

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

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Lawndale Educational and Regional Network (U282M150008)

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:

Lawndale Educational and Regional Network (LEARN) is a CMO located in the Chicago, Illinois area. Based on the performance of its schools, as delineated in the application, LEARN has been able to demonstrate success in increasing student academic achievement for its students.

Overall, LEARN has been successful with most subgroups of students that are educationally disadvantaged except for Students with Disabilities.

Reader's Score: 44

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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

Lawndale Educational and Regional Network (LEARN) is a growing CMO network of public charter schools in the Chicago, Illinois area. Established in 2001, it is currently operating 8 K-8 schools with 3,400 students in Chicago and suburb of North Chicago and will open a 9th in the fall of 2015 in Waukegan, a suburb of Chicago.

LEARN has been recognized for its success as evidenced by receipt of two Charter Schools Growth Fund awards of \$3 million in 2008 and \$4.8 million in 2015 and a previous award of a CSP grant of \$1.6 million (2010).

LEARN's mission is to provide excellent educational opportunities in historically underserved low-income communities in the Chicago area. [e34] It is also to provide children with the academic foundation and ambition to earn a college degree." [e41]

Across the LEARN network of schools, the students being served are:

- 92% low income
- 96% minority (89% AA; 7% Hispanic)
- lower than 10%SWD
- 3% EL

LEARN has been able to demonstrate success in increasing student academic achievement for its students. This is evidenced the performance of LEARN students (broken into subgroups) from 2012-2014 in comparison to the State. Even though the changes to state assessments makes it difficult to compare year to year between 2012 and 2014 [e24], overall LEARN students outperformed the State. Table 1 "ISAT Percent Meets/Exceeds by Subgroup, State V. Learn" [e25] illustrates LEARN performance meets and exceeds the State on state assessments (ISAT) in Math and Reading. By 8th grade, LEARN students meet proficiency standards on ISAT at similar rate to statewide averages for reading (55%, 1 percent below state) and a rate that surpasses averages in math (77%).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

Table 1 [e25] indicates that in most all areas LEARN outperforms the State performance averages and it also shows that there has been an overall drop in absolute performance from 2013 to 2014. This drop is not specifically addressed.

Table 1 [e25] breaks out subgroup performance but does not include SWDs. The narrative specifically mentions that "LEARN's low-income, Black, and Hispanic students and English Learners have nearly always outperformed statewide proficiency rates on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for those subgroups." [e24] and does not include SWD as part of this comparison. Elsewhere in the application it is noted that LEARN SWDs underperform in comparison to the State. [e39]

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

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:

Overall, LEARN has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for its. As indicated below, the vast majority of LEARN students fall under the subgroups defined for this CSP grant. Generally and overall, LEARN subgroups outperformed the State, Districts and schools in the same area as LEARN schools.

The LEARN students being served consist of 92% low income, 96% minority (89% African-American; 7% Hispanic), lower than 10% SWD, and 3% EL. In comparison to the State, Districts and surrounding schools, LEARN serves more African-American and FRL students. [Table 9, