

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2011 02:43 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rocketship Education (U282M110029)

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	3
<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	10
<b>Quality of the management plan and personnel</b>		
1. Quality of Mngt. Plan	25	22
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>108</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Rocketship Education (U282M110029)

## Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Low-Income Demographic

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

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

#### Strengths:

Applicant states that in its three existing schools there is an average of 92% of students receive free and reduced lunch (FRL) with each school having more than 90% FRL (pp. e22-e23). Subsequent achievement summary sections confirm these percentages (pp. e178-186).

#### Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 10

### Competitive Preference Priority 2 - School Improvement

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

#### Strengths:

Application describes the administrative relationship the CMO and schools have with the districts, which are the authorizers. This relationship is guided by the relevant sections of the state charter law (pp. e57-e58). Also, later the application mentions that the CMO's first facilities development option is to partner with LEAs for space (p. e64). The applicant includes letters of support from seven targeted LEAs expressing an interest in working with the CMO; several allude to specific collaborative projects (pp. e118-e124).

**Weaknesses:**

None identified.

**Reader's Score:** 5

**Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

Applicant presents a chart showing diversity in the ethnic composition of its current schools SY 2010-11 (p. e23). Although the chart shows at most 1% of the students are Caucasian and no more than 3% are African American. The applicant explains this to be an artifact of the communities and notes that in a new school there likely will be a larger percent of Vietnamese students as this is the primary ethnic group in the community (p. e25). The chart on e23 also shows over 70% of the students in the applicant's schools is ELL versus 26% district-wide (p.e27). In addition, the applicant outlines the concentrated efforts to recruit low income students and students that reflect the ethnic diversity of the communities where the schools are/will be located. Further it notes that the schools are intentionally located in low income neighborhoods (pp. e22; e25). The application presents a chart showing the percent of ELL students enrolled in the applicant's schools -- versus those in the surrounding districts in California -- that shows comparable levels: above the district rate in four schools and 4%-7% below in two schools (p. e26). The applicant indicates 5.8% of its students are SPED (p. e26).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant's schools' African American and Caucasian enrollment rates are well-below the state averages (p. e202) and the application does not specifically address the recruitment of African American and Caucasian students nor is there an indication the schools are trying to recruit non-poor students (pp. e22-e26). The charts of the percent of applicant school ELL enrollment versus the surrounding districts and state shows that the applicant is well below the state average and 4%-7% below the rate of two nearby schools (pp. e26; e203). The application acknowledges that its SPED enrollment is below district levels, but never states what district levels are. The applicant says the reason for the low rate is that -- unlike the school district which may label student as SPED who are merely struggling academically -- the applicant schools attempt to deal with the academic situation first. It goes on to stress its open enrollment policy. However, the application does not adequately detail how the applicant determined this is the case or any evidence or corroboration for this supposition (p. e26-e27).

### 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 shows that all students in both of its San Jose district schools exceeded state students in terms of their rating as proficient or advanced on the 2007-2010 math and ELA and state tests and that the applicant school's educationally disadvantaged students exceeded educationally disadvantaged students from comparable districts in terms of their rating as proficient or above on the 2009-2010 math state test (pp.e29-e30; e170-e188). Moreover, the applicant includes charts (pp. e42-e43) that show increases in API (Academic Performance Index) 2008-10. There are graphs showing increases in ELL students' scores on a developmental reading assessment 2007-11 and a closing gap in these skills versus non-ELL students (pp. e44-e45).

Also, there are charts showing that average student test scores for low income students are better than state average scores as shown by relative percentages of proficient or above students (pp. e170-e188). Additionally, the applicant shows its school attendance to be above 96% for school years 2007-2011 and its attrition rate to be between just over 8% and just over 13% over the same three years (pp. e204-e214).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not say what the components of API are, what it specifically measures, or what about it makes it a measure of a closing achievement gap (pp. e37; e42-e43). Although the application presents school-wide data, when it discusses subgroups it focuses the discussion on economically disadvantaged and ELL results but does not address SPED results stating that this data is not presented because the subgroup is not statistically significant. Whether statistically significant or not the applicant should keep track of these students' academic achievement and be able to present it -- especially if the criteria is all students' achievement (pp. e29-e30; e178; 186).

