

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

Status: Draft

Last Updated: 08/15/2014 03:15 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U282M140009)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Qual: Eligible Applicant	50	35
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance of Project	10	8
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	14
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management/Personnel Plan	20	18
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation Plan	5	5
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Low Income Demographic</b>		
1. CPP 1	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>School Improvement</b>		
1. CPP 2	4	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 3	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
<b>Promise Zones</b>		
1. CPP 4	2	2
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		

1. Overall Comments

0

**Total**

121

97

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282m - 1: 84.282M

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

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U282M140009)

## 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 described that they have consistently over the past 3 years demonstrated success in increasing student achievement for all students who are part of their program. Both math and language scores have steadily increased, and the applicant has assisted in having more students pass the Advanced placement exam than the statewide averages.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant specifically did not provide scores for educationally disadvantaged students.

Reader's Score: 15

#### 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 provided adequate evidence that demonstrates that students who are members of the various racially identified subgroups, LEP and Special Education students, have outperformed the state and regional

### Sub Question

measures of academic achievement and daily attendance. The three year measures of increased student achievement were adequately demonstrated through the Texas Index 3 Closing Performance Gaps measure.

ii. The applicant has demonstrated that there have not been significant achievement gaps between ELL, Special Education, and Economically Disadvantaged Students in all of their schools within the past 3 years .

#### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide this longitudinal data across schools for students in racially identifiable subgroups. The applicant did not provide data on non-disadvantaged subgroups.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant has adequately demonstrated that low income and educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant have steadily increased in their four year graduation rates. The applicant has also demonstrated a steady increase in the average daily attendance for these students over a three year period.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant submitted information that demonstrated that economically disadvantaged students have decreased in their college retention rates over a 3 year period, also did not provide any information with respect to this data for Special education or ELL students. Likewise, the applicant demonstrated that economically disadvantaged students have waxed and waned in their college enrollment rates, and, the applicant provided no information on these data for special education or LEP students.

**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 adequately demonstrated that their proposed project will be located in communities that serve low income populations. The applicant has adequately demonstrated that they will increase their population of low income students by 131%. The applicant has adequately described their 14 year history working with low income communities and the continual increase in student achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment. The applicant has adequately demonstrated that they serve all students irrespective of disability or ELL status. Further ELL and special education students receive individualized instruction and receive accommodations in 'regular' education classrooms.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has not demonstrated how they will increase their population of ELL and disabled students, other than through word of mouth referrals.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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: 14**

**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 demonstrated an ambitious and achievable goal of increasing their school sites by opening and expanding 31 additional schools. The applicant has identified a goals of increasing the school sites incrementally over the next 5 years. The expansion goals are clearly specified, measurable and attainable. The applicant has adequately demonstrated that they will continue to serve communities they currently serve in Texas.

**Weaknesses:**

The objectives are not fully detailed to match goals identified by the applicant.

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 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 provided sufficient and adequate evidence that demonstrates they they are well experienced in serving low income populations through a culture of high academic rigor, strong connections to college experiences

**Sub Question**

(for example, all high school seniors must show proof of college acceptance prior to receiving their high school diploma), direct instruction, and personalized learning.

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

**1. 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: 18**

**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:**

The applicant has provided a management plan that demonstrates that it will likely meet the objective and goals of expansion on time and within budget. The responsible parties are clearly identified and efficient milestones have been identified to meet project tasks.

**Weaknesses:**

The management plan did not provide milestones that are comprehensive to match project objectives, therefore it is unclear if fidelity to the academic plan will be met.

**Reader's Score: 3**

- 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 adequately demonstrated that they will sustain themselves after the funding period through regular per pupil funding sources.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Sub Question**

**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 demonstrated that they have a strong commitment from current and future partners for the expansion of their schools, including from the Gates, Walton and Dell foundations. The applicant has adequately demonstrated a fiscally responsible multi-year financial and operating model for the organization.

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**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 evidence of a strong turn around model for schools that do not meeting academic standards of high quality, which includes changing school leadership several times.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not demonstrate that they would close the school all together if the turn around model was unsuccessful.

**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 provided evidence that the key personnel involved in leading the organization are highly experienced and well trained in leading charter schools of this scope and size.

**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 plan for evaluation of the expansion project that includes site visits, principal interviews, teacher and student surveys and student outcome analysis.

