

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/13/2011 11:15 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Richard Milburn Academy, Inc. (U282M110023)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Low-Income Demographic</b>		
1. Low-Income Demographic	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>School Improvement</b>		
1. School Improvement	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	5
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the eligible applicant</b>		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	43
<b>Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Assisting Students	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	9
<b>Quality of the management plan and personnel</b>		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	10
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>95</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Panel - 3: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Richard Milburn Academy, Inc. (U282M110023)

## 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 student body consists of 70% economically disadvantaged pupils who were eligible for free or reduced lunch in 2009-2010.

#### Weaknesses:

None

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:

Over the course of 11 years, over 25,000 at need high school students were served in the nine existing schools (p 5). Applicant proposes to replicate procedures used at these schools.

#### Weaknesses:

None

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:**

Students served by the school include 64% ethnic/racial minorities.

**Weaknesses:**

None.

Reader's Score: 5

### 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 showed significant improvements in TAKS scores over several years.

**Weaknesses:**

Some of the criteria for this section were not addressed and some contradictory data were presented without an adequate explanation for the discrepancies.

**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 TAKS scores increased from 63 to 89% compared to 50% for the Texas Standard. With AEA data for 2008-2009, the figures were 71% for reading and 71% for social studies. It appears that RMA has been successful with hard to serve populations.

**Weaknesses:**

A few discrepancies were found between conclusions reached by the applicant and data that were reported. There was no discussion of these discrepancies. See p. 6 drop out rate ranged from 4-20%;

**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:**

From 2004 to 2009, data for the TAKS passing rates rose from 52% to 71%, an 18 point gain. The math scores increased from 19% to 33%. (p 13).The data show that 70% of the students are in special subgroups.

**Weaknesses:**

The changes in the TAKS pass rates for science and social studies were minimal (2-8%). Science and math were the lowest areas for RMA. In 2009, the pass rates were 36 and 33% respectively.

**Reader's Score: 13**

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

**Sub Question**

**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 TAKS scores increased from 63 to 89% compared to 50% for the Texas Standard. With AEA data for 2008-2009, the figures were 71% for reading and 71% for social studies.

The attendance figures showed an increase from 81-91% (p 6). The data show an 80-96% graduation rate.

The applicant presented data for 10 years (1989-2009/10). Overall, 81% continued their education or graduated.

Regarding post-secondary planning, the applicant described surveys that were given at graduation and afterward. At graduation, 73% had plans for post-secondary school.

**Weaknesses:**

No information was provided on actual college attendance figures. No information was provided on the numbers of students who actually graduated from college.

The post-secondary results are confusing; it is not clear what exactly the 73% postsecondary planning means; i.e., whether this refers to the percentage of students who developed post secondary plans or who indicated that THEY HAD plans for after graduation. Also, at the six month follow-up, the reporting by RMA was only 39% (p 14).

**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. 3, applicant indicates that the proposal will serve a population of students, 70% of whom are disadvantaged. The applicant appears to have substantial experience with this population, as well as with high-school drop outs.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

**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's budget is \$29 million, with \$23 million from the State and \$6.2 million from Federal funding. (The abstract states: \$5.8 million.) The proposal is to develop schools in Florida and Texas. The annual budget is for \$500,000-\$1.8 million a year, with the largest amounts in Years four and five.

Goals are to introduce the Corpus Christi, Texas, Charter School model into six new school districts, to increase the number of students served by 60% to 4,000, to improve the project management and school-based programs through a continuous feedback loop with outcome goals of 90% graduation and 60% career/30% career preparation and to validate teacher and administrator incentive plans (EPIC).

The first school opened in 1998 and there are now 8 academies in Texas.

RMA appears to have developed a philosophically sound model for serving youth who have left school or are at-risk of leaving school. RMA has many of the best, research-based practices in place.

The model is to serve students who need to take 1-2 courses before returning to their home school, those who are in credit recovery, and those who need long term services. The program serves students who have had a personal accident (pregnancy, gang membership, auto accident, arrests, etc.); failure to thrive (drop outs, academic failures); students with learning disabilities, non-native language; those who have been crippled by family circumstances such as divorce, eviction, homelessness; students who have been expelled or suspended.

