

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Replication & Expansion - 2: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Einstein Group, Inc. (Charter Management Organization) (U282M150014)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. (Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Eligible Applicant Sub-Questions.)

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

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

(2) Either

(i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or

(ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

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

General:

Einstein Group, Inc. (EGI) currently runs 2 preK-8 schools serving 1,000 students. Based on the performance of its current schools (as provided in the application), EGI has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement and attainment for its students.

It is noted that within the application, specific information and data was not consistently provided.

Reader's Score: 48

Sub Question

Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 1

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

Einstein Group, Inc. (EGI) was founded in 2005 and currently runs 2 preK-8 schools serving 1,000 students. Einstein works with turnaround charters. The applicant has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement and attainment for the students EGI serve, including educationally disadvantaged students.

EGI's success in increasing student achievement is evidenced by its ability to bring, one academic year, a formerly failing school from an F to a B on the LA Dept of School Performance Score. In addition, 100% of EGI 8th graders passed and earned HS credit prior to matriculation and in 2015 EGI was named Winner – Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color [e20].

"EGI's mission is to promote academic excellence in teaching and learning through the integration of mathematics and science in interdisciplinary curricula and to promote the ideals and habits of lifelong learning among stakeholders." [e16]

Across the EGI schools, the students being served are:

- Low income 86.8%
- Minority 99% (58% African-American; 28% Asian, 13% Hispanic, 1% White)
- LEP 35% (EGI runs largest ELL program in NOLA)
- o Many of these students are newly immigrated to the US from Vietnam
- o Impressively large ELL enrollment vs. the state and district [e26]
- SWD 14.9% for 2014-15 [e25]
- o In comparison to the Orleans Parish School Board rate of 7%
- Homeless ~10% [e33]

Einstein Charter School at Village De L'Est (preK-8) was a new school creation which was started by EGI in 2006. It serves approximately 473 students.

Einstein Charter School at Sherwood Forest (prek-8) is a turnaround charter school and was taken over by EGI in 2013. EGI took over the Intercultural Charter School and brought it from a F to a B in one year. This was especially notable since 80% of ICS student body remained after Einstein assumed control. For the 2014-15 year it served 564 students. [e68]

In 2015 EGI became a Community Eligibility Provision school, meaning the school is a federally funded free meal school. [e16]

EGI has received top gains recognition from the LA DOE for two years (2012, 2013) and also been designated as one of 21 High Performing Poverty schools statewide in 2014. For the last two years EGI received a perfect score for academic progress. [e20] From 2012-2014, EGI students consistently outperformed students across LA, often showing a 20-point difference in Math and ELA. The table, provided on page [e17] clearly illustrates the performance of Einstein Village and Einstein Forrest as outperforming their district and state on the LEAP. The subgroup break down performance is provided on [e29]. Though there were some dips in performance between 2011-12 to 2013-14, overall all performance was strong.

For grades K-3, EGI uses the DIBELS assessments which can be used comparatively with state averages. The table provided on page [e18] shows that EGI students are more/less on par with the state (the application does note that DIBELS is not state mandated so the state scores may not be totally indicative as a comparative measure).

Weaknesses:

Specific information on Einstein Charter at Gaudet (preK-8) [e34] was not provided. It is assumed that this is another school closure /turn around model but details around the closure and turnaround are not included in the application.

Sub Question

Grant fund will be used to increase student performance – done through grant dollars applied to personnel. Salaries of hired staff will be absorbed by regular funding streams [e65]. CSP funds are for start-up purposes and not for on-going expenses, i.e. for annual, regular costs like salaried positions. [e65]

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 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:

EGI has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students. As indicated below, the vast majority of EGI students fall under the subgroups defined for this CSP grant. Generally and overall (with some drops in performance), EGI subgroups outperform the district and State. In addition, 100% of EGI 8th graders passed and earned HS credit prior to matriculation and in 2015 EGI was named Winner – Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color [e20]. More detail on subgroup breakdown is provided on [e29].