**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:**

The applicant has adequately demonstrated that 86% of the student population served by the current charter model are students who are eligible for free and 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](http://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:**

n/a

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not submit a response to this question.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

**Note 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:**

- a. The applicant has adequately demonstrated that through their expansion project, the student population will become more racially diverse, by increasing African American and White students to the population.
- b. The applicant has adequately demonstrated the proposed project will allow them to serve disabled students at rates that are greater than the rate by which such students are served in the surrounding public schools.
- c. The applicant has adequately demonstrated the proposed project will allow them to serve ELL students at rates that are greater than the rate by which such students are served in the surrounding public schools.

**Weaknesses:**

n/a

**Reader's Score: 5**

## 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](http://www.hud.gov/promisezones).

### Strengths:

The applicant has demonstrated they they will serve in an area that is a designated Promise Zone and they have the support of the leaders in the promise zone.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 2

## Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall/additional comments

### General:

**Reader's Score:**

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**Status:** Draft  
**Last Updated:** 08/15/2014 03:15 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 12:49 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U282M140009)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Qual: Eligible Applicant	50	32
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance of Project	10	9
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	13
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management/Personnel Plan	20	18
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation Plan	5	5
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Low Income Demographic</b>		
1. CPP 1	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>School Improvement</b>		
1. CPP 2	4	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 3	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
<b>Promise Zones</b>		
1. CPP 4	2	2
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		

1. Overall Comments

0

**Total**

121

94

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282m - 1: 84.282M

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

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U282M140009)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Eligible Applicant

#### 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: 32

#### 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 information on its student achievement scores, percentage of college-ready graduates, percentage of students taking AP/IB tests, percentage of students testing at or above criterion, percentage of students taking the ACT test and the percentage at or above criterion, and the percentage of graduates enrolled in a Texas college or university (p. e28).

The applicant indicates that its ACT scores are higher than virtually all comparable charters nationwide (p. e28).

The applicant shows that it has more students demonstrating college readiness in English/Language Arts and Math and more college-ready graduates in English/Language Arts and Math than its peers across the state (p. e29).

The applicant provides data from the Texas Educational Agency that shows that IDEA demonstrates significant achievement above and beyond the targets set by the state in all four indices: Student Achievement, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps, and Post-Secondary Readiness (p. e32).

The applicant provides evidence in Table 4 (p. e30) of three years of results in all major subjects that demonstrates that IDEA students are performing on par or exceeding the averages in their local districts and the state, and they are doing this consistently.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant did not specifically provide scores for its educationally-disadvantaged students, and not all metrics were provided for the last three years.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 15

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 limited evidence concerning Texas' Index 3 (Closing Performance Gaps) measure that indicates student performance from economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and African American groups (p. e219).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide comparable achievement scores for the ESEA groups across the state or in the local district for comparison and does not include scores over a three year time span for evaluation.

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:**

The applicant provides academic achievement information from 2012-2014 that demonstrates the percentage of schools outperforming their home regions by significant margins. The schools are predominantly economically disadvantaged and Hispanic (p. e217).

The applicant provided information on its students from 2009-2011 who have enrolled in college and returned for a second year. The rates are between 81.6% and 93.1% (p. e216).

The applicant provides mobility information for its schools from 2010-2012 that ranges from 2.3% to 26.5%. The school that showed 26.5% mobility decreased in the next year to only 6.6% (p. e215).

The applicant provides evidence of its 4 year longitudinal high school graduation rates which demonstrate IDEA schools have higher graduation rates for all students and economically disadvantaged students from 2011-2013 that are on par or considerably higher than the students' peers in the state, region, and district (p. e213).

The applicant provides attendance and state assessment performance information from 2012-2014. With attendance, all IDEA schools demonstrate impressive attendance rates in all schools over the past three years. On the state assessments, students show impressive growth even if year 1 scores seem comparably low (p. e211-212).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide comparable state scores for the state assessment and attendance information.

The applicant provides college enrollment and graduation rates that are inconsistent and does not provide any explanation for the inconsistency.

**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 includes a list of schools served by the applicant and states that IDEA locates its schools in low-income communities (p. e36).

The applicant discusses how it serves English language learners and students with disabilities through individualized instruction and special services, including modified tests or linguistic accommodations. The applicant discusses how it has undertaken a Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, an empirically-validated approach to teaching that helps prepare all students to be college and career-ready (p. e37-39).

The applicant states its 100% college acceptance rate, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (p. e40).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not specifically mention or describe its instructional or curricular efforts to help these groups meet state academic content and achievement standards.