The RMA model includes an Arc of Renewal (p.15) that considers recovery, restoration and redirection.

RMA has components for academics, work study, remediation/skill building, 15:1 student:teacher ratios, life skills instruction, and monitored study. RMA uses the eCollege Learning Management System and the Bocavox Maestro SIS with their online courses. The graduation rate for the online courses is 80%.

RMA provides a graduation coach, experiential learning, non-traditional scheduling.

RMA provides GO COLLEGE! -- a program costing \$6,000 to \$7,000 per student.

Applicant indicates that student proficiency rates on TAKS math have risen from 20-95% with the partnerships with GO CAREER! and GO COLLEGE!

It appears that RMA has developed a successful and productive relationship with Agile Minds and AVID, resulting in substantial gains in student achievement (p 22).

The applicants previous success in 17 schools has led to their employing a range of management tools. RMA wants to start six more schools in Texas and Florida to replicate their success in helping a population of students that is highly mobile and has experienced serious life interruptions, from pregnancy to gang involvement to serious family issues. Continuous feedback loops will guide the project management and student programs, of which they use several, including Agile Minds, AVID, GO CAREER!, and GO COLLEGE!, as well as online courses, to help students get back on their original track, complete school in other ways, or work toward career goals.

**Weaknesses:**

There appears to be a discrepancy in requested amounts between the budget and abstract (abstract \$5.8 million; budget \$6.2 million).

It is unclear how Go College! works (p 21). Applicant did not explain how the \$6,000-\$7,000 per student will be spent.

**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:**

Richard Milburn Academy has opened 17 schools in 15 districts in Florida and Texas over the past 11 years. The applicant has substantial experience replicating its model (p.25-26). The replication is achieved by using a common guidebook: Every school prepares a common assessment and describes plans for equal opportunity marketing and compliance with IDEA. RMA has a significant structure in place for charter school operation. RMA has a comprehensive timeline (p. 29-32) with components delineated for school management, human resources, governance, business operations, and evaluation. The plan incorporates such details as planning for the Common Core Standards implementation, student interviews, and developing evaluation maps of essential elements.

The applicant presented a business plan with specific references for where to find materials in the Appendices. The plan for closing charter schools is also very detailed.

The applicant identifies individuals both by positions within RMA and also by describing responsibilities within this project. Mr. Briggs has significant expertise, including a M.Ed. from Johns Hopkins and MA in History and ABD in education from Stanford. He has experience as a Headmaster at two schools and was Deputy Assistant for Dissemination in the National Institute of Education.

RMA shows a strong history of management success, having opened 17 schools in two states over the past decade+. The applicant includes: timelines with specified elements regarding human resources, governance and more; detailed plans about implementing Common Core Standards and evaluation maps; and a mandated guidebook for schools that describe assessment, marketing, and compliance methods.

**Weaknesses:**

The amount requested for Project Evaluator (\$900,000) seems excessive and not justified by the information presented.

There is a discrepancy between the budget (p. e469) and the budget narrative which indicated that Mr. Briggs is the project director (p.e56).

The appendices document corrective action issues for financial management and expenditure of federal funds in previous years, but the application did not adequately address how the oversight would assure that this would not happen in the future. (p. e329, August 31, 2010).

Also on p.e e381: "The Organization could not provide documentation on the employee time and efforts allocation rates for payroll expenses charged to Federal programs.") The auditor recommended that the Organization establish formal policies and procedures to support adequate documentation. The management agreed and will implement policies. Corrective Action Activities were reported on p. e385.

Another issue from that Corrective Action plan was communications among schools and board participation of a staff member from a Houston school that is performing below acceptable levels.

The applicant also included an August 31, 2010 report (with summarized comparative information for 2009). That report included another Corrective Action Plan (see. e391...this appears to be a duplicate of the previous document.)