Across the EGI schools, the students being served are:

- Low income 86.8%
- Minority 99% (58% African-American; 28% Asian, 13% Hispanic, 1% White)
- LEP 35% (EGI runs largest ELL program in NOLA)
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Einstein Charter School at Sherwood Forest (prek-8) is a turnaround charter school and was taken over by EGI in 2013. EGI took over the Intercultural Charter School and brought it from a F to a B in one year. This was especially notable since 80% of ICS student body remained after Einstein assumed control. For the 2014-15 year it served 564 students. [e68]

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EGI has received top gains recognition from the LA DOE for two years (2012, 2013) and also been designated as one of 21 High Performing Poverty schools statewide in 2014. For the last two years EGI received a perfect score for academic progress. [e20] From 2012-2014, EGI students consistently outperformed students across LA, often showing a 20-point difference in Math and ELA. The table, provided on page [e17] clearly illustrates the performance of Einstein Village and Einstein Forrest as outperforming their district and state on the LEAP. The subgroup break down performance is provided on [e29]. Though there were some dips in performance between 2011-12 to 2013-14, overall all performance was strong.

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Sub Question

table provided on page [e18] shows that EGI students are more/less on par with the state (the application does note that DIBELS is not state mandated so the state scores may not be totally indicative as a comparative measure).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 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:

EGI has consistently been on par with or outperformed its host districts and the State in achieving results for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students. This is evidenced by EGI's performance on state assessments.

EGI has received top gains recognition from the LA DOE for two years (2012, 2013) and also been designated as one of 21 High Performing Poverty schools statewide in 2014. For the last two years EGI received a perfect score for academic progress. [e20] From 2012-2014, EGI students consistently outperformed students across LA, often showing a 20-point difference in Math and ELA. The table, provided on page [e17] clearly illustrates the performance of Einstein Village and Einstein Forrest as outperforming their district and state on the LEAP. The subgroup break down performance is provided on [e29]. Though there were some dips in performance between 2011-12 to 2013-14, overall all performance was strong.

For grades K-3, EGI uses the DIBELS assessments which can be used comparatively with state averages. The table provided on page [e18] shows that EGI students are more/less on par with the state (the application does note that DIBELS is not state mandated so the state scores may not be totally indicative as a comparative measure).

The application provides a data table on Attendance, Retention, and Attrition [Table 9, e31-e32] and states that EGI schools "demonstrate higher levels of performance in each of these categories than schools in Caddo Parish, the OPSB and RSD-NO and the State." [e31]. The table also includes Drop Out, Suspension, Expulsion, and Student Returning data.

- Attendance rates are greater than 95%.
- The Retention rate is presented as the number of students dropping out and, with the limited data available, comparable to that of the districts and state. [e31]
- Student Returning rate has improved from 2013 to 2014 (83% to 87%)

Weaknesses:

The attendance and retention rates appear to be on par with state though not all data was presented for LA. [e22; e31, appendix F] There is limited data available for comparative data, it was not available/consistent for the districts and state. The applicant's statement that EGI schools are at 'higher levels' is difficult to verify as there is little comparative data. Also it wasn't clear why the data on retention rates was presented as a number one year and a percentage in another. [e31-32]

The student return rate of 87% for 2014 is an improvement from 2013 (83%) but is still a relatively low return rate. The 87% is the same as 2012. An explanation about how EGI is working on increasing the rate is not evident.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. 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:

EGI's education program has proven, via the data provided, to assist educationally disadvantaged students to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. EGI's program features:

- Alignment to the Common Core (despite political challenges currently underway with Common Core and PARCC implementation).
- Recognition of community needs so Einstein Charter HS at Sara Towles Reed will have a CTE program, in addition to EGI's HS college prep program.
- Use of PBIS (positive behavioral interventions and support) [e47]
- Data-driven culture to inform instruction:
 - o Goals are set on an individual student basis for the entire school [e37]
 - o Data collected and used include LEAP, DIBELS, iLEAP, PARCC, SLT Report, teacher observations, student work. Data Director, a web-based assessment and management system is used to manage and analyze data. [e36]
- Use of a blended-learning model with technology such as individual computers and promethean boards.
- Provision of a differentiated ELL curriculum that is data driven.
 - o E.g., individual instructor-to-pupil instruction, small group instruction, blended instruction
- Support of SWDs by the Special Education Team and an on-site administrator to ensure adherence to all IEPs [e61].

