

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

Status: Draft

Last Updated: 08/15/2014 01:56 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools (U282M140022)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Eligible Applicant		
1. Qual: Eligible Applicant	50	35
Significance		
1. Significance of Project	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	12
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel Plan	20	19
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Evaluation Plan	5	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Low Income Demographic		
1. CPP 1	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
School Improvement		
1. CPP 2	4	4
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 3	5	0
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Promise Zones		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		

1. Overall Comments

0

Total

121

97

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282m - 1: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools (U282M140022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Eligible Applicant

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant (50 points)

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

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 35

Sub Question

- 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 adequately demonstrated that they have consistently increased student achievement in the past 3 years as measured by the API scores for all students in their charter schools.

Weaknesses:

n/a

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:

i. The applicant has adequately demonstrated that they have had success with closing the historic achievement gap among subgroups as compared to achievement data by the surrounding LEA for one year.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

1. The applicant did not adequately demonstrated that over the past 3 years that there have not been significant achievement gaps.

- ii. The applicant has not adequately demonstrated that over the past 3 years that there have not been significant achievement gaps between the subgroups of students that are served.

Reader's Score: 5

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 has adequately provided evidence that demonstrate that the participating schools have achieved very high and consistently increasing results on statewide tests, student attendance rates, high school graduation rates, college acceptance rates, college persistence rates and college enrollment rates.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide any evidence of comparison data with respect to state averages on the required

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students (10 points)

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.

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

Using the current academic model used in existing schools, the applicant has adequately demonstrated that the replication proposed will serve educationally disadvantaged students by increasing graduation rates, achievement rates and college acceptance rates.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the Project Design (15 points)

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 following factors:

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 12

Sub Question

- 1) 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 (5 points).

Strengths:

The applicant has provided high quality goals and objectives that will lead to the replications proposed. The goals are very specific, measurable and attainable and will likely lead to the timely opening of all the proposed schools.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 5

- 2) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by evidence of promise (as defined in this notice) (10 points).

Strengths:

The applicant has submitted a high quality plan that has its foundation in the 5 core values maintained by the organization. High expectations and student success are at the core of all activity proposed.

Weaknesses:

Although research was referenced, no complete citation and bibliography was offered, and therefore it is difficult to measure the researched based quality of the project.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (20 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

- 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 (4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant has submitted a high quality plan that includes very specific activities and the key personnel who will lead the actions. The timelines and objectives appear to be within budget and able to be achieved in a timely fashion. The comprehensive management plan includes plans from the initiation phase through full implementation.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 4

- 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 (4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant has included a sustainable business plan that includes revenue from various state level categorical block grants that will sustain the quality of the charter schools beyond the initial period of federal funding.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 4

- 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 projects long-term success (4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant has provided adequate demonstration of support from several local and national funders who provide support for the project. Additionally, they have also demonstrated support from local community stakeholders for the proposal.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a thorough plan of the procedures of how it will close schools should the school not make adequate academic progress.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include plans of how schools will revamp to try to avoid closure and use closure as the final step of the turnaround model.

Reader's Score: 3

- 5. 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 (4 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant has adequately provided evidence of high quality personnel who have extensive experience in school management and leadership and educational experience in increasing student achievement. The applicant also identified highly qualified people who are members of the board

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

- 1. Quality of the Evaluation Plan (5 points)**

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a high quality evaluation plan that includes formative and summative data that will drive the development of the replication models in the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 5

Priority 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 (as defined in this notice).

Note 1: The Secretary encourages an applicant responding to this priority to describe the extent to which the charter schools it currently operates or manages serve individuals from low-income families at rates that are at least comparable to the rates at which these individuals are served by public schools in the surrounding area.

Note 2: For charter schools that serve students younger than 5 or older than 17 in accordance with their State's definition of "elementary education" or "secondary education," at least 60 percent of all students in the schools who are between the ages of 5 and 17 must be individuals from low-income families to meet this priority.

Strengths:

The applicant has demonstrated that 93% of the students they currently serve are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Weaknesses:

n/a

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 (as defined in this notice) 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).

Note: Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the June 7, 2012, "ESEA Flexibility" guidance at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects complement the efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in States' approved requests for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

Strengths:

The applicant has adequately demonstrated that the proposed project is designed to assist the LEA with implementing academic and structural interventions to serve schools that have been identified for improvement or corrective action.

Weaknesses:

n/a

Reader's Score: 4

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 1: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Diversity, is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project would 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, or to avoid racial isolation.

Note 2: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice entitled, " Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>.