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: 9**

**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: 13

### 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 indicates that it will be serving primarily the same population in its 30 new schools. The applicant provides extensive information regarding the measurable and attainable goals, and outcomes. These goals and objectives span student achievement, teacher retention, student attendance, student persistence, student demographics, enrollment, and teacher vacancy filling rates (e54-56).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates it expects a decrease in the percentage of low-income students served and does not provide a 2018-19 target for federal cost per student. The applicant also does not provide measures for the interim years of the grant, only the benchmark and the final year.

The applicant did not include measurable objectives as required by the criterion.

Reader's Score: 3

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant provides a logic model (p. e43) and an example of a What Works Clearinghouse approved approach to demonstrate its evidence of promise: direct instruction. The applicant also provides experimental studies to support its use of Schoolwide Impact, AVID, college counselors, and the National Science and Math Initiative. (p. e42-46)

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

## 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: 18

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 provides a management plan for the objectives of the project with clearly defined responsibilities, a timeline, and milestones for project tasks. The applicant describes how the CMO office supports the schools and includes an organizational chart that details the current CMO organizational structure and services provided to the schools. The applicant also details its efforts to secure top talent, both instructional and operational, for its schools which are critical to the school's long-term success (p. e56-59).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant's activities in years 2-5 are not as robust and comprehensive as the ones included for year one, making it difficult to evaluate the performance of the project in the later years of the grant (p. e58-59).

Reader's Score: 3

- 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 provides a comprehensive and detailed business plan that spans all aspects of its operations. In particular, the regional support structure is an effective way to manage operations across multiple geographies. Furthermore, the CMO has centralized control over school budgets, accounting, the implementation of a consistent academic program, and governance. The applicant states that all schools will be self-sustaining on public funds (including the payment of its 8% management fee to the CMO) by the schools' fourth years of existence (p. e62-66). Given the centralized nature of school budgeting, the network's past success in this area, and the financial and operational controls, this is a believable assertion.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

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).

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The applicant demonstrates that its schools are self-sustaining financially in their fourth year of existence (p. e64) and the network has Above Standard financial integrity ratings from the state of Texas (p. e67-68). This is supported by the applicant intending to implement its future expansion and replication using the same model as it has in its first expansion and replication plan.

The applicant includes evidence of current and future partners on the national and local level as well as a number of letters of support indicating the same. Partners include the Texas Education Agency, Charter School Growth Fund, Ewing Halsell, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Brown, and George W. Brackenridge (p. e68-69). These partners offer significant financial support, extensive programmatic knowledge and support from certain national foundations' expertise in education reform and supporting high-performing charter networks.

**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 indicates that it utilizes a "turnaround" model to improve schools that do not meet high standards. This process includes evaluating the school's progress, replacing the school leader, and removing the lowest-performing teachers. This, as the applicant asserts, dramatically changes the school structure and puts the school on the path for success. Given the importance of quality school leadership and instruction, replacing those positions as stated is a valid strategy to turnaround a low-performing school (p. e69-70).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not indicate it would close low-performing schools.

**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 provides substantial information in the narrative (p. e70-72) and in the appendices, including bios and resumes, of the training and experience of the network's leadership team and key project personnel. These staff members have been in place during the network's first phases of growth, indicating their ability to manage projects of the same size and scope. Specifically, given the high percentage of ELL students the network serves, the Co-foundation and Superintendent's appointment to President Obama's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics is impressive.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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 indicates its use of a qualified independent evaluator for this and its other federally funded programs which ensures objectivity and research-based results to indicate the progress and results of the programs. The evaluation is structured by SRI International and Copia Consulting to use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, guided by five thoughtful research questions (p. e72-75). The applicant provides a letter of support from the evaluator, indicating the evaluator has already been consulted and is committed to providing services as detailed in the application.

#### 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:

The applicant provides evidence that it serves at least 60% low-income students in the schools it currently manages (p. e18).

#### 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](http://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:**

No strengths were noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address this criterion.

**Reader's Score:** 0

**Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

**Note 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:**

The applicant details how it sends its students to college, changing the racial and diversity profiles in the colleges they attend and decreasing social isolation (p. e19).

The network is moving into neighborhoods where the demographics are more ethnically diverse (p. e19).

The applicant provides evidence that it serves an increasingly large amount of students with disabilities and a higher

percentage of English language learners (p. e20).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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](http://www.hud.gov/promisezones).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided evidence that of the schools it intends to open or expand with CSP funding, 16 of those will be located in San Antonio, Texas, a promise zone (p. e21).