The communities of the EGI schools are located in New Orleans East, an area of need. In EGI's target service area, from 2008-12, 40.2% were living in poverty [e26; Table 11, e 34]. The application provided a racial composition of Village de L'Est and New Orleans [Table 11, e33]. With the closure/removal of three schools in the area, there is a need for education options for families.

Weaknesses:

The level of supports for SWDs does not seem to be as extensive as for ELL students. It is unclear if EGI uses a tiered response to help identify SWD and/or support struggling students.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Strengths:

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

Strengths:

The application adequately describes the design of the proposed project. It provided tables that are detailed by Objectives and subcategories. The goals, objectives and outcomes are clearly specified, measurable and attainable.

EGI is applying for \$5,476,656. [e13, e23]

- EGI will open 3 charter schools in New Orleans East at two failed school sites. It is working with the Recovery School District (RSD) and the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) for the turnaround schools.
 - o Sarah T Reed School [e23] is to become Einstein Charter at Sarah Towles Reed.
- § The school was closed by RSD and the facilities were turned over to OPSB which chartered the school to EGI for reopening Fall 2015.
- § The re-opening school will begin as a middle school. A separate high school will open in 2016.
- o Einstein Charter at Gaudet, a preK-8 school will open in 2016 with 600 students. [e34, e54]

Separate from the CSP grant, during its grant period, Einstein "will conduct a rigorous, quasi-experimental evaluation of an innovative and intensive PBIS intervention strategy... to improve student outcomes for tier 3 students." [e13] This is funded through a Federal grant for School Climate Transformation Grant awarded through the district; it began in 2014 [e26]. EGI will use the schools under the CSP grant as a comparative to its other schools that have been awarded the Climate Transformation Grant.

Grant funds will be used to increase:

- The number of charter seats from 1,000 to 3,075 by Year 5 of the grant.
- [e13; Table, e34] (Includes rollout of student numbers per school (not per grade))
- Percentage of students achieving proficiency in state mandated Grade 4 and Grade 8 Math and ELA assessments.
- Growth target will be 3% annual increase over the prior year. At least 95% of students will attain or exceed SLT on state mandated tests. [e55]
- Table on [e55-56] lays out the Objective, Target, Instrumentation of measurement, and Data analysis. It also includes responsible personnel and EGI responsibilities under the Target.

Table 13 [e35] lays out the project goals and objectives.

Weaknesses:

It is note that CSP funds will be used to increase student performance through grant dollars applied to personnel. Salaries of hired staff will be absorbed by regular funding streams after the life of the grant. [e65] CSP funds are for start-up purposes and not for on-going expenses, i.e. for annual, regular costs like salaried positions. [e65]

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. (Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Management Plan Sub-Questions.)

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-

(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).

(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).

(3) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success (4 points).

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

(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 (6 points).

General:

The proposed management plan is adequate and will achieve the objectives on time and within budget.

The scale of the proposed project is relatively small and focused on the enrollment expansion of one school. Additional replication of the EGI model is not discussed.

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 proposed management plan is adequate and will achieve the objectives on time and within budget. EGI's project management plan will implement current effective operating, financial, instructional and professional development models, a series of processes, procedures and protocols that has produced clean records of financial management and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. [e13]

The application provides a Project Management Plan that delineates Major Activities, Timeline, Persons Responsible, and Milestones. [e40-e42] The plan is based upon EGI experience of starting and 'turning around' charter schools.

EGI operation model uses a decision matrix hierarchy to provide transparency and accountability [e57]. The matrix describes each department's (CEO, Development, Academics, Finance, and School) role within the organization. A chart is provided on page [e57].

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of the schools created and expanded under the grant and beyond is adequate. In addition to the business plan, the Budget narrative describes Years 1-5 of the CSP grant. Based on its experience with turn-around charter school work, EGI will be able to continue growth and support of its schools after the grant expires. It has the ability to manage state and federal funds received per school and demonstrated past fundraising capacity.

EGI has existing controls in place to ensure that each school receives its allocated funds, i.e. a comprehensive fiscal control structure is in place for network and individual schools.