#### 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

#### Sub Question

**all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).**

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant shows that all students in both of its San Jose district schools exceeded state students in terms of their rating as proficient or advanced on the 2007-2010 math and ELA and state tests and that the applicant school's educationally disadvantaged students exceeded educationally disadvantaged students from comparable districts in terms of their rating as proficient or above on the 2009-2010 math state test (pp.e29-e30; e170-e188).

#### **Weaknesses:**

Application presents school-wide data and when it discusses subgroups it focuses the discussion on economically disadvantaged and ELL results and does not address SPED results stating that this data is not presented because the subgroup is not statistically significant. Whether statistically significant or not the applicant should keep track of these students' academic achievement and be able to present it -- especially if the criteria is all students' achievement (pp. e29-e30; e178; 186).

**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).**

#### **Strengths:**

Application includes achievement data for three years for its oldest school showing steady gains for all students in terms of scoring advanced or proficient on the state test (pp. e170-e188). Applicant states that CMO principals are responsible for closing the achievement gap at their schools, as indicated by API results (p. e37) and includes charts (pp. e42-e43) that show increases in API (Academic Performance Index) 2008-10. There are graphs showing increases ELL students' scores on a developmental reading assessment 2007-11 and a closing gap in these skills versus non-ELL students (pp. e44-e45).

#### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not say what the components of API are, what it specifically measures, or what about it makes it a measure of a closing achievement gap (pp. e37; e42-e43). Application presents school-wide data and when it discusses subgroups it focuses the discussion on economically disadvantaged and ELL results and does not address SPED results stating that this data is not presented because the subgroup is not statistically significant. Whether statistically significant or not the applicant should keep track of these students' academic achievement and be able to present it -- especially if the criteria is all students' achievement gains (pp. e29-e30; e178; 186).

**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 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).**

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

The application provides charts showing average student test scores for low income students are better than state average scores as shown by relative percentages of proficient or above students (pp. e170-e188). The applicant notes that attendance and attrition rates for all California schools are not published thus preventing attendance comparisons. However, the applicant shows its school attendance to be above 96% for school years 2007-2011 and its attrition rate to be between just over 8% and just over 13% over the same three years (pp. e204-e214).

### Weaknesses:

Applicant does not address SPED results stating that this data is not presented because the subgroup is not statistically significant (pp. e29-e30; e178; e186).

**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:

Applicant states the expectation to open 61 schools in eight regions, 29 throughout California, names the school districts and cities where it has pending charter applications, and outlines the characteristics of a number of these places showing the demographics and need (pp.e18; e23-e25; e46-e48). The applicant shows that all students in both of its San Jose district schools exceeded state students in terms of their rating as proficient or advanced on the 2007-2010 math and ELA and state tests and that the applicant school's educationally disadvantaged students exceeded educationally disadvantaged students from comparable districts in terms of their rating as proficient or above on the 2009-2010 math state test (pp.e29-e30; e170-e188).

#### Weaknesses:

None identified.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

### 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.

#### Strengths:

Applicant provides brief but clear goal statements that include objectives and outcomes expressed in measurable terms (p. e18). There is more extensive elaboration of these goals, objectives, outcomes, and general descriptions of benchmark indicators on pp. e49-e51.

**Weaknesses:**

None identified.

**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:**

Application includes descriptions of the CMO, its educational and operational models, and its current operations as well as a CMO organization chart showing chain of responsibility (pp. e31; e227-e244). It outlines the CMO growth strategy along with its major steps and timelines (pp. e61; e226). Also included is a more detailed outline of activities, milestones, and timelines pertinent to the expansion proposed in this application (pp. e215-e225).

The application provides descriptions and details of the CMO's regional expansion plans and also includes financial projections for regional office expansion and national office sustainability (pp. e62-e66; e189-e199). The applicant indicates the expansion will call for \$2.8 M in external funding -- i.e., not per pupil allotments -- and that some grant money is needed at the school level. The applicant provides a list of federal and foundation grants it currently has emphasizing it has been successful in this regard in the past (pp. e65-e67).

