the funds needed to accomplish the goals as well as what the expected allocation of these funds will be (pp.e-61-e67). In addition, the applicant presents project objectives, keyed to the overall goals that include measurable criteria for achievement (pp. e67-e68). Given the support described in the earlier portions of the application, it is likely that the goals and objectives are attainable.

Weaknesses:

The opening and expansion goals' outcomes are not clear. They seem to be comprised of acquiring the funds necessary and expending them as described in order to complete the listed opening and expanding activities on time (pp.e-61-e67). But this is never made explicit by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the management plan and personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

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

(2) The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools.

(3) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success.

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality.

(5) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, chief executive officer or organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant provides an overview of a three-phase growth plan showing the CMO has completed and paid for one phase (p. e25). The applicant intends to use grant funds to off-set operational expenses of phases two and three which are expected to be completed in five years (p. e26). There are descriptions of the CMO management structure and lines of responsibility for school and CMO business operations. These descriptions provide sufficient detail as regards continuation of essential business services to the schools after they are started (pp. e71-e74). The budget narrative shows costs and expenditures during each project year and provides rationales for their variance as the schools are established and expanded (pp. e85-e116).

The application profiles the key management staff and includes their resumes (pp. e72-e74; e94-e103). They have qualifications and background adequate to manage the CMO business and school operations as described (pp. e71-e74). The applicant describes how it currently engages families and community groups and outlines the steps taken to engage families of currently enrolled students in the expansion planning. The application includes letters of support from a number of legislators, the governor, and community foundations, development organizations, and philanthropic groups (pp. e56-e58; e107-e126).

Weaknesses:

The management and business plans presented do not specifically detail the management of the expansion project itself. They focus more on CMO and school operations once the expansion has occurred (pp. e71-e77). For example, there is no description of what the Project Director will do exactly to ensure that the expansion goals and objectives reach the expansion outcomes within the timeframes specified (pp. e72-e74). Likewise, it is not clear how the Board sub-committees will operate or maintain oversight for the expansion project goals and outcomes (pp. e74-e75). The description of the financial management and accounting tasks does not address its responsibilities during the expansion phases of the project but rather its functions and responsibilities "when the network reaches its goal of serving twenty schools" (p. e75).

The applicant states that the CMO and its schools are "not currently sustainable solely on the public funds" received (p. e79). However, indicating that the CMO has been successful garnering foundation and philanthropic support, the applicant proposes that foundation and philanthropic support will be a part of its continuation strategy along with "learning to do more with less" (p. e78). The applicant provides some general examples of what strategies they might employ to do more with less and outlines a multi-year financial model that is contingent on reducing the per pupil cost by more than \$1,000 because of doing more with less (pp. e79-e80). The applicant also expresses a hope that the CMO could convince the district to increase its school levies; but there are no contingency plans proposed should these strategies prove unworkable or unsuccessful in reducing the per pupil cost by the amount indicated (pp. e78-e80).

Although the applicant describes how it currently engages families and community groups, there is no explanation of how or whether it conducted any information sessions or needs analyses of community members or families in the targeted locations -- other than with those whose children are CMO school students (pp. e56-e58).

The applicant states it would close a poorly performing school if necessary and after steps had been taken to correct the situation, but does not provide plans or outline procedures for either correcting the situation or actually closing the school other than saying state and federal laws would be followed (pp. e81-e82).

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**

Strengths:

The applicant describes the components of the project evaluation plan as each is linked to the major project objectives. Much of the evaluation data resulting from the evaluation plan is described as quantitative -- number of schools opened, achievement test results, enrollment, and so forth (pp. e68-69).

Weaknesses:

The application's descriptions of the evaluation for objective 3 -- CMO performance -- does not provide specific details, but rather indicates the particulars associated with the measurement of this objective are being developed and that they will be handled by a not-yet-hired Director of Performance Management (p. e69). The applicant does not indicate who will be responsible for measurement of the objectives and collection of data prior to this individual being brought on.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/06/2011 11:33 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2011 10:26 AM

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Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282M110014)

Reader #2: *****

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1. Low-Income Demographic	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
School Improvement		
1. School Improvement	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	2
Selection Criteria		
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1. Quality of the Applicant	50	45
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Assisting Students	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	8
Quality of the management plan and personnel		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	15
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	3
Total	120	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282M110014)

Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Low-Income Demographic

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that at least 60 percent of all students in the charter schools it currently operates or manages are individuals from low-income families.