The business plan is based on original plan for EGI's first school. It has been revised as the organization and the number of schools has grown. EGI created a Development Department and hired a Development Director (2014) and works with the Board. [e43] EGI has partnered with organizations like Replicating Quality Schools for New York City Charter Schools, New Schools for New Orleans, Charter School Growth Fund and Education Pioneers.

The business plan, which is updated annually, includes governance, fiduciary, legal, operational and instructional policies and activities of EGI. A portion of the 2015 business plan is included in the application. Specifically, the role of the CMO is described and includes finance, board management, facilities, IT, development, marketing, human resources, school improvement, authorizer relations, public relations, litigious situations, and other shared services. [e44]

Weaknesses:

It is unclear what the fee structure is for the services provided by the CMO.

The scale of the project is relatively small. CSP funds are limited to expansion and academic achievement. The planning for another school was not mentioned. Over the course of the grant, the scale of growth is limited to increasing the student population and increasing overall student performance.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 project 's long-term success (4 points).

Sub Question

Strengths:

The financial and operating model for the organization demonstrates commitment from current partners. Based on its experience with turn-around schools, EGI will be able to continue growth and support of schools after the grant expires based on its ability to manage state and federal funds received per school.

EGI's financial model is not dependent on development activities to support ongoing costs. CSP funds will be used for start-up activities only and all projected grant expenses will be absorbed by the end of Year 5. [e62] Personnel costs will comprise the greatest expenditures. [e65]

In addition, 6% of total direct costs will be for the contracted Evaluation services.

EGI has a working relationship with its authorizer since 2005. It has an Operating Agreement with OPSB, which was amended in 2012 to open ECSSF (Sherwood Forest). [E62]

In 2014, the RSD gained the ability to transfer school building and facilities to OPSB for charter authorization. This resulted in EGI's being able to take over the Sarah T. Reed School to establish charter middle and high schools.

Following the damage done to facilities by Hurricane Katrina, EGI facilities are receiving over \$2M in renovation work and a newly constructed building (ECSSF). [E63]

Stakeholders include community members with over 750 signing a petition for the expansion of the Reed school. [e63] Very many letters of support are provided in the application [Appendix C]. In addition, New Schools for New Orleans is an ongoing supporter of EGI. EGI received a subgrant from NSNO of \$1M in USDOE i3 Funds to replicate at the former ICS, i.e. ECSSF (Sherwood.) EGI has a relationship with Tulane University, Xavier University, University of New Orleans, NASA, Project Lead the Way, and Chevron Oil.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear what the fee structure is for the services provided by the CMO.

CSP funds are limited to expansion and academic achievement. The planning for another school was not mentioned. Over the course of the grant, the scale of growth is limited to increasing the student population and increasing overall student performance.

CSP funds will be used to increase student performance through grant dollars applied to personnel. Salaries of hired staff will be absorbed by regular funding streams after the life of the grant [e65]. CSP funds are for start-up purposes and not for on-going expenses, i.e. for annual, regular costs like salaried positions. [e65, Budget explanation, e579]

Reader's Score:

4. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 4

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

Strengths:

EGI will follow the protocols for school closure as delineated in its charter application and upon the decision made by the SEA.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

EGI does not have experience in school closure nor does its authorizer. [e48]

"This process remains somewhat ill-defined as out authorizer as yet to close any school and it is not within the statutory authority to do so." [e48}

EGI does not have its own plan based upon the school not meeting high standards of quality.

Reader's Score:

5. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 (6 points).

Strengths:

Management team members have credentials and are qualified to continue grow EGI schools. The expansion and replication will be led by the Administration and centralized staff who have experience in public education, charter school development, and implementation, as evidenced by the resumes provided in the application. They are currently managing the schools and the relationship with EGI's authorizer. Additional supports will be provided from Board members and school-based principals.

There is a designated Project Director. In addition, key project personnel include the CEO, CAO, Dept. Executive Director, Finance Director, and a Development Director.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Strengths:

Einstein will contract an outside evaluator to measure Outcomes and Processes against GPRA Measures and the Invitation Priority [e13]. The evaluation will accomplish three primary purposes [e51]:

- 1) Ensure fidelity to the logic model
- 2) Ensure accomplishment of project requirements
- 3) Ensure achievement of GPRA goals.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be produced and the plan includes adequate evaluation procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement. Quarterly meetings with the Project Director will be established. [e51]

The evaluator will be responsible for finalization of the Evaluation Plan, collection of data, preparation of annual reports, and the planning and organization of semi-annual meetings with necessary EGI personnel.