The applicant states that the CMO business model enables each school to breakeven in its first year of operation even as it contributes 15% fee to the CMO (p. e67). The application provides total per school enrollment projections as well as projections for students that make the schools eligible for special federal funds -- SPED, FRL, and ELL (p. e69). It goes on to state that the CMO makes its financial per pupil allotments associated with these projections based on the California allotment which it says is the second lowest in the country thus a conservative estimate (pp. e69-e70).

The application outlines the demographics and educational needs of the target communities (pp. e18; e23-e25; e46-e48). It outlines the types of community and family outreach strategies employed for development of current schools (p. e57) and the applicant indicates the CMO intends to develop relationships with the target communities and the families in them (p. e58). The application includes letters of support and MOUs from foundations, authorizers, political leaders, educators, and university staff. Several allude to building partnerships with the CMO as it establishes schools in their cities (pp. e71; e117-162).

The application provides an outline of the school closure steps it would take and indicates the closure process will conform to the processes in place by the authorizer (p. e72). The application provides brief biographies of select key

management staff (pp. e73-e75) and resumes of all key personnel (pp. e82-e116). All have qualifications and background adequate for the implementation and management of all phases of the proposed expansion project.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the application outlines the demographics and educational needs of the target communities and notes it will develop relationships with them prior to opening the schools (pp.e18; e23-e25; e46-e48), it does not describe whether it conducted any of the community outreach strategies or a needs analysis involving community stakeholders or families of potential enrollees in the targeted communities as a method of determining which to target (e-57).

The application does not say specifically what the California per pupil allotment is or what the expected per pupil allotment will be by targeted location. Moreover, it does not explain how the allotments will be allocated by school, or provide detail in the business plan for each school's income and expenditures other than staff compensation and management fees to the CMO (pp. e62-e66; e69-e71; e189-e199). The applicant says the CMO charges more than other CMOs for its management fees, and indicates the expansion will call for \$2.8 M in external funding -- i.e., not per pupil allotments -- and although it emphasizes this past record likely will presage the future, the specific commitments identified seem far below this target (pp. e65; e70).

**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 applicant provides an evaluation plan overview structured by objectives and includes outcomes and associated performance measures. The applicant identifies overall categories for evaluation that call for the use of quantitative and qualitative data sources as well as potential data collection and analysis instrumentation. Further, the applicant notes the evaluation will be conducted by external contractors who will develop a more comprehensive evaluation plan relying on a number of methods and data sources (pp. e75-e78).

**Weaknesses:**

None identified.

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/06/2011 02:43 PM

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rocketship Education (U282M110029)

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	3
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the eligible applicant</b>		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	48
<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	22
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>112</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Rocketship Education (U282M110029)

## 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 operates schools with a student population that is 92% low-income as evidenced by the fact 92% of students receive free or reduced priced lunch (e22).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

### Competitive Preference Priority 2 - School Improvement

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

#### Strengths:

The application included formal documentation of a partnership between the applicant and the Franklin-McKinley School District in San Jose (e119) as well as letter of support from Chicago Public Schools indicating its intent to partner with the applicant (e121).

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

### Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity

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

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

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

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

#### Strengths:

The application describes comprehensive strategies, including preparing materials in foreign languages and utilizing bilingual volunteers, to recruit students who reflect the diversity of the communities where the schools are located (e25-26). The three current schools operated by the applicant reflect the racial demographic of their neighborhoods and are serving English Language Learners at higher rates compared to the surrounding public schools (e26). For example, 76% of the applicant's students are English Learners as compared to 26% in Santa Clara County (e27).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant's student population includes only 6% students with disabilities. The applicant recognizes that it is serving students with disabilities at a lower rate as compared to the surrounding public schools and the state (e26). For example, Rocketship Si Se Puede enrolls less than 1% students with disabilities as compared to two similar elementary schools which both enroll 10% students with disabilities (e203).