Strengths:

no strengths noted

Weaknesses:

b/c - the applicant did not provide evidence that they serve disabled or ELL students at a comparable rate to that of the LEA in all of their schools.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Promise Zones

1. This priority is for projects that are designed to serve and coordinate with a federally designated Promise Zone.

Note: Applicants should submit a letter from the lead entity of a designated Promise Zone attesting to the contribution that the proposed activities would make, and supporting the application. A list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations can be found at www.hud.gov/promisezones.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided adequate evidence through letters of support that one of the proposed charter schools will be located in a promise zone.

Weaknesses:

na/

Reader's Score: 2

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall/additional comments

General:

Reader's Score:

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools (U282M140022)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Eligible Applicant		
1. Qual: Eligible Applicant	50	35
Significance		
1. Significance of Project	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	11
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel Plan	20	19
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Evaluation Plan	5	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Low Income Demographic		
1. CPP 1	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
School Improvement		
1. CPP 2	4	4
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 3	5	0
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Promise Zones		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		

1. Overall Comments

0

Total

121

96

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282m - 1: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools (U282M140022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Eligible Applicant

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant (50 points)

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

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 35

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides academic scores (API) that indicate that all of its schools are outperforming the traditional neighborhood public schools. This was evidenced by the provision of API data for 2012-2013 for the applicant and the neighboring schools. For the most part, the schools' scores are consistent over the three years provided with just minimal dips and increases, and the applicant indicates that the scores represent the performance of educationally disadvantaged students (p. e30-31).

The applicant provides evidence for one year demonstrating that students from ESEA subgroups in the network perform on par or better than their peers in the LAUSD and the state of California (p. e32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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

Sub Question

students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

Strengths:

In the chart on p. e32, the applicant provides evidence that the students in ESEA subgroups are outperforming their advantaged peers on average across the state of California and their disadvantaged peers in LAUSD.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide three years of data in most places and does not provide at all any disaggregated data to demonstrate the performance of both the disadvantaged groups and the non-disadvantaged groups at the state level. Without this evidence, the applicant does not provide evidence of an existing achievement gap nor provide evidence that no gap exists. The data that are provided indicates student achievement in a general way, but it does not address the criterion's requirements in regards to the achievement gap (p. e33-36). It is not clear from the table on p. e32 if those scores are actually indicating the existence of an achievement gap.

Reader's Score: 5

- 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 Alliance has a college persistence effort called the Alliance Mentoring Program, which has demonstrated some initial success in reducing the number of students who fail to enroll in college after high school graduation (p. e41).

The applicant provides three years of data compared to the state and LAUSD demonstrating a strong consistency in overall graduation rates over three years (p. e133).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a lot of information but none meet the minimum standards to properly evaluate the criterion. The attendance rates and retention rates, while provided for three years, do not have comparative state or local data to compare the network to the state results (p. e36-37).

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Significance

- 1. Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students (10 points)**

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.

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with

disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The data on pages e28 to e41 demonstrate that Alliance students are outperforming their peers in neighboring schools, the LAUSD, and the state of California. Given that 100% of Alliance students are economically disadvantaged, this is a significant contribution to enabling these students to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. The applicant includes information on the proposed locations of the schools to be opened and the student populations to be served (p. e42-43).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the Project Design (15 points)

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 following factors:

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 11

Sub Question

- 1) 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 (5 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant provides detailed and measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes. The objectives and outcomes span from school formation to college readiness and persistence and include financial and operational goals and objectives. The goals, objectives, and outcomes are attainable given the network's record of prior success (p. e49-51).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 2) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by evidence of promise (as defined in this notice) (10 points).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant provides a logic model that details resources, activities, outputs, short-term outcomes, long-term outcomes, and impact (p. e52).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide measurable outcomes or outputs in the logic model (p. e52).

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (20 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

- 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 (4 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant provided information on its home office departments and their key services, which indicated clearly defined responsibilities. This included human relations, instructional development and management, development and communications, information technology, operations, facilities, and finance (p. e59-61).

The applicant provided a detailed timeline for the opening of the schools that includes activities, the person/department responsible, and the milestone associated with the activity (p. e62-63).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

- 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 (4 points).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant has included a detailed business plan that describes how each of the departments functions and fulfills the needs of the project. A critical part of the Alliance's business plan is the Alliance Framework for Effective Teaching. This is the framework against which all Alliance teachers are trained, coached, evaluated, and compensated to an extent. This common framework ensures quality instruction and faculty across the network which is critical in a growing charter network (p. 63-68).

The applicant references financial and operating models. The 7% management fee to the central office is below the industry average of 10%. The financial model also uses a conservative revenue forecast and a minimum 5% general operating reserve is maintained (p. e66).