Weaknesses:

The evaluator has not yet been identified for project. The evaluator will be selected from a pool of applicants. [e51] It is not apparent that a pool of applicants has actually been compiled.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students****1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Serving High-Need Students (0, 1, 4, or 5 points)**

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through one of the methods described below. An application may receive priority points for only one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1. Therefore, an applicant should address only one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and must specify which element (i.e., (a), (b) or (c)) it is addressing. If an applicant addresses more than one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and does not specify whether it is addressing element (a), (b), or (c), the application will be awarded priority points only for the element addressed in the application that has the highest maximum point value, regardless of the number of priority points the application is awarded for that particular element of Competitive Preference Priority 1.

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through element (a), (b) or (c) as described below:

(a) Supporting Students who are Members of Federally Recognized Indian Tribes. (0 or 5 points)

To meet this priority, an application must demonstrate that the proposed project is designed to improve academic outcomes or learning environments, or both, for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed project is designed to serve students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes through a variety of means, such as creating or expanding charter schools in geographic areas with large numbers of students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes, conducting targeted outreach and recruitment, or including in the charters or performance contracts for the charter schools funded under the project specific performance goals for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

(b) School Improvement. (0 or 4 points)

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 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 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 Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects would complement efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in the State's approved request for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

(c) Promise Zones. (0 or 1 point)

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

Note: To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to www.hud.gov/promisezones. The link to HUD Form 50153 (Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation), which has been cleared by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act, is http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf.

Strengths:

Einstein works with turnaround charters. It was able to turnaround in one year a formerly failing school from an F to a B on the LA Dept of School Performance Score. Two new schools it is opening are based on a closed school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Diversity (0 or 3 points)

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

Note 2: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department s Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf) and "Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html).

Strengths:

EGL schools populations are racially diverse and reflect the communities they serve. The CMO has continued to actively recruit in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese). The Recovery School District and Orleans Parish School Board refer students to EGL schools, including ELL students. A reported 99% of EGL's student population are minorities (58% African-American; 28% Asian, 13% Hispanic, 1% White) and 35% are LEP (EGL runs largest ELL program in NOLA). In addition, close to 15% are SWD and roughly 10% are homeless.

EGL has a strong relationship with its authorizers as both the RSD and OPSB refer students to EGL schools and thus help

EGI reflect the populations the schools are located in.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/27/2015 09:41 AM

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Replication & Expansion - 2: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Einstein Group, Inc. (Charter Management Organization) (U282M150014)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. (Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Eligible Applicant Sub-Questions.)

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

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

(2) Either

(i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or

(ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

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

General:

Einstein has shown the ability to close the achievement gap with their students as evidenced by LEAP testing. Their strength is also evident by improving their school performance score from an "F" to a "B". They have also shows growth within targeted subgroups.

Reader's Score: 46

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 1

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

Strengths:

Einstein has shown success in closing the achievement gap, especially as it relates to STEM. Einstein demonstrates this achievement on LEAP testing (table 1) and outperforming state peers. School performance grade rose from "F" to "B" in one year. Performance has shown growth with "at risk" students over the past 3 years. (e28). The focus on STEM teaching and learning has led to strong achievement results.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

There was a drop in DIBELS achievement and reading proficiency from 11-12 to 12-13 (table 2), but this drop is consistent with scores across the state.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 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:

Einstein serves the target demographic with 86% of students receiving free/reduced lunch (e22). Einstein demonstrates that targeted subgroups are outperforming their peers within the state of Louisiana. (Table 7–e29)

Weaknesses:

The across the board drop in 12-13 year is a weakness regardless of changing tools or assessments.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 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:

Einstein demonstrates strong attendance and retention (table 3), despite the extreme challenges posed by Hurricane Katrina. The return rate demonstrates engagement and success (e19). The attendance rate is above 95% for each of the last 3 years (e31-32).