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 application presents California Standardized Tests data which demonstrates that the applicant's schools are outperforming similar schools in the surrounding area as well as the state average (e28). In addition, the percentage of the applicant's economically disadvantaged students who score proficient or above on the California Star Test dramatically exceeded similar schools and the state average by as much as 30% points in some grade levels (e29).

The applicant provides disaggregated achievement data for sub-groups of minority, low-income, and English Learners students which shows no achievement gap within the applicant's schools. In addition, the data shows that the applicant is successfully closing the achievement gap between these sub-groups of students and all students in the surrounding San Jose USD which serves only 43% low-income students (e30). The applicant's students are not only outperforming the educationally disadvantaged students from San Jose USD by more than 30% points, but are outperforming all San Jose USD students by nearly 20% points (e30). Furthermore, the Academic Performance Index provided shows that there is not a statistically significant gap in Academic Performance Index for either low-income students or English Learners when compared to the school's overall student population (e42).

The application shows attendance data for applicant's current schools at 96%-98% (e204, e209). The applicant has achieved significant results for its predominantly low-income student population as evidenced by the fact that 80% of all students in the applicant's current schools achieve proficient or higher status on the state test. The schools are also rated among the highest performing schools serving low-income states in all of California.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant noted that it does not have statistically significant data on students with disabilities, it still did not provide any disaggregated data for the academic performance of its students with disabilities and how their proficiency rates compare to students with disabilities in similar schools.

The application presents attrition rates ranging from 8%-16.6% (depending on attrition rate method) but did not provide attrition rates for comparable schools in the region. The application did not provide any disaggregated data for the academic performance of its students with disabilities and how their proficiency rates compare to students with disabilities in similar schools.

**Reader's Score: 48**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

The application presents California Standardized Tests data which demonstrates that the applicant's schools are outperforming similar schools in the surrounding area as well as the state average (e28). In addition, the percentage of the applicant's economically disadvantaged students who score proficient or above on the California

**Sub Question**

Star Test dramatically exceeded similar schools and the state average by as much as 30% points in some grade levels (e29).

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant noted that it does not have statistically significant data on students with disabilities, it still did not provide any disaggregated data for the academic performance of its students with disabilities and how their proficiency rates compare to students with disabilities in similar schools.

**Reader's Score: 19**

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 disaggregated achievement data for sub-groups of minority, low-income, and English Learners students which shows no achievement gap within the applicant's schools. In addition, the data shows that the applicant is successfully closing the achievement gap between these sub-groups of students and all students in the surrounding San Jose USD which serves only 43% low-income students (e30). The applicant's students are not only outperforming the educationally disadvantaged students from San Jose USD by more than 30% points, but are outperforming all San Jose USD students by nearly 20% points (e30). Furthermore, the Academic Performance Index provided shows that there is not a statistically significant gap in Academic Performance Index for either low-income students or English Learners when compared to the school's overall student population (e42).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

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

**Strengths:**

The application shows attendance data for applicant's current schools at 96%-98% (e204, e209). The applicant has achieved significant results for its predominantly low-income student population as evidenced by the fact that 80% of all students in the applicant's current schools achieve proficient or higher status on the state test. The schools are also rated among the highest performing schools serving low-income states in all of California.

**Weaknesses:**

The application presents attrition rates ranging from 8%-16.6% (depending on attrition rate method) but did not provide attrition rates for comparable schools in the region. The application did not provide any disaggregated data for the academic performance of its students with disabilities and how their proficiency rates compare to students with disabilities in similar schools.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. Contribution in assisting economically disadvantaged students

The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.

**Strengths:**

The application proposes opening 29 schools serving an additional 13,500 in its current region of San Jose and Santa Clara as well as expanding to Oakland, San Francisco, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and other districts for which it has not yet submitted charter petitions across the timeframe for this grant (e23). The application provides details such as the demographics and academic performance of the current elementary schools for each of the school districts for which it has submitted a charter petition (e25). The data validates that the proposed locations, both new and expanded, would serve a predominantly educationally disadvantaged population that is similar to the population currently successfully served by the applicant.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.