Individual from a low-income family means an individual who is determined by an SEA or LEA to be a child, ages 5 through 17, from a low-income family, on the basis of (a) data used by the Secretary to determine allocations under section 1124 of the ESEA, (b) data on children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, (c) data on children in families receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, (d) data on children eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, or (e) an alternate method that combines or extrapolates from the data in items (a) through (d) of this definition (see 20 U.S.C. 6537(3)).

Strengths:

The application clearly demonstrates that it is serving at least 60% of students from low-income families because more than 81% are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - School Improvement

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more local educational agencies (LEAs) in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for the School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

Strengths:

The application describes a strong and deliberate partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) as evidenced by the fact that CMSD has sponsored BCS schools and authorized BCS to replicate its programs across the city. BCS is the only charter management organization with such an established partnership with CMSD (e27).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding under this grant), taking active measures to--

- (a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
- (b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and
- (c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

In support of this priority, applicants must provide enrollment data as well as descriptions of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken.

Note: An applicant addressing this priority is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

Strengths:

The application provides enrollment and academic achievement data which indicates BCS is enrolling a higher percentage of African-American students as compared to CMSD, the state of Ohio, and other charter networks in the area (e161-162).

Weaknesses:

The enrollment and student academic performance data shows that BCS is serving students with disabilities (11-12%) at a lower rate than CMSD (22%) and the state of Ohio in 2008-2010 (e163-164). BCS is also serving economically disadvantaged students at a lower rate compared to CMSD across the past 3 years. The application also lacked disaggregate enrollment or academic achievement data for English Language Learners, thereby, not providing any evidence as to whether or not BCS is serving English Language Learners at a comparable rate to schools in the surrounding area.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Quality of the eligible applicant

In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

(2) Either (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, 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) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or (ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which

significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

(3) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).

Strengths:

The application includes comparative data to other educational options in the surrounding areas and shows that BCS's average performance index is 98 compared to 74 for CMSD (e39) and similar scores for local CMOs. The three-year academic achievement data provided illustrates the success of BCS students in outperforming their peers on scoring "proficient" or higher on the OAA across the network as well as for the sub-groups of economically disadvantaged students, African-American students, and students with disabilities (e160-163). All of the current schools are rated "Excellent," or "Effective" (e129-131). BCS's student performance has also steadily improved at every grade level from 2008-10 with an improvement rate of 17% which dramatically outpaces the local district's rate of 7% and other charter organizations' rate at 0-6% (e45). In 2010, BCS students outperformed the local district, local CMOs, and the entire state of Ohio in both reading and math (e42-43).

BCS presents compelling data that shows it not only closes, but also reverses, the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students. The financial achievement gap for BCS is -1% as compared to 28% for the local district, 23% in Ohio, and 5% and 15% for comparable local charters (e46). BCS African-American students outperform white students at the local district, the state, and nearly all the other local charters (e47). Even when compared to the highest performing school district in Ohio, Solon City Schools, BCS demonstrates that it is able to significantly diminish the achievement gap.

The three-year academic achievement data provided illustrates the success of BCS students in outperforming their peers on scoring "proficient" or higher on the OAA across the network as well as for the sub-groups of economically disadvantaged students, African-American students, and students with disabilities (e160-163). BCS's attendance demonstrates higher attendance rate, including for economically disadvantaged students, when compared to the local school district. The attrition rate has also continuously improved and is now at 14.1% which is also higher than the local district.

The application provided a sound explanation for the significantly higher attrition rate at E Prep and the strategies it implemented to improve the attrition rate across the past 3 years which resulted in its current attrition rate which is lower than the local school district (e48). Although BCS only serves grades K-8, the application describes a thorough effort in supporting its students and families in selecting high quality college-prep high schools as well as ongoing programming to support the students as they prepare to apply to colleges and financial aid (e50).