The applicant also describes a tiered governance structure with governance at the school level (including a School Advisory Board and a Board of Directors) and a network board of directors. The school board of directors each includes one ex-officio LAUSD representative from the local district where the school is located (p. 68).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

- 3. 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 projects long-term success (4 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant describes a multi-year financial model that has each school becoming self-sufficient when it has full enrollment, at its third year of operations. It also states that each school will be sustained with per pupil public revenue by the third year of operation (p. e68).

The applicant provides evidence of support from the federal department of education and a list of current local and national funders as well as a number of letters of support from stakeholders (p. e70). This list of funders included Ahmanson Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the Bloomfield Family Foundation, the Charter School Growth Fund, the Green Foundation, the Riordan Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation among others.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided sufficient evidence that they would close a school if it was not performing at high standards of quality (p. e71). The applicant describes how it would provide written notification to parents/caregivers within 72 hours, notify LAUSD in writing with a list of returning students and their home schools within 72 hours, transfer student records to receiving schools within seven days, complete a financial closeout audit within six months to determine disposition of assets and liabilities and maintain employment of critical staff for 6 months following the closure to complete the process.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

I have discussed this particular component of the application with my fellow peer reviewers, and this score is a reflection of my professional assessment.

Reader's Score: 4

5. 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 (4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence of relevant training and experience of the network's senior management team that demonstrates their experience in managing projects of similar size and scope, including the CEO who served as a superintendent in the LAUSD, the Vice President of Schools who oversees principal preparation has significant principal experience, and the Chief Development Officer who has over two decades of philanthropy and fundraising experience (p. e70-72).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not explicitly identify who the project director is, which makes it difficult to evaluate whether the project director is qualified to implement the project and understand if he/she has experience managing projects of the same size and scope.

The applicant has also provided significantly outdated resumes. For example, the resume provided for the chief of staff only details experience through 2002 – making it over a decade old. Also, the CEO's resume ends in 2012 with no information for the last two years.

I have discussed this particular component of the application with my fellow peer reviewers, and this score is a reflection of my professional assessment.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Quality of the Evaluation Plan (5 points)

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 research questions and evaluation phases, indicates the evaluation provider, the Wexford Institute, a credentialed evaluator with relevant experience evaluating federal projects serving low-income and English Language Learner communities, and details the methodology of the evaluation. The methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and is aligned with the performance measure targets. The evaluation will also report on outcomes, including progress on goals, objectives, and performance measures (disaggregating NCLB subgroups). The evaluation data will be collected more frequently than just annually, providing for mid-course corrections (p. e75-78).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority 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 (as defined in this notice).

Note 1: The Secretary encourages an applicant responding to this priority to describe the extent to which the charter schools it currently operates or manages serve individuals from low-income families at rates that are at least comparable to the rates at which these individuals are served by public schools in the surrounding area.

Note 2: For charter schools that serve students younger than 5 or older than 17 in accordance with their State's definition of "elementary education" or "secondary education," at least 60 percent of all students in the schools who are between the ages of 5 and 17 must be individuals from low-income families to meet this priority.

Strengths:

Among the applicant's students, 93% of them are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

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 (as defined in this notice) 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).

Note: Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the June 7, 2012, "ESEA Flexibility" guidance at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects complement the efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in States' approved requests for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

Strengths:

The applicant describes its efforts to assume the operations of the New Millennium Charter School, a school in its third year of improvement action which meets the criterion (p. e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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 1: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Diversity, is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project would 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, or to avoid racial isolation.

Note 2: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice entitled, " Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>.

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address the minimum standards for this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Promise Zones

1. This priority is for projects that are designed to serve and coordinate with a federally designated Promise Zone.

Note: Applicants should submit a letter from the lead entity of a designated Promise Zone attesting to the contribution that the proposed activities would make, and supporting the application. A list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations can be found at www.hud.gov/promisezones.