Although the items for corrective action were reported in the Corrective Action Plan, with a scheduled review in August 2011, elsewhere in the proposal the applicant did not address these issues and the steps specifically taken to resolve them. It is uncertain whether or not at this time that the policies and procedures that have been implemented by RMA are adequate to address these concerns.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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:**

RMA is contracting with Capacity Builders for the Evaluation. The applicant reports that student outcomes will be measured for: attendance, dropping out of school, suspension; expulsion; and on performance on state assessments in at least reading and math (TAKS).

The applicant presents a table of data to be collected by goals, milestones, and targets.

**Weaknesses:**

The costs for evaluation (\$900,000) seem excessive. I don't believe the intent of these grants is to fund everything for an organization, but rather to fund what is relevant to the project.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/13/2011 11:15 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2011 11:22 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Richard Milburn Academy, Inc. (U282M110023)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Low-Income Demographic</b>		
1. Low-Income Demographic	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>School Improvement</b>		
1. School Improvement	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	4
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the eligible applicant</b>		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	42
<b>Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Assisting Students	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	8
<b>Quality of the management plan and personnel</b>		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	12
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>94</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Panel - 3: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Richard Milburn Academy, Inc. (U282M110023)

## 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 currently serves 2500 secondary school students, of whom 75% (page 2) are economically disadvantaged (70% as noted on page 3).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant develops charter alliance arrangements with public school systems seeking to enhance and supplement their existing alternative programs for high need students (page 16).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

All students are accepted and all are at risk of dropping out. The Arc of Recovery (reception, recovery, restoration, and redirection) is designed to accept them as they are and avoid any type of isolation.

#### Weaknesses:

Several pages of demographic data are provided in the more than 450 pages of attachments, but they are difficult to analyze and would be more effective if summarized in the project narrative. Page 27 does state that RMA has always been known for having a high percentage of children with disabilities.

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:**

Overall, the applicant does a good job of presenting and analyzing data, including some explanations of responses to concerns raised by the analysis. In addition, there is a significant track record of success with a very difficult and needy population.

**Weaknesses:**

No data is provided related to post secondary outcomes, or college persistence.

**Reader's Score: 42**

**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:**

In the Texas sites, across all 9 schools, an average of 78% of all students passed the state tests.

**Weaknesses:**

There is confusing information in the application. On page 2 it states that there are 9 schools in Texas and 75% of the students are economically disadvantaged. On page 3 it states that there are 8 schools in Texas and there are 70% economically disadvantaged. Data is not provided related to subgroups of students.

**Reader's Score: 14**

- 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 been meeting the needs of high school dropouts for over 12 years and has an overall success rate for 11 years of data of 85% (graduating, continuing, or returning to home school). The applicant responded to a concern raised through post-secondary follow up by adding a unit on post secondary financial planning, scholarship, and grant opportunities.

**Weaknesses:**

Although 5 schools in Florida are mentioned on page 2, no data is provided for them.

**Reader's Score: 13**

## 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 high mobility rate of 71% would be concerning in a traditional school, but the applicant explains that their credit recovery mission fosters short term enrollments. The attendance rate of 86% is very positive, as is the completion of 66% among dropouts and students at risk of dropping out. The applicant demonstrates response to data that shows the need for change. The table on page 13 shows growth in all areas of state testing over the 5 year period between 2004 and 2009, including an 18% gain in reading and a 19% gain in reading.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 15

## 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 schools are designed specifically to support students at risk for dropping out. This includes nontraditional learning environments, small class sizes, flexible scheduling, individual attention and academic assistance. In addition, the basic program components (academic core curriculum, work study, remediation/skill building, low pupil/teacher ratio, life skills, and monitored study) are tailor made for this population. The new schools will be serving students who are in districts similar to the current sites.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant is building on a successful program that has added the additional components of online education, focus on graduation and post secondary success, portfolio assessment, experiential learning, and non-traditional scheduling options. The goals are measurable and attainable and are clearly specified. The table on page 24 includes goals, objectives, outcomes, and measures.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not clearly define the project partners, Agile Mind and AVID, Inc. They are not included in the project design. Career rate and career preparation rate need to be defined and needed data for these areas clearly described.