Weaknesses:

BCS currently serves a lower percentage of students with disabilities as compared with the local district and the state of Ohio (e163).

The application also did not provide disaggregated data for students who are English Language Learners and any achievement gap that might exist for those students.

One of the three current schools, The Intergenerational School, experienced an increase in attrition across the past three years (e48).

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. **(1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).**

Strengths:

The application includes comparative data to other educational options in the surrounding areas and shows that BCS's average performance index is 98 compared to 74 for CMSD (e39) and similar scores for local CMOs. The three-year academic achievement data provided illustrates the success of BCS students in outperforming their peers on scoring "proficient" or higher on the OAA across the network as well as for the sub-groups of economically disadvantaged students, African-American students, and students with disabilities (e160-163). All of the current schools are rated "Excellent" or "Effective" (e129-131). BCS's student performance has also steadily improved at every grade level from 2008-10 with an improvement rate of 17% which dramatically outpaces the local district's rate of 7% and other charter organizations' rate at 0-6% (e45). In 2010, BCS students outperformed the local district, local CMOs, and the entire state of Ohio in both reading and math (e42-43).

Weaknesses:

BCS currently serves a lower percentage of students with disabilities as compared with the local district and the state of Ohio (e163). The application also did not show disaggregated data for students who are English Language Learners.

Reader's Score: 17

2. **(2) Either (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, 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) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or (ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).**

Strengths:

BCS presents compelling data that shows it not only closes, but also reverses, the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students. The financial achievement gap for BCS is -1% as compared to 28% for the local district, 23% in Ohio, and 5% and 15% for comparable local charters (e46). BSC African-American students outperform white students at the local district, the state, and nearly all the other local charters (e47). Even when compared to the highest performing school district in Ohio, Solon City Schools, BSC demonstrates that it is able to significantly diminish the achievement gap.

Weaknesses:

The application also did not provide disaggregated data for students who are English Language Learners and any achievement gap that might exist for those students.

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

3. (3) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).

Strengths:

The three-year academic achievement data provided illustrates the success of BCS students in outperforming their peers on scoring "proficient" or higher on the OAA across the network as well as for the sub-groups of economically disadvantaged students, African-American students, and students with disabilities (e160-163). BCS's attendance demonstrates higher attendance rate, including for economically disadvantaged students, when compared to the local school district. The attrition rate has also continuously improved and is now at 14.1% which is also higher than the local district.

The application provided a sound explanation for the significantly higher attrition rate at E Prep and the strategies it implemented to improve the attrition rate across the past 3 years which resulted in its current attrition rate which is lower than the local school district (e48). Although BCS only serves grades K-8, the application describes a thorough effort in supporting its students and families in selecting high quality college-prep high schools as well as ongoing programming to support the students as they prepare to apply to colleges and financial aid (e50).

Weaknesses:

One of the three current schools, The Intergenerational School, experienced an increase in attrition across the past three years (e48). The application also did not provide any disaggregated data for students who are English Language Learners.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. Contribution in assisting economically disadvantaged students

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. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.

Strengths:

The applicant intends to open addition schools in the same city where it currently operates schools and intends to serve the same population of educationally disadvantaged students. The application provided a comprehensive analysis proving the need for additional high quality schools to serve the children of Cleveland because 100% of CMSD schools were found to be failing based on a 2009 study (e51). The applicant has demonstrated a record of success, as proven by all of its current school making AYP and receiving an "Excellent" or "Effective" rating from the state, in assisting its population of predominantly educationally disadvantaged students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 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 must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

Strengths:

The application presented a project design that is well organized into phases with goals embedded into each of the phases. The 3 objectives presented are specific, quantitative in nature, and generally measurable.