The applicant provided a letter of support from Ivy Taylor. Ivy Taylor is a councilwoman in the city of San Antonio. The letter indicates support for IDEA's work within the San Antonio promise zone (p. e133).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Overall Comments - Overall Comments**

- 1. Overall/additional comments**

**General:**

**Reader's Score:**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/25/2014 12:49 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/24/2014 01:50 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U282M140009)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Qual: Eligible Applicant	50	33
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Significance of Project	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	15	13
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management/Personnel Plan	20	18
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation Plan	5	5
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Low Income Demographic</b>		
1. CPP 1	10	10
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
<b>School Improvement</b>		
1. CPP 2	4	0
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 3	5	5
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 4</b>		
<b>Promise Zones</b>		
1. CPP 4	2	2
<b>Overall Comments</b>		
<b>Overall Comments</b>		

1. Overall Comments

0

0

**Total**

121

96

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282m - 1: 84.282M

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

Applicant: IDEA Public Schools (U282M140009)

## 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: 33

#### 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:

IDEA students have made modest gains in all subjects and math on the state test (Table 4, p. 15). In reading, writing, science and social studies students have consistently in the 80% range. In every subject except math, they have consistently fared better than their district peers.

Further evidence of student success is provided by 4th and 8th grade achievement results in reading and math. Over a three year period 86% of FRM and 95% of Hispanic students achieved growth on the state test (Appendix 5, e217).

IDEA consistently outscored district and state performance indices (2012-13) for student achievement (81%), Student Progress (38%), closing gap (82%), and postsecondary readiness (99%).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant provided attendance, dropout, graduation rates and achievement comparison data with the district and state (TEA Snapshot, Table 3, pp. 12-13) but only for a single year (2011-12). Table 4 on page 15 provided only two years of comparison data.

Reader's Score: 15

#### 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

## Sub Question

**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:**

LEP, students with disabilities and low-income students consistently improved on their state assessment over a three year period (Appendix V, e211). Oftentimes, their gains were more consistent than IDEA students overall. Additionally, LEP and students with disabilities' 2014 STAAR results were comparable, indicating minimal gaps between these two subgroups. Low income students and all students' three year results are also fairly close in range.

### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide state level or non-disadvantaged group data to determine if there were significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups and the non-disadvantaged students.

The applicant provided limited evidence or discussion in the text for criteria 2 (i or ii) other than referring the reader to Appendix V.

**Reader's Score: 8**

- 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 presented multiple data sources documenting that IDEA students had higher high school graduation, college attendance and retention rates than their state and district peers. They presented two years of data showing IDEA students received Level III Commended Performance (a state indicator of college readiness) than the state when all subjects were combined and in Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies (Table A2, e237). Further, over a period of five years, all students (100%) who graduated high school enrolled in college (e243).

School retention rates for all IDEA students was shown to be better than state averages, yet was variable for individual schools across a three year span. Three years of school attendance rates showed that IDEA students had better attendance than the state and region and tracked closely to high district rates. Three years of high school graduation, college enrollment and retention rates were provided (e239-243).

### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide three years of college enrollment and retention data, disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., low income or disadvantaged – SPED, ELL).

**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:

In the previous section, the applicant provided ample evidence that they their student enrollments across their 30 current schools enroll a high percentage of educationally disadvantaged students (p. 23), especially students of poverty and designated subgroups. These students, particularly LEP and students with disabilities, have higher achievement rates than their district and state peers.

The applicant referred to a Site Selection Framework and Heat Map approach as a process they use to determine where to locate new schools (e245-246). This location decision process is strategic and thorough and aids IDEA in establishing a community's need, demand, support and potential for sustaining a new charter school. The applicant explained that in 2012 they began to plan for a second phase of expansion by adding 10 schools in the Rio Grande Valley, 16 in San Antonio and 4 in Austin (pp. 9-10). They have a documented need in these areas from their wait lists linked to their current schools in these communities (p. 10).

IDEA employs recognized and research-based strategies and interventions to support their LEP and students with disabilities. Specifically, they provide Life Skills for students with profound disabilities, full inclusion, content mastery, additional support if behind in grade level, and RTI leveled interventions (pp. 23-24). Sheltered Instruction for LEP students will begin in 2014-15 with teachers currently undergoing training (p. 24).

#### 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:** 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: 13

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:**

Two goals were stated: produce a higher number of low-income college graduates, and transform low-income students and communities (p. 28). Baseline and long-term targets for student achievement, attendance, persistence, enrollment, and teacher retention were delineated, measurable, and referenced as outputs in the logic model (pp. 39-41).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide clearly stated measurable objectives with accompanying outcomes. The measures were not linked to objectives or strategies and therefore had no framework to guide their realization.