**Strengths:**

The application presents a clear project design with well aligned goals, objectives, and outcomes as well as metrics that are specific. The goals are closely tied to student outcomes and capacity building for a sustainable pipeline of top talent for principals and instructional leaders. The description of the education model is well supported by research, specific implementation strategies, the tools to be used, and the timing.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

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 application presents a comprehensive management plan supported by detailed timeline documents which align the outcomes with all the activities and milestones that must be accomplished starting 37 months prior to the opening of a new school (e61). The roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated with a particular emphasis on the role for the Board for governance (e67-68).

The application also provided a business plan built off of a project with Boston Consulting Group to develop a regional expansion approach based on best practices (e62).

The application provided a multi-year financial and operating model that ties to its sustainability plan in which schools will each break even in its first year of operation while supporting management fees of up to 15% of revenues. The applicant makes clear how the CSP Replication and Expansion funds will be used as infrastructure investment to support the broader network in its role to bring each school, region, ultimately the network to sustainability post-grant (e67).

The applicant successfully shows it has a broad support from key stakeholders as evidenced by the many letters of support from school districts, partner organizations, funders, community organizations, and potential authorizers.

The application also included the resumes and qualifications of the entire project team which demonstrated substantial expertise in education, business, technology, and charter schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not include discuss any community needs analysis or community outreach strategy in the selection phase for regional expansion (e62).

**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 application presents a solid framework of the evaluation plan with the measures to be used, data collection for each method (e75-76), and expects to conduct a multi-year evaluation plan. It also highlights good practices such as its expectation to back up databases regularly and performing statistical analyses using relevant software tools (e77). The plan was clear on interim deliverables and reports, timelines, and expectations that evaluators will present findings at conference to help disseminate best practices (e78).

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not include the criteria and process by which the applicant would select the external contract evaluators (e76-77).

**Reader's Score:** 4

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 09/06/2011 10:26 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/06/2011 05:50 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Rocketship Education (U282M110029)

**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	4
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the eligible applicant</b>		
1. Quality of the Applicant	50	46
<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	22
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Quality of the eval. plan	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>112</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Rocketship Education (U282M110029)

## 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:

P.1 of the abstract provides a long-term goal of RSED to serve 1M elementary students in low income urban neighborhoods by 2040.

The flagship school is the 3rd highest ranked low income school in California (76% ELL, 92% low income) (p.1, 3).

On average, 89% of students receive free and reduced lunches (p.8).

Founded with specific goal to eliminate the achievement gap for educationally disadvantaged students and intentionally target low income neighborhoods. The applicant states that they explicitly recruit low income students, visit preschools, houses of worship, and apartment complexes (p.3).

The applicant demonstrates high FRL populations and provides state and district data for comparative purposes (p.4, p. e201, e206, e211)

#### Weaknesses:

No specific deficiencies are 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:**

Rocketship is targeting students in OUSD that are Program Improvement Year 5 in Oakland. Recovery School District in New Orleans is the lowest performing in the state and is on academic watch. Milwaukee schools have 38/62 failing to meet Tier I or Tier II status.

The applicant notes they have been in discussions with RSD in New Orleans.

MOUs are provided (i.e., for Franklin-McKinley School District and Santa Clara County Office of Education that explicitly state a partnership exists (appendix p.e132, p.e146).

**Weaknesses:**

No specific deficiencies are 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:**

GEPA statement notes more than 51% ELL enrolled and to overcome barriers to parent access in governance and schooling will encourage a Parent Teacher Council to facilitate communication and to promote social and cultural activities. All staff is trained in GLAD strategies.

The school translates all outreach materials into Spanish and/or other languages of the target neighborhoods. Examples provided include Vietnamese in San Jose and Arabic in Oakland (p.38).

The applicant provides explanation for a heavily Hispanic/Latino population due to its location in San Jose and a new school, Rocketship Mosaic having a heavy Vietnamese population. Efforts to outreach to students representative of the

community have been successful (p.6.)

Consistent with the GEPA statement, the applicant reaches out via a variety of marketing methods to reach populations representative of the communities it serves.

The applicant provides a chart with percentages of ELL students served. Services levels are consistently between 67 and 81%. State averages are 26% for Santa Clara County.

