

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/30/2011 12:14 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (U282M110015)

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	3
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the eligible applicant		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	39
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Assisting Students	10	7
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	8
Quality of the management plan and personnel		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	22
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	4
Total	120	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (U282M110015)

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:

On p. 2 of the proposal, the applicant states that 100 percent of its students are considered educationally disadvantaged. Almost all students (99 percent) are classified as ethnic minorities and 95 percent are eligible for free-and-reduced price lunches.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found for this priority.

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 applicant reports that it has built a successful working relationship with LAUSD over the past seven years (p. 1). Its project director is a former high-ranking district administrator. The applicant focuses on serving the most needy communities of South Los Angeles, Huntington Park, Glassell Park, East Los Angeles, and Central Los Angeles (p. 20). The public schools in these communities are overcrowded and resource-poor. Achievement, graduation, and college-going rates are significantly below the state average (p. 20).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found for this applicant for this priority.

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 serves nearly 100 percent urban, under-represented students (p. 2); almost all of these students are classified as ethnic minorities and eligible for free-and-reduced price lunches.

Weaknesses:

The applicant serves about 22 percent English Learners and 7.3 percent special education students (p. 20); no comparison data are provided for LAUSD so it was not possible to determine if the applicant serves these two student groups at comparable rates. No discussion is offered by the applicant about how the proposed design will help to bring together students of different backgrounds, or any benefits from a diverse student body.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

California Academic Progress Index (API) data documented improvements in student achievement in five of the eight high schools and one middle school. All but one of the high schools and all of the middle schools scored better than the LAUSD. High percentages of students are accepted into college.

Weaknesses:

California API data were missing for several high schools. California High School Examination Pass Rates in math were uneven. State comparison data for attendance and graduation rates were not provided.

Reader's Score: 39

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 student achievement data on the California Academic Progress Index (API) for eight high schools and three middle schools; data are not provided on four high schools and three middle schools that had not been open for sufficient numbers of school years (p. 9-10). These data reveal improvements at five of the eight high schools and one middle school. For the 2009-10 school year, all but one of the applicants high schools and all of the middle schools scored better than LAUSD averages; seven of the high schools did better than state averages. All of the students are classified as disadvantaged students. California High School Exit Examination Pass Rates in reading were generally over 85 percent in reading, passing rates in math were more varied (p. 13-14).

Weaknesses:

Only one of the three middle schools scored higher than the state middle school API average. California High School Exit Examination Pass Rates in math were uneven, ranging from 99.1 percent to 55.3 percent (p. 13-14). No LAUSD or state comparison data were provided for high school examination passing rates.

Reader's Score: 16

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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant's track record over the past three years seems impressive. Data are presented that demonstrate its success in student achievement data for the entire student population (pp. 13-15). Many schools out-perform LAUSD and state averages on the California API.

Weaknesses:

Subgroup data were not presented by the applicant for its schools (i.e., African American, Hispanic, special education, ELL) so it is impossible to assess its track record for different subgroups. In addition, no data were presented about statewide averages for these subgroups which would have been helpful in determining how successful the applicant is in closing the gap.

Reader's Score: 10

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 provides data on p. 15 that suggests that by grade 8, its students are scoring higher on the CST than either LAUSD or students statewide. High percentages of its students are accepted into college. API data presented earlier in the proposal also suggests that the applicant is outperforming the LAUSD.

Weaknesses:

No attendance data are provided by LAUSD or the state (p. 17) so it is impossible to determine how well the applicant is performing in this area. The applicant reports data on college acceptance rates, but does not provide any data from LAUSD or the state. The applicant is taking steps to systematically collect college persistence data, however it is not yet available.

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:

On p. 20, the applicant notes that all new charter schools will be based in the most needy communities in Los Angeles. The charter schools are comparatively smaller than LAUSD high schools, so students are not lost because of the vast numbers faculty are trying to serve. Looping provide opportunities for teachers to build closer, more personal relationships with students (p. 23). The school day and year are also longer and so more time is available for instruction. Upon enrollment in an applicant school, every student is given comprehensive diagnostic testing to build an individualized education plan and supports are providing using an RtI model (p. 22-23). Classrooms are designed to support individual students; special education and ELL students receive additional attention. The applicant also partnered with the Gates Foundation to implement the "College-Ready Promise" to make sure that students graduate college ready (p. 5).

Weaknesses:

The applicant offers a list of educational practices on p. 24 that can potentially motivate and challenge all students to achieve their potential, such as "integrate the intellectual process, including both cognitive and affective abilities." However, no details are provided on what this actually means in practice or how such practices will support the disadvantaged students in these schools.