Strengths:

The applicant is opening at least one of the schools funded by this grant in a federally designated Promise Zone. The applicant includes a letter of support from Youth Policy Institute, the lead entity for the federal Promise Zone in Los

Angeles supporting the applicant's efforts and confirming their participation in the Promise Zone efforts (p. e143)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall/additional comments

General:

Reader's Score:

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 04:37 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/24/2014 01:55 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools (U282M140022)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Eligible Applicant		
1. Qual: Eligible Applicant	50	37
Significance		
1. Significance of Project	10	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	11
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management/Personnel Plan	20	20
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Evaluation Plan	5	5
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Low Income Demographic		
1. CPP 1	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
School Improvement		
1. CPP 2	4	4
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 3	5	0
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Promise Zones		
1. CPP 4	2	2
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		

1. Overall Comments

0

0

Total

121

99

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282m - 1: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools (U282M140022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Eligible Applicant

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant (50 points)

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

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 37

Sub Question

- 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:

From the multiple data sources provided, Alliance documented that their students consistently outperformed their peers enrolled in neighboring schools. Three year trend data shows that, on average, each of the 12 high schools and 6 of the middle schools (three year data available) made consistent growth on the state API index. Six of the high schools saw scores dip in 2011-12 results, but the scores bounced back up. This occurred in only one of the middle schools (p.13 & e130).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

The passage rate on the 2012-13 CAHSEE of Alliance student subgroups in comparison to their LAUSD district and state peers is impressive. The ELL students surpassed their district peers by 22.5 percentage points in ELA and 29 percentage points in math (p. 14). Given that the majority of students (almost 90%) are Hispanic and on average 17% of the enrollment is classified as ELL (p.8), this is an accomplishment.

On the ELA CST, 6th grade Alliance students just entering the charter program do not perform at better rates than their district peers. However, continued enrollment shows strong gains in test results that with each grade out distance the district students (p. 15). Graduation by subgroup designees graduate at much higher rates than their district or state peers. Impressive is the 27 percentage points between 27 Alliance Latino students and the district, 26 percentage points for students with disabilities and a highly significant 58 percentage points for ELL students (p. 17).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide three years of comparison achievement data by subgroups (p. 14). Also, no comparison to majority groups by identified sub-groups to non-disadvantaged students was provided in order to determine closure of historic achievement gaps.

Reader's Score: 7

- 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:

Attendance and retention rates across all Alliance schools averaged in the high 90% range for three years for all students and all subgroups, thereby adequately meeting the criteria (p. 19). Likewise, student graduation rates across all subgroups were relatively equal ranging from 94.7 % for African Americans to 96.1% for Latinos. Students with disabilities were not far behind at the rate of 95.4% in 2013. Not only do the Alliance students graduate high school at a high rate, their four year college acceptance rate is an impressive 95%. (p. 22).

The CMO pays particular attention to the issue of college retention through the Alliance mentoring program, matching matriculated Alliance alumni with first time college attendees. As a result, the second year persistence rate has thus improved by 5% (p. 23). Three years of high school graduation data with comparisons to the district and state figures were provided (e133).

Weaknesses:

High school graduation rates and college enrollment rates were not broken down by sub-groups.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students (10 points)

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.

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The applicant has a well-documented track record of strong student achievement and college and career ready results, in both aggregate and by subgroup, in meeting and surpassing district and state benchmarks.

The grant (should it be awarded) will fund 10 additional schools (5 high and 5 middle) in a Promise Zone and low poverty, high need neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

The applicant provides evidence that they are both knowledgeable and accomplished in providing services, interventions and support for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Entry assessments establish student baselines and inform personalized learning plans. Instruction and classroom participation is conducted 80% in a regular education environment with appropriate accommodations and supports such as the Learning Lab and teacher support (pp. 24-30).

Qualified staff members are recruited, and their professional growth is supported with an evaluation process (pp. 27-28).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the Project Design (15 points)

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 following factors:

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 11

Sub Question

- 1. 1) 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 (5 points).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The goal to establish 10 new charter schools during the grant period is well supported by 4 pertinent and clear objectives related to both student outcomes and school management. The performance measures listed under each objective are specific, measurable and attainable. Taken together, the objective and measures provide a solid operational base (pp. 31-33).

Comment: Alliance might want to consider adding a teacher and administrator effectiveness measure under Objective 2 in alignment with the TIF grant.

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 5

2. 2) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by evidence of promise (as defined in this notice) (10 points).

Strengths:

A logic model is provided (p. 34).

The applicant described their 5 core values (high expectations for all students, personalized learning environments, increased instructional time, high quality educators, and parents as partners) and referenced at least one study for each (pp. 37-40). All of these values were included in the logic model and are relevant to the long-term impact of college ready students who persist in college (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

The logic model did not align the objectives with the activities and the outputs with the measures to form a coherent and measurable road map for the proposed project.

Further, while research was referenced (p. 37), no complete citation or bibliography of the studies was provided. Therefore it was not possible to determine if the referenced research met the criterion.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel (20 points)

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.)

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

Sub Question

1. **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 (4 points).**

Strengths:

Home office roles and responsibilities that support critical school operations from conception to full scale implementation are delineated (pp. 41-42). Accompanying the key services is a detailed management plan outlining the timeline, responsibilities and milestones for school start-up and scale-up to independent operation (pp. 44-45). The plan supports implementation of the objectives for new school start-up and operations.