Rocketship states they serve 5.8 of students with exceptionalities and notes that this is a lower level than surrounding schools because of the strong supports for students, which ends up with less students being labeled Special Education unless they truly qualify (p.7). This is supported by the enrollment data comparisons to state and district averages (p. e208).

Supports for SPED students are specifically articulated in the GEPA statement.

**Weaknesses:**

P.2 states that there will be approximately 75% of ELL students enrolled, which contradicts the projection stated on p.1 (51%).

P.4 provides a breakout of current enrollment of subgroups; however comparative state and district data is not provided for context for subgroups (with the exception of Santa Clara Countys ELL average provided on p.8).

**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:**

4 years in operation, 2 most recent year API scores of 925 making RMS the 5th highest scoring school in California for schools serving greater than 70% low income and ELL students (p.1). RSSPs first year demonstrated exceptional scores, scoring highest among first year schools in the state for low income students.

**Weaknesses:**

No specific weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 46**

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

RSED is significantly outperforming state and district averages for 3rd grade for 2009-2010 (p.9).

RSED's economically disadvantaged youth who score proficient and above far outpace district and state averages in math and reading in all grade levels (p.10). Comparing San Jose and state scores, Rocketship doubles in some cases proficiency in nearly all grades and subgroups.

Comparisons on the California Star Test proficiency scores demonstrate that Rocketship students are strongly outperforming district and state students with higher numbers of students in the advanced and proficient range (p. e171-e175).

Scores in almost every grade increased in proficiency on the California Star Test.

**Weaknesses:**

There is some decline in advanced scores in math from 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 (p. e175, e181).

**Reader's Score: 19**

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:**

According to DRA measures, reviewed by a third party source, RSED students are making average gains of 2.67 levels per testing occasion. The data was disaggregated for both EL and non-EL students and demonstrated almost consistent growth and achievement of benchmarks (p.25-26).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

No specific deficiencies were noted.

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides Rocketship Mateo Sheedy data on subgroups on p. 23, and the EL and low income population have a significantly higher API score than the surrounding district, with differences over 200 points for both low income and ELL.

The ELL and low income subgroups are performing very close to the total API for all students (p.24).

Economically disadvantaged students are by far outperforming local and state average proficiency rates, often by double or even triple (p.e176) only 1 year of data available. The results for Latino and EL students are similar exceeding the district(s) and state by large margins (p.e177, e178).

**Weaknesses:**

Other subgroups (i.e., SPED) are considered not statistically significant, and are not reported (p.23).

The school reports being the highest achieving first year school, which is commendable, but does not provide any context (i.e., how many first year schools there were).

**Reader's Score: 12**

**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:**

Focus and commitment to serving economically disadvantaged students is reiterated with an end goal of serving more than 60 schools with 60% or more educationally disadvantaged students and a high population of English Language Learners (p.27). The schools currently opened and scheduled to open all meet these demographic targets and are enrolled in districts with low achievement.

The target demographics for West Oakland are displayed in a charter on p. 28 and who the targeted population being high minority (89-99%) and low income (75-83%). Milwaukee shows similar demographics (88% minority and 81% low income). The Milwaukee district has a lower EL population than served in current schools. The other districts in Louisiana and Illinois follow similar demographics for future growth and expansion. Based on selection of these communities, it is evident that the Rocketship model will be replicated with similar student populations.

**Weaknesses:**

No specific deficiencies were noted

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

**Strengths:**

The goals of the project are clearly articulated on p. 30-31. The goals and objectives are specific, measurable, and based on data provided from prior RSED schools, attainable. The goals include an absolute and increase rigor for students enrolled for 2 or more years. Goals are also reflective of the schools commitment to talent management and its direct connection to student achievement. Growth goals are included in goal 2, which is a strength as well.

Outcomes of the project (p.1 of the abstract) address rigorous academic outcomes for 5th grade students and growth rates.

Cluster of 8 schools in a region supports sustainability (p.1 of the abstract).

Target population in Oakland matches current populations served (81% FRL and 27% ELL) p.5. Recovery School District serves 99.4% minority students, 91.3% FRL.