**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 management plan on pages 29-32 includes tasks, responsibilities, and completion dates. The categories included are governance, business operations, human resources, financial, school management, and evaluation. The key personnel and the project director are well qualified and experienced with building the current structure.

**Weaknesses:**

: Page 25 mentions 3 subcontractors involved in the proposal whose roles are not defined and who are mentioned in other parts of the application. It appears that the management plan is the same for all 6 new sites, thus it is difficult to imagine that the dates would be the same for all (even telephone installation!). The plan for closing is included on page 36 but no explanation is provided related to how and when the organization would decide to close one of their schools. If the organization indeed had 1300 staff members to serve 2700 students, that is almost 1 adult for every 2 students, which would not be cost effective. The application would be strengthened by planning to open fewer schools per year, not all 6 at one time, thus keeping the costs within reason and not overwhelming the organization. A multiyear financial model is not provided, nor specific commitments from partners related to this project. The budget does not appear to be designed

to use project funds for replication and start up but for full funding of the new schools for the first 4 years of actual operations. For instance, in year 4, page 51, all 6 school directors and 14 teachers per school would be paid by the grant.

**Reader's Score:** 12

#### **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 project intends to hire an external evaluator. It will include formative and summative information. The evaluation plan on page 42 includes goals, data collected, milestones, and targets.

**Weaknesses:**

The milestones for goal 1 are just related to opening, hiring staff, and enrollment, not measurements of the effective replication of a successful model. The evaluation proposed will take up a large part of the money requested, approximately \$900,000. It includes charging for data collection that is a part of the current programs.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/12/2011 11:22 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2011 05:13 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Richard Milburn Academy, Inc. (U282M110023)

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

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

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Panel - 3: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Richard Milburn Academy, Inc. (U282M110023)

## 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 has documented the diverse regions with students who are 90% economically disadvantaged, students who could choose to enroll at RMA are 70% eligible for free or reduced lunch, p.24.

#### Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

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 has justified the replication of expanding RMA services with extensive data about students it will serve in the proposed areas, for educational improvement and an innovative high school program.

#### Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

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 has rich record of working specifically with diverse students populations in the areas it service. RMA provides a positive learning environment for over 33,000 disadvantaged students as they earn their high school diplomas, pgs. 27-33.

#### Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

Reader's Score: 5

### 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 has documented with significant data their success in increasing students achievement in the charter school of RMA for the past three years. The applicant provided necessary data and detailed process on how it plans to execute the expansion plan, and how it will improve students achievement.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

**Reader's Score: 50**

**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 documented with significant data their success in increasing students achievement in the charter school of RMA for the past three years, (table - page 24).

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

**Reader's Score: 20**

- 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 strong documentation data on the academic gaps increase in the subgroups of school operated by RMA, (Table 2, pg. 27). This shows a well organized applicant with a thorough feasible plan.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

**Reader's Score: 15**

- 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**

**Sub Question**

**above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has significant data and metrics showing results that are positive gains in standardized test, attendance, and college acceptance with low income disadvantaged students. ("Table 1, page 54, and Table 2. Page 27)

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses in this area.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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 has a detailed, comprehensive and focused justified plan to contribute in assisting disadvantaged students. This plan of increasing high school graduation rate and college acceptance is significant and feasible.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

**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 has developed an extensive, strong, and thorough project design for the replication of five additional schools in diverse communities it plans to service. The application is an excellent comprehensive, complete and well documented project design for RMA.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

**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 provided a detailed focused plan for every application requirement with the how to be addressed which is extremely well written, pgs. 24-27

### Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

Reader's Score: 25

## 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 address the specific roles of governess, business resources, school management and evaluation process with proposed timelines and role assignments. The application for RMA is innovative and extensive which indicates the strength of RMA and its commitment in creating successful opportunities for students in economically advantaged areas (pages 29-36)

### Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses found in this area.

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/12/2011 05:13 PM