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. 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:

New Orleans East community fits the educationally disadvantaged students criteria based on wide disparity of services and the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina (e32). Einstein has “filled the void” left by other charter schools that have left or been closed in the area and would serve this population aligned to project goals and achievement. The community has seen flight and an increase in poverty (e34).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Strengths:

Quality is evidenced by previous i3 funds being approved for this replication (e35). The goals around growth and achievement at scale are measurable and feasible. (e36) There is evidence that Einstein will be able to replicate their curriculum and successful delivery of teaching and learning aligned to the CCSS (e36), adequate staffing including a data director to ensure reliable and actionable data, and progressive approaches including blended instruction.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. (Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Management Plan Sub-Questions.)**

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-

(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).

(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).

(3) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project 's long-term success (4 points).

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

(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 (6 points).

General:

Einstein will replicate systems that have already been successful and can scale. The plan is detailed and achieves the goals of the expansion project.

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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:

Successful expansion protocols are already in place from previous expansion. This supports the management plan as a strength and shows appropriate reflection from Einstein. (e40-41) The activities within the plan make sense and are aligned to goals.

Weaknesses:

The plan is very discrete and can be stronger with more general buckets and clearer ownership.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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:

Business plan with constant attention from board of directors (e42). Einstein has created a full development team to ensure quality in this department (e43) Einstein also has partners and a cohort culture to leverage best practices in expansion and replication including NY Charter Schools, Charter Growth Fund, etc (e43).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 project 's long-term success (4 points).

Sub Question

Strengths:

Einstein's finances are solid with strong staffing and governance. (e44) One of the Board explicit functions is budgeting support in this area. Einstein was recognized by the city for smart spending in 2014 with all financials in compliance. (e 45-46). Central office staffing a strategically organized and well-resourced including HR, recruitment, and professional development.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

4. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 4

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

Strengths:

Einstein details how they would in fact follow regulations to close schools without consistent achievement. (e48).

Weaknesses:

No evidence of execution or specific strategies here. Also unclear on which entity has authority and exact protocol. (e48)

Reader's Score:

5. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 (6 points).

Strengths:

The project team has the capacity and relevant experience. The project team is made of up leaders within Einstein and range from instruction, leadership, and operations talent. (e48-50)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Strengths:

Einstein plans to use a variety of valid and reliable data sources for evaluation including COMPASS, annual reviews, and testing data. (e51) The evaluation plan provides adequate feedback loops. Einstein plans to employ an independent 3rd party evaluator to ensure fidelity to the model, achievement of benchmarks, and GPRA goals. The measures and methods described are valid.

Weaknesses:

External evaluator is still TBD.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students****1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Serving High-Need Students (0, 1, 4, or 5 points)**

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through one of the methods described below. An application may receive priority points for only one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1. Therefore, an applicant should address only one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and must specify which element (i.e., (a), (b) or (c)) it is addressing. If an applicant addresses more than one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and does not specify whether it is addressing element (a), (b), or (c), the application will be awarded priority points only for the element addressed in the application that has the highest maximum point value, regardless of the number of priority points the application is awarded for that particular element of Competitive Preference Priority 1.

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through element (a), (b) or (c) as described below:

(a) Supporting Students who are Members of Federally Recognized Indian Tribes. (0 or 5 points)

To meet this priority, an application must demonstrate that the proposed project is designed to improve academic outcomes or learning environments, or both, for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed project is designed to serve students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes through a variety of means, such as creating or expanding charter schools in geographic areas with large numbers of students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes, conducting targeted outreach and recruitment, or including in the charters or performance contracts for the charter schools funded under the project specific performance goals for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

(b) School Improvement. (0 or 4 points)

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 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 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 Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects would complement efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in the State's approved request for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

(c) Promise Zones. (0 or 1 point)

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

Note: To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to www.hud.gov/promisezones. The link to HUD Form 50153 (Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals

and Implementation), which has been cleared by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act, is http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf.

Strengths:

Evidence of identifying specific students for turnaround in accordance with LEA's and using valid strategies from T&L model to increase achievement.

Weaknesses:

No evidence of other indicators

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Diversity (0 or 3 points)

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

Note 2: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department s Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf) and "Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html).