Reader's Score: 7

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 lists three goals with accompanying objectives and outcomes for the project on pp. 26-30. These goals focus on opening new charter schools with fidelity to the applicants model. Outcomes are identified in terms of numbers of schools and students served, fidelity of implementation, and student performance expectations. These are all measurable. The applicant is proposing to serve populations in the new charter schools similar to those already served.

Weaknesses:

The applicants goals and objectives focused on the macro level. As a result, the proposal talked about the opening of five new schools, but did not offer objectives and outcomes that would help focus its work as it moved through the various steps in opening these schools and implementing the model.

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 has submitted a clearly laid out management plan. Key departments and personnel are named and their respective responsibilities are prescribed (pp. 34-43). The applicant submitted a comprehensive business plan. Consideration has been given to creating a multi-year financial plan with necessary adjustments for a fluid economy. The applicant has developed a thorough plan for closing underperforming charter schools, even though it has not faced this issue as of yet (pp. 52-53). The top leaders are all qualified for their positions.

Weaknesses:

The timeline and milestones for this project are at the macro level, such as opening two charter schools each year (pp. 43-44). The applicant would benefit from more detailed timeline planning

Reader's Score: 22

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 has laid out a clear set of academic achievement and other indicators on which to gather data (pp. 57-58). Quarterly interim assessments will be given to chart student progress during the school year. Student personal learning plans and portfolios also will be reviewed. Principals and assistant principals will regularly observe classroom instruction and provide feedback to teachers (p. 59). The applicant also has arranged for an external evaluation of the program (p. 60).

Weaknesses:

It would be helpful if the principal observations were tied to all of the classroom variables described throughout the proposal (e.g., see p. 24). Teachers are often pulled in multiple directions and so it is difficult for them to sort out what is essential and what is not.

No specific foci were identified for the external evaluation. It is important to specify these in advance, both to reduce duplication of effort between the internal and external evaluations, as well as ensure that the external evaluation provides helpful guidance.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/01/2011 02:27 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (U282M110015)

Reader #2: *****

	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	0
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	3
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the eligible applicant		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	38
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Assisting Students	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	10
Quality of the management plan and personnel		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	22
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	4
Total	120	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (U282M110015)

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 provides evidence that more than 60% of its students are from low income families (e21-22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses presented.

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:

No strengths presented.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provided a letter of support from the LAUSD, a specific partnership agreement indicating which SIG schools the applicant will be assisting was not included in the response.

Reader's Score: 0

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 provides data that demonstrates that 22% of the students are English Learners (ELs) and 7.3% are Students with Disabilities (SWDs). The applicant also provides a description for the recruitment of students which includes flyers, brochures, and engagement of the local media (e 70).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provides enrollment data for its schools, it fails to provide enrollment data for the local district therefore making it impossible for the reader to determine if the % of ELs and SWDs is comparable to that of the local district. Also, the applicants description of the student recruitment process is not specific to ways the applicant promotes diversity. A description of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken by the applicant to further promote diversity would have strengthened the response.

Reader's Score: 3

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 applicant provides substantial evidence demonstrating the API scores for the charter schools managed by the applicant are higher than the LAUSD scores (p 3). The applicant provided 3 year trend data for math and English that shows an increase in achievement over time (p 3). The applicant demonstrates strengths in student attendance rates with an average attendance of 95% over a 3 year period of time (p 17).

Weaknesses:

The response to the criteria would have been strengthened if the applicant had provided AYP data and disaggregated the data presented by subgroups. On pages 17-18 the applicant mentions student attrition but does not provide data that detail student attrition trends. Information regarding student attrition trends would have strengthened the application by allowing the reader to analyze student attrition in comparison with graduation rates. Although the applicant describes a college persistence tracking system being put in place (p. 19), college persistence data has not been provided.

Reader's Score: 38

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 substantial evidence demonstrating the API scores for the charter schools managed by the applicant have steadily increased over the past three years (e28-e30).

Weaknesses:

The response to the criteria would have been strengthened if the applicant had provided 3 year trend data for educationally disadvantaged students the reader could make a determination if academic achievement has increased for this group of students.

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 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 substantial evidence that demonstrates a successful percentage of Socioeconomically disadvantaged and English Learners meeting AYP in English and Math in 2010 (e 139).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The response to the criteria would have been strengthened if the applicant had provided disaggregated academic achievement data by specific subgroups of students as defined under ESEA.

Reader's Score: 9

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 provides substantial evidence demonstrating the API scores for the charter schools managed by the applicant are higher than the LAUSD (p 3). The applicant provided 3 year trend data for math and English that shows an increase in achievement over time (p 3). The applicant demonstrates strengths in student attendance rates with an average attendance of 95% over a 3 year period of time (p 17).