Weaknesses:

One of the proposed outcomes under objective 2 ("the implementation of Scantron") was not specific enough as to the metric by which complete implementation will be measured (e68). In addition, the application did not provide a rationale for setting the expectation for the outcome to "hire and retain 50% of TFA corps members upon the completion of their term of service" when there is not yet a cohort of corps members in Cleveland to provide a reliable benchmark (e68).

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the management plan and personnel

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:**

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

(2) The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools.

(3) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success.

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality.

(5) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, chief executive officer or organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant presents an extensive list of key stakeholders who have committed their support including the Charter School Growth Fund, the local school district, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (for a charter-district compact), and local organizations and foundations as evidenced by the many letters of support.

The application included a solid plan for closing low performing charter schools should that be necessary.

The applicant specified the qualifications (which included business, finance, and charter schools experience) of the key project leaders and personnel, including providing their resumes.

The application provided a 10 year strategic growth plan with reasonable enrollment projections that will improve the student to CMO ratio, thus making the operating model more sustainable (e80).

The applicant will be first charter school in its local district to ever share facility space with a district school in a district-owned building which will save the applicant substantial facilities costs (e81).

The application provided high level outline on how it plans to sustain the quality and performance of the charter schools after the initial grant period (e78). The applicant projects its need for outside philanthropy to decrease from over \$1,500 per student in 2013-14 to just over \$1,000 per student in 2015-16 (e79).

Weaknesses:

The application was sparse in details on the responsibilities and expectations of the governing boards of the individual schools and the relationship between the boards and CMO such as how the boards should be "monitoring CMO performance" (e75).

Some of the strategies for sustaining the quality of the schools beyond the initial grant period, such as "open schools with more academically focused staff, by reducing the overall administrative burden at the school level" are not specific enough and do not provided a quantitative expectation on what the expected cost savings might be (e78). According to the sustainability plan, in 2015-16, the applicant still expects to need \$1,000 per student in outside philanthropy which is still a heavy reliance on philanthropy (e79).

The application did not include travel as part of the budget even though it is expected that grant recipients will have to travel annually to Washington DC for project director training.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**

Strengths:

The application describes adequate quantitative metrics for core areas including enrollment, achievement, financial, and human resources. It also presented the organization's intention to hire a Director of Performance Management in year 2 of Phase II to be a key player in the evaluation project (e68-69).

Weaknesses:

The application was sparse in details on the "360 degree scorecard" it plans to use as a core component of the evaluation plan such as the specific measurements for fiscal accountability and what processes and tools it will use to track staff and parent satisfaction (e69). The application did not specify who will be responsible for the evaluation plan prior to the hiring of the Director of Performance Management in Year II of Phase II (e68-69).

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2011 10:26 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/04/2011 08:46 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282M110014)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Low-Income Demographic		
1. Low-Income Demographic	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
School Improvement		
1. School Improvement	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	2
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the eligible applicant		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	46
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Assisting Students	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	8
Quality of the management plan and personnel		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	16
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	4
Total	120	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282M110014)

Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Low-Income Demographic

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that at least 60 percent of all students in the charter schools it currently operates or manages are individuals from low-income families.

Individual from a low-income family means an individual who is determined by an SEA or LEA to be a child, ages 5 through 17, from a low-income family, on the basis of (a) data used by the Secretary to determine allocations under section 1124 of the ESEA, (b) data on children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, (c) data on children in families receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, (d) data on children eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, or (e) an alternate method that combines or extrapolates from the data in items (a) through (d) of this definition (see 20 U.S.C. 6537(3)).

Strengths:

The applicant addresses in the abstract its explicit intent to serve low income families. To support eligibility for this priority, the BCS addresses their population of economically disadvantaged students on p. e26 and e39 (81%). Again on p. e40 the applicant addresses serving low income students.

Weaknesses:

No specific deficiencies were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - School Improvement

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more local educational agencies (LEAs) in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for the School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

Strengths:

The abstract notes that the CMO seeks to serve low performing district schools and schools that are underperforming (p. e26). Data was provided to show that 38,000 students are in failing schools in the Cleveland area. Furthermore, there is a very low graduation rate at 54% and only 9% are noted to graduate from college (p. e26). The applicant provides a failing schools map of the target areas they hope to serve through the expansion and replication plan on p. e52.