Strengths:

Evidence of promoting Diversity in model with regards to family engagement, recruitment, and professional development for staff. Applicant partners also represent a broad range and are focused on diversity. Data focus on targeted subgroups like SPED and ELL.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/27/2015 05:13 PM

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Replication & Expansion - 2: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Einstein Group, Inc. (Charter Management Organization) (U282M150014)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. (Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Eligible Applicant Sub-Questions.)

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

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

(2) Either

(i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or

(ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

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

General:

Applicant has met the criteria for Quality of Applicant by demonstrating a track record of success by the following:

- 1- Meeting Absolut Priority 1 of Experience of Operating or Managing High Quality Charter Schools and
- 2- Meeting Absolute Priority 2 of Serving a Low Demographic

Applicant has met the criteria for Quality of Applicant 1,2(I),3.(Pg e19)

This is evident from EGI's second campus was the first to rise in Louisiana from a school performance of an "F" to a "B" in one year. In addition, this campus was also a failing charter campus in the past that stagnated at an "F" rating until applicant took over.

Applicant has also been designated at as one of the 21 High Performing High Poverty schools in the state in 2014. Applicant also provides data that shows from 2012-2014, EGI students consistently performed higher than students across the state.

Reader's Score: 50

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 1

(1) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has

Sub Question

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:

Applicant has met criteria for QEAP1. (Pg e28-e30)

This is evident from EGI's second campus being raised from an "F" to a "B" rating in one year.

EGI shows sufficient data to prove that from 2012-2014, their students performed higher than students in the state.

EGI took over a failing charter campus in 2013 with 80% of a retention rate from the previous charter operator. EGI

also shows significant improvement of subgroups such as economically disadvantaged, ELL, and males of color.

(Pg 5)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 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:

Applicant has met criteria for EAP2.

Applicant has experienced academic improvement in the last three years in a wide array of subgroups such as minorities, ELL, SPED, and 504 students. (Pg 14)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 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:

Applicant has met criteria for EAP3. (Pg e28-e30)

Applicant has achieved results given the circumstances surrounding the community. Applicant has realized an increase of testing scores. Applicant states that approximately 70% of the student population has returned since Hurricane Katrina.

Applicant has also conveyed and provides substantial proof that there is intensive community support for EGI. In

Sub Question

addition, EGI has demonstrated a higher performance in attendance, retention, and attrition in all EGI subgroups compared to other schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:**Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

- 1. 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:

Applicant has met criteria for serving disadvantaged students. EGI prides itself in absorbing underperforming schools into its portfolio and greatly improving them. Applicant has encountered special circumstances by existing in an area that has suffered great loss from a natural disaster (Hurricane Katrina) and is still experiencing the pains of rebuilding its community 10 years later. For example: Scarce supply of community resources still exists such as schools, churches, houses of worship, and healthcare.(Pg e32-e34) With these circumstances, EGI fills a void of limited educational options within the community and with its expansion, will become an even greater asset to the existing students of the community. In addition to subgroups, 10% of EGI's students body also qualifies as being homeless.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Strengths:

Applicant has met criteria for quality of project design for replication and expansion. (Pg e34-e40)
Applicant states clear goal, objectives, and outcomes.
Due to EGI's past record, they have been accepted by OPSB as a highly qualified charter operator.

EGI conveys the following project goals:

1. EGI to add to the nationally available charter seats available around the nation
2. Percentage of 4th and 8th grade students at or above the proficient level for state exams

3. Financial Proficiency

based on:

- 1: The need for additional facilities/grades levels to serve their target community.
2. EGI's proven track record of student academic success.
3. EGI's proven track record of operational/financial success
- 4: EGI's track record of success for attracting and retaining talented principals and teachers.
- 5: EGI's community support

The previously stated project goals are also supplemented by milestones. EIG also conveys that all data collected is utilized by the existing teachers in order to evaluate their students and set learning growth goals with each student in their class. (Pg 22) This aspect provides each teacher with the opportunity for "ownership" of their individual classrooms thus serving as a catalyst for EGI's success.

EIG also conveys the method in which they are replicating and expanding their instructional method such as the use of a web based system, pedagogy methods (including subgroups,) and additionally planning educational enrichment methods such as making CTE courses available for older students of the community.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **(Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Management Plan Sub-Questions.)**

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-

(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).

(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).

(3) A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success (4 points).

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

(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 (6 points).