The school identifies that the ethnic populations will differ in the new districts but contends that the academic achievement issues are factors of poverty rather than ethnicity and notes that the RSED model has proven successful with low income students (p.39). The applicant further lists overall predicts school-wide projected demographics (p.50).

**Weaknesses:**

No specific deficiencies were noted.

**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:**

Plan is based on a logic model to address student outcomes, staff development and advancement, school-wide success, research and continuous quality improvement, and disruptive impact on the status quo nationwide.

A specific replication timeline for each phase of the project is provided (p.e215) and supports the explanation from the narrative related to expansion and replication.

Budget narrative describes activities that align with the projects plan and expected outcomes. Project evaluator amounts are commensurate with the level of qualitative and quantitative data that will be collected and assessed; staffing salaries and positions are appropriate based on the plan and industry standards;

Organizational structure supports all components of central operations required for new school development and management (p.12).

A key strength of the application is the focus on the importance of professional development with key learning objectives related to pedagogy, organizational culture, instructional strategies, use of student data, individualizing instruction, goal setting. The schedule utilized demonstrates the level of commitment to professional development with each Friday focused for 3 hours more than 150 hours in a school year (p.18).

Leadership development and succession planning are also highly valued as evidenced through pathways to leadership, relationships with organizations like TFA, and the support and development offerings (p.19-20.) The structure is designed to aid in expansion and replication, as RSED creates a highly qualified bench of leaders to deploy to new or growing schools. This is a key strength of the applicants plan (p.43).

The organization demonstrates a high level of value on talent management and cost savings in teacher retention. Compensation is reported to be 20% higher than traditional schools nearby and tied to student outcomes (p.22-23).

The applicant reports savings of \$500k in use of non-certified staff in learning labs and using the additional funds in other

innovative areas (p.23).

On p. 33-38, a variety of supports such as a strong RTI model, differentiation, frequently data analysis, research based strategies, and the learning lab and classes in the arts support a strong and effective instructional program (affirmed by the excellent academic achievement data presented).

The schools operate autonomously from their authorizers (p.39).

In years 2015-2016, the plan calls for more than double the schools from the preceding year (from 7 to 16), and another large jump to 25 schools in years 2016-2017. This is aggressive growth with a strong plan to provide time to address obstacles and cultivate community involvement.

The plan addresses key factors in successful replication, the most notable is political will (p.44).

The business model utilizing the learning lab with non-certified staff, driving staffing down to 75% average school staffing requirements positions RSED to effectively scale up and self-sustain using the 8 school network (p.46, 48).

Financial partners are listed and supported by MOUs from several key supporters, including current and planned authorizers (p.47 and appendix)

Governance oversight is provided quarterly on financials, key indicators, and growth (p.49).

A swift closure plan is included if the charters do not hit the targets (p.53).

The applicant has assembled a talented team of strategic advisors and administrators to lead the replication and expansion initiative.

**Weaknesses:**

To expand, the network requires \$2.8 to enter a new region and depends on philanthropic dollars to support this growth.

The applicants current expenditure in California is 15% (more along industry standard). Spending an additional 5% on facilities which is higher than industry standard is not necessarily a strength (p.45).

Contingency amount is set at 1% (\$30k annually), an amount not likely to cover costs for even 1 month.

**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:**

Plans to contract with a highly qualified 3rd party evaluator (p.14).

The plan articulates how progress toward objectives is measured (weekly meetings of leadership, periodical examination of dashboard key indicators on a variety of qualitative and quantitative factors such as API, attendance, retention rates, etc. (p.31).

Key indicators for positive progress are explicitly addressed for: strong systems, talent cultivation, facilities, political/community engagement, and learning lab impact. (p.31-32).

The methods employed include norm referenced testing and ongoing document and data review by identified staff. Data is collected and reported systematically (5 times or 2 times per year, depending on the instrument). Qualitative data will be evaluated using ATLAS.ti. Evaluation will include analysis of causal and non-causal linkages and relationship that will inform decision making about the efficacy of the program. Feedback is regular and shared for best practice.

**Weaknesses:**

No specific deficiencies were noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **5**

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