Weaknesses:

No specific deficiencies were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding under this grant), taking active measures to--

(a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;

(b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and

(c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

In support of this priority, applicants must provide enrollment data as well as descriptions of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken.

Note: An applicant addressing this priority is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

Strengths:

The schools serve a 92% black and 8% minority population, which is significantly higher than the diversity in the CMSD, which serves a 69.2% minority population (p.e39).

Weaknesses:

Information is not provided related to the percentage of SPED students that are served. Nor is information provided relative to the percentage of ELL students served. GEPA provides a note that marketing materials are translated into Chinese and Spanish, which shows somewhat of an effort to provide access to ELL families. Although mass marketing efforts are mentioned, no specific efforts other than the translation of information are noted to actually promote diversity.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Quality of the eligible applicant

In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

(2) Either (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, 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) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or (ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)

(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

(3) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).

Strengths:

In every measure, either aggregated or in disaggregated data by subgroup, the applicant demonstrates outstanding achievement compared to the local school district and the state. It should be noted that the applicant consistently benchmarks themselves not only against the lower performing CMSD, but also against the highest performing schools in the state (p.e47). This demonstrates a clear commitment to truly closing the achievement gap.

Weaknesses:

The greatest deficiency for this section was the lack of disaggregated data on subgroups, and in particular, ELL.

Reader's Score: 46

Sub Question

1. (1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides data in a number of ways to demonstrate consistence performance for all students including economically disadvantaged students. For example, on p.e30, the applicant notes that Citizens Academy has moved from an emergency rating to consistently rating as excellent. P.e42 and the data provided in the appendix demonstrates solid growth and performance over a 3 year period and consistent out-performance of district and state proficiency levels and rates of growth. The applicant provides disaggregated data for economically disadvantaged, SPED and African American students that reflect this solid performance as well. P.42 clearly shows that the educationally disadvantaged students are scoring more than 36 percentage points higher than the CMSD, and p. 343 shows that the BCS network schools outperformed the district in math and reading by a landslide.

Weaknesses:

Disaggregated data for ELL was not provided.

Reader's Score: 18

2. (2) Either (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, 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) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or (ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students

Sub Question

described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides sufficient evidence on p. e41 and e42 that BCS is making sustained growth from 2008-2011. In the last 2 years, proficiency levels have been maintained in the high 80s to 90s. The disaggregated data provided on p.e42 further demonstrates the closure and even reversal of the achievement gap for African American, economically disadvantaged, and SPED students. P.e46 shows that the applicant is closing, and reversing the achievement gap between African American/black and Caucasian peers by 23 percentage points. The comparisons between the schools in the BCS network are significantly higher than the CMSD and state scores provided on p. e44 and e45. Furthermore, the data shown for the African American and students with disabilities subgroups also show that gaps are being closed, as these students are also outperforming their traditional school peers.

Weaknesses:

ELL data is not provided for comparative purposes.

Reader's Score: 14

- 3. (3) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).**

Strengths:

On p. e24 it is noted that the charter school has been named 1 of 28 CMOs invited to participant in the Charter Schools Growth fund. This demonstrates the confidence national charter school investors have on on-going performance of the BCS network. Intergenerational was recognized as an innovative model closing the achievement gap (p.e34). The performance index scores are exceptionally higher at 98% for the applicant versus the 74% index rating for the district and compared to another high performing EMO, Hope. 75% of BCS schools scored excellent verses 15% of the CMSD schools.

Weaknesses:

ELL data is not provided for comparative purposes.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. Contribution in assisting economically disadvantaged students**

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. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.

Strengths:

The current BCS network only serves grades K-8; however, the applicant is heavily involved in the high school experience with its alumna. BCS supports 8th graders matriculating to high school with school selection and tracking performance (p. e49-50). P. e43 shows that the BCS educationally disadvantaged youth outperformed the districts ED population by more than 35% in reading and math and outperformed the state by 22 and 20% respectively.