General:

Applicant has met criteria for Management Plan (1,2,3,5) (Pg 25-35)

Management is well aware and possesses the needed credentials to oversee a program of this nature.

Applicant has not met criteria 4. (Pg e48)

Applicant does not have a solid plan in place to close an underperforming charter school.
Please see comments in each section.

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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:

Applicant has met criteria for QMP1 (Pg e40-e42)

EGI has specific protocol developed to support its last expansion. (pg 25)

EGI conveys 12 steps of implementation that management intends to follow that is replicated from its existing successful protocol.

EGI already possesses a proven track record of bringing its second campus from an F to a B rating in one year.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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:

Applicant has met criteria for QMPP2.(Pg e42-e48) Applicant presents an adequate business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring quality.

EGI's initial charter contained a detailed road map for facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement targets. governance, oversight, and human resources. These protocols have since been updated, however still remain in effect producing tangible results.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 project 's long-term success (4 points).

Strengths:

Applicant has met criteria for QMPP3. (Pg e63-e65)

Applicant has demonstrated a commitment and overwhelming support from the nonprofit sector, local community, and local businesses. They also provide a platform for their recipients to participate in a "buy in" program by implementing an open door policy campus wide.(Pg 49)

This dynamic is paramount their program's success.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

4. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 4

(4) The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not have a solid plan in place to close an underperforming charter school. besides falling back on its authorizer or SEA. (pg 33)

Reader's Score:

5. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 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 (6 points).

Strengths:

Applicant has met criteria for QMPP5. (Pg e48-e50.

Administration is well equip to oversee a program of this nature.

6 individuals are listed as key personnel in the replication and expansion process. Every individual maintains a positive track record of successful charter school administration.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Strengths:

Applicant has met criteria for project evaluation. (Pg 36-38)

EGL will contract with an independent evaluator to provide unbiased information. (Pg 51)

Evaluations are to occur quarterly and are set to accomplish 3 purposes:

1:Ensure fidelity to the logic model

2:Ensure accomplishment of project requirements

3:Ensure achievement of GPRA goals

Applicant performs an additional evaluation beyond the scope of the anticipated grant project using a quasi experimental model. (Pg 11-12)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students****1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Serving High-Need Students (0, 1, 4, or 5 points)**

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through one of the methods described below. An application may receive priority points for only one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1. Therefore, an applicant should address only one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and must specify which element (i.e., (a), (b) or (c)) it is addressing. If an applicant addresses more than one element of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and does not specify whether it is addressing element (a), (b), or (c), the application will be awarded priority points only for the element addressed in the application that has the highest maximum point value, regardless of the number of priority points the application is awarded for that particular element of Competitive Preference Priority 1.

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through element (a), (b) or (c) as described below:

(a) Supporting Students who are Members of Federally Recognized Indian Tribes. (0 or 5 points)

To meet this priority, an application must demonstrate that the proposed project is designed to improve academic outcomes or learning environments, or both, for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the proposed project is designed to serve students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes through a variety of means, such as creating or expanding charter schools in geographic areas with large numbers of students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes, conducting targeted outreach and recruitment, or including in the charters or performance contracts for the charter schools funded under the project specific performance goals for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

(b) School Improvement. (0 or 4 points)

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 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 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 Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects would complement efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in the State's approved request for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

(c) Promise Zones. (0 or 1 point)

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

Note: To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to www.hud.gov/promisezones. The link to HUD Form 50153 (Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals

and Implementation), which has been cleared by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act, is http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf.

Strengths:

Applicant has met criteria for CPP1(b)

Applicant has demonstrated that expansion will occur in partnership with an LEA in the fall of 2015.

Applicant also has a highly successful track record of absorbing low performing schools into their portfolio.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Promoting Diversity (0 or 3 points)

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

Note 2: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf) and "Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html).

Strengths:

Applicant meets criteria for CPP2(a.b.c)

Applicant serves English learning students as well as disabled students at a comparable rate to other schools.

Applicant discusses how they attempt to promote diversity with their limited resources. Applicant goes above and beyond to promote student diversity. (pg 51) EGI's advertising budget is over \$100,000. The applicant advertises in three different languages in print, billboards, radio, and on television.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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