Weaknesses:

The response to the criteria would have been strengthened if the applicant had provided AYP data and disaggregated the data presented by subgroups. On pages 17-18 the applicant mentions student attrition but does not provide data that detail student attrition trends. Information regarding student attrition trends would have strengthened the application by allowing the reader to analyze student attrition in comparison with graduation rates. Although the applicant describes a college persistence tracking system being put in place (p. 19), college persistence data has not been provided.

Reader's Score: 11

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 provided a concise depiction of the contribution the project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students (p 21) which includes using a rigorous curriculum to meet and exceed state standards and creating a self directed learning environment. The applicant clearly describes the location of the schools to be within the Los Angeles area.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses presented.

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, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clear, measurable and attainable.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses presented.

Reader's Score: 10

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 a clear management plan with clearly defined roles and responsibilities that are consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the project design. Letters of support for the project were provided by all stakeholders. The plan for closing charter schools is clearly defined in California State law. The proposed staff dedicated to complete the project goals and objectives are qualified to complete the project.

Weaknesses:

The 7% management fee described in the project narrative is high. The applicant did not provide a multi-year financial model.

Reader's Score: 22

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 provided is clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project.

Weaknesses:

On page 60 of the narrative the applicant states the outside evaluator who will conduct the evaluation is not under the control of the applicant. However, if the applicant is hiring the evaluator using grant funds the evaluator should have some responsibility to the applicant and the evaluator's performance should be reviewed by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/01/2011 02:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2011 01:56 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (U282M110015)

Reader #3: *****

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Questions		
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Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools (U282M110015)

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.

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Strengths:

The applicant serves a 95% free lunch population (pg e21).

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states it is partnering with LAUSD to improve failing schools, but the application does not describe the partnership with LAUSD. They are not taking over failing district schools but rather opening new charters.

Reader's Score: 0

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 serves a similar proportion special education students and an exceptionally high number of ELL learners compared to the District (pg e23).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not serve an ethnically and economically diverse student population (87% Latino, 95% Free and Reduced lunch on pg e24).

Reader's Score: 4

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 applicant has shown significant achievement results for the schools across many categories.

Weaknesses:

The applicant should provide more disaggregated data by subgroups and comparable information for similar groups across the District to make its case more compelling.

Reader's Score: 43

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 has demonstrated three successive years of improving academic achievement at the school level. The API and proficiency levels exceed the state levels.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not show individual student gains over time. A couple of the schools do not perform well (school #5 and #7).

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:

The applicant has demonstrated success in closing the achievement gap by showing its educationally disadvantaged students (95% of its students) are performing above the state average. The fact that 87% of its students are Latino also shows that this subgroup is performing better than the state average.

Weaknesses:

There is no separate data for ELL students.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Sub Question

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 has demonstrated results such as attendance (95%), high school graduation (90%+), and college acceptance (93%).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not show three years of college-ready data such as college persistence.

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:

For \$8M, the applicant will be serving 5,000 educationally disadvantaged students in the new schools. The students are performing better than their peers in the District.

Weaknesses:

Less than half of the students are making AYP (pg e41).

Reader's Score: 8

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 are clearly set and are measurable. There are firm targets set for academic achievement and college readiness (90% graduation, 85% non-remediation in college)

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the interim goals (on pg e49) of "outperforming the LAUSD schools" and "annually decreasing the percentage of students performing far below basic" align in preparing 90% of students to enter college (pg e48). These interim goals would need to be more aggressive to achieve the long term goal.

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 has a thorough analysis of the types of support it provides to open new schools. It lists all of the departments that are involved and it lists many of the activities that must occur.

The applicant has implemented their business plan and created a central office to manage its on-going growth. This central office is fully funded by the schools

The applicant has a multi-year budget. The applicant has demonstrated support from stakeholders such as the Charter School Growth Fund.

The staff has years of experience opening schools and managing a large organization.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not show a detailed timeline with milestones for the activities needed to open schools.

The budget indicates a need for \$10.6M in facility grants above and beyond this grant to reach sustainability on page e69.

The applicant dismisses the potential for closures and relies on district stated policies for closures and does not prepare

any innovative analysis on the potential for closures such as early intervention and student placement services.

Reader's Score: 17

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 has a detailed list of evaluation mission metrics to clearly state the intended outcomes. The method of evaluation is clear for academic achievement growth, graduation rates, college-readiness, and college attendance, attendance, and parent surveys. The use of a third-party is a key factor.

Weaknesses:

The high school readiness criteria use available but inaccurate measures. Using algebra as a predictor of high school readiness is rudimentary. There should be financial metrics.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
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