The applicant specifically targets educationally disadvantaged students in underserved schools and provides evidence of this by including a map of failing schools (p. e52).

Weaknesses:

No specific deficiencies were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 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 must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

Strengths:

The goals and measures described on p. e67 are specific, measureable, and attainable. Evidence that the goals are attainable is provided based on past data of schools in the BCS network. For example, the abstract notes proficiency rates of 80 and 85% in reading and math, and the schools in the network have consistently scored in the high 80s and low 90s. Taking into account a lower proficiency rate in the beginning years of the schools, they have consistently ramped up and been able to hit these targets. The growth plan was carefully planned and considered a number of factors as noted on p. 25, and therefore the target of a 15% market share in CMSD seems attainable. The applicant notes that they anticipate serving a highly similar population with the only difference being an anticipated increase in the percentage of Hispanic students.

Weaknesses:

The overall application lacks sufficient information pertaining to serving ELL students. If there is an anticipated increase in Hispanic students as noted on p. e52, and thus, a higher ELL rate anticipated, greater emphasis throughout the plan on supporting these students should be included. It is unclear, given a lack of performance data for ELL and lack of goals for this subgroup if they will be able to adequately serve this newer and higher population of students.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the management plan and personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

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

(2) The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools.

(3) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success.

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality.

(5) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, chief executive officer or organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant provides exceptional evidence that the project plan was well developed including researched financial conditions, locations, populations, benchmarking of strong CMOs nationally, and considerations of all factors including capacity of the CMO to handle the growth (p.e59-e61). The responsibilities, timelines, and milestones appear to be achievable.

It is also evident that this CMO reflects on past experiences to provide a better plan for the future. This is noted on p. e62 where the applicant discusses adding a Year Zero, as they learned that greater resources are required in the planning year to successfully replicate, as learned from a prior replication effort.

The applicant demonstrates a full actionable plan related to building on the culture of the K-8 models to accommodate the higher ages and maturity levels of the high school replications (p.e32). The application provides sufficient evidence that consideration was given for human resources functions, procurement, compliance, IT, marketing, and curriculum development have been adequately planned for and budgeted (p.e60-62). Another strength of the plan is the focus on teacher and leader development, as evidenced by the leadership pipeline being developed, Breakthrough University, and the teacher residency programs (pe65-e66).

The application focuses strongly on building teams leadership teams, finance teams, etc. and sharing a vision and resources (p.e75).

The application also capitalizes on a strong partnership with the CMSD with a plan to both share a facility and to use vacant district space (p.e80-e81).

The project director, CEO, and key project personnel (Surrat, Whitehouse, Hirschfield) demonstrate in their resumes a high level of capacity based on relevant experience in high performance chartering, knowledge and experience with the CMO, and appropriate levels of education.

Weaknesses:

The \$4M projected gap in revenue over a 5 year period anticipated with the replication and expansion. The applicant downplays the amount as only \$1014 per students, but \$4M, with the CSP grant, is still a significant amount to raise from private donations. Sustainability of the overall plan is somewhat questionable.

The budget document and budget narrative have some inconsistencies, most notably the discrepancy in contracted dollars budgeted. The budget shows \$2.8M over 5 years for contracted services, but the budget narrative seems to account for significantly less.

The plan for closure of low performing schools is relatively weak with the only plan being to replace the model. No plan for remediation efforts, staffing changes, etc. was addressed, and closure was not mentioned at all.

Travel to DC for the project directors meeting was not included in the budget narrative or summary.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**

Strengths:

The evaluation plan seems sufficient to measure outcomes. The applicant provides a number of inputs to this process including verifying growth measures, use of ODE data on enrollment and demographics, use of norm referenced testing via Scantron, a 360 degree Scorecard, and hiring of a Director of Performance Management to support the school, model, and CMO. Timelines and accountability are also provided for assessing progress and performance (p.e68-e70).

Weaknesses:

There are no clear methods for evaluating financial data or other factors such as retention of staff and students.

The qualifications of the Director of Performance Management position were not articulated

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/04/2011 08:46 AM