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 4

2. **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 (4 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed description of the key components of their operating business plan including examples related to human resources, facilities, financial management, student academic achievement and governance. Several practices are worth noting: recruitment practices to attract high quality teachers through relationships with local universities; a school financial model that plans for self-sufficiency by three years; a low 7% management fee; a 5% general cash reserve; careful attention to student attendance rates (linked to income); high degree of local school autonomy and governance; and a sustaining strong relationship with the LAUSD charter authorizer (pp. 46-50).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 4

3. **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 projects long-term success (4 points).**

Strengths:

The applicant has a multi-year funding model that supports school self-sufficiency by year 3. The model includes initial start-up costs for Home Office with increasing per pupil funds (p. 51). The Home Office also mounts aggressive and successful fundraising efforts bringing in federal, foundation and local resources including the Gates, Broad and Walton Foundations and several local funders (p. 52). Parents are engaged from initial recruitment to inclusion in school decision-making by serving on the School Advisory Council and as participants in parent academy sessions on career and college readiness (p. 53).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 4

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

A comprehensive and client friendly closure plan is in place. Parents are provided with written notification that includes the process for school identification and records transfer. School records will be sent to new school within seven days. Closed school audit with distribution of assets is conducted within six months, and staff members are retained for six months post closure to assist with closure tasks. This plan was effectively operationalized with a closure of a high school in 2011 (pp. 53-54).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

I have discussed this particular component of the application with my fellow peer reviewers, and this score is a reflection of my professional assessment.

Reader's Score: 4

5. 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 (4 points).

Strengths:

In addition to the senior management team, the applicant provided resumes for critical lead staff such as Directors of Special Education, College Counseling, and Parent and Community Engagement. Bios were also provided for the Board of Directors. The organizational leadership and Board bring a deep and broad level of requisite experience, expertise and capacity to the management of this large CMO (pp. 54-57).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

I have discussed this particular component of the application with my fellow peer reviewers, and this score is a reflection of my professional assessment.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Quality of the Evaluation Plan (5 points)

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

Strengths:

The evaluation plan is complete in that it provides questions that will guide the evaluation process. A sound methodology is described that will twice annually produce descriptive data that is used to assess progress, annually analyze implementation and report on key outcomes accomplished during that year. Also provided was a timeline and type of data to be collected that would support the evaluation methods and inform the questions. The Wexford Institute, with 20 years of evaluating federal grant programs, has been engaged as the project evaluator (pp. 57-60).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority 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 (as defined in this notice).

Note 1: The Secretary encourages an applicant responding to this priority to describe the extent to which the charter schools it currently operates or manages serve individuals from low-income families at rates that are at least comparable to the rates at which these individuals are served by public schools in the surrounding area.

Note 2: For charter schools that serve students younger than 5 or older than 17 in accordance with their State's definition of "elementary education" or "secondary education," at least 60 percent of all students in the schools who are between the ages of 5 and 17 must be individuals from low-income families to meet this priority.

Strengths:

Applicant provided evidence that students attending the schools they currently operate greatly exceed 60% FRL. In aggregate, their FRL student enrollment is 16.6 percentage points greater than LAUSD (p.4 & pp. 8-9).

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 (as defined in this notice) 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).

Note: Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the June 7, 2012, "ESEA Flexibility" guidance at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects complement the efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in States' approved requests for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

Strengths:

Applicant states that the proposed replication and expansion will serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action or closure. They further referenced a relationship with New Millennium, a charter school in its third year of improvement (pp. 2-3).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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 1: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Diversity, is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project would 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, or to avoid racial isolation.

Note 2: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice entitled, " Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>.

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not discuss how they will promote racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Promise Zones

1. This priority is for projects that are designed to serve and coordinate with a federally designated Promise Zone.

Note: Applicants should submit a letter from the lead entity of a designated Promise Zone attesting to the contribution that the proposed activities would make, and supporting the application. A list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations can be found at www.hud.gov/promisezones.

Strengths:

Alliance has made the commitment to open one of the expansion schools in the LA Promise Zone (p. 5). The lead agency for the Federal Promise Zone supports the commitment (p. e143).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall/additional comments

General:

This is a well written and thoroughly documented proposal. The organization's depth and capacity to effectively manage this expansion effort is grounded in their success with other federal grant awards (i3, TIF, expansion) all complex endeavors. This application was a pleasure to review. Note: 1st one to complete ED524 B- Non-Federal funds.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/24/2014 01:55 PM