Reader's Score: 3

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a logic model that delineated short-term outcomes under three categories: student growth, achievement, and college matriculation and success.

The applicant provided strong evidence of promise for many of their K-12 program model strategies. They included research citations, many of them quasi-experimental or random control trial, for Direct Instruction, National Math and Science Initiative, College Counselors, and AVID (pp. 30-34). Additional citations for Sheltered Instruction, GEAR-UP, and teacher career pathway were provided in the appendix and linked to the logic model (e223-224).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

**1. 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: 18

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:**

The applicant outlined a management plan showing detailed activities such as: identify a director, update baseline demographics, consult with business partners, and purchase equipment for Year 1. This year is the most intensive for project start-up (pp. 42-43). Milestones for Years 2-5 conveyed big picture activities for continued implementation such as: gather data quarterly, recruit and select school leaders/teachers, gather formative data and report findings (pp.43-44).

**Weaknesses:**

The milestones in the management plan for Years 2-5 were vague and do not provide specific tasks to guide implementation in the out years.

Reader's Score: 3

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 ample documentation that they have a strong business plan in place that addresses all the critical components to managing a large CMO with an aggressive scale-up plan. They described their four key components that included: new school start-up services and facilities acquisition; recruitment and assessment of school leadership, teachers and staff; central office provision of academic, financial, and operational support; and governance and oversight (pp. 44-51 & Appendix VII, e262-266). An organizational chart with percentages of time allocated to each function was included (Appendix VII, e259-260).

**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).

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

IDEA holds a FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating), indicating the organization is viewed as financially stable. They expect all their schools to be financially independent by their fourth year of scale up (p. 52). IDEA has garnered support for its current schools and future expansion efforts as evidenced by the support of influential stakeholders such as local and national foundations, municipalities, and local and state political leaders (pp. 52-54). Letters of support attest to the commitment of these individuals and organizations (Appendix II, e115-142). Parents are a critical stakeholder. While not addressed in the narrative, the applicant provided a detailed description of their Parent Engagement Process and strategies for informing, including and supporting parents in school and student learning processes (Appendix VII, e268-271).

### Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 has had experience with schools that are not succeeding. Their first step is to apply turnaround strategies that focus on the provision of additional resources, implementing interventions and instituting staff changes. Additionally, a strong oversight and governance model provides coaching and support to the school leadership team with frequent check-ins, training, and observations (pp. 54-55).

### Weaknesses:

Applicant did not state they would close low performing schools.

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:

IDEA brings a strong and experienced leadership team to the endeavor. The CEO [REDACTED] has been involved and managed charter schools since 2000. The designated COO [REDACTED] brings a strong business and project management background. Their bios and resumes document their combined years of expertise and capacity to manage a project of this size (pp. 55-57 & e82-104).

### Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

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 design is framed by five questions such as: to what extent does implementation of key model elements differ between schools; what factors affect sustainability; and to what extent do IDEA schools retain students and ensure college readiness. Three methodologies (descriptive, implementation and impact) are outlined (p. 58). A nationally recognized firm has been engaged to conduct a rigorous external evaluation using mixed methods and informed by both qualitative and quantitative data.

**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:**

The applicant provided student enrollment data of economically disadvantaged students over a three year period. This enrollment exceeded 60% by 26 percentage points (p. 3). The total school enrollment of low-income students far exceeded state percentages of 60% and was frequently comparable to regional and district enrollment percentages at 85% and 83.5%, respectively (e146-148).

**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](http://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:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not seek points for this competitive preference priority.

Reader's Score: 0

**Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Promoting Diversity**

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding under this grant), taking active measures to:
  - a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
  - b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and
  - c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

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

**Note 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:**

Across the 26 schools for which IDEA provided demographic data, school enrollment of diverse students varies by district and location. Typically, the enrollment of students with disabilities is below district percentages. The applicant attributed this to their primary instructional program and low identification of students. Hispanic and LEP are on par with district percentages (pp. 4-6 & e146-148).

Mention was made that expansion schools would be located in a mixed income neighborhood to increase diversity (p. 4).

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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](http://www.hud.gov/promisezones).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant currently operates 4 schools within the San Antonio Promise Zone with plans to open an additional 16 schools (p. 6 & e133 support letter) thus meeting this criteria.

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Overall Comments - Overall Comments**

- 1. Overall/additional comments**

**General:**

N/A

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/24/2014 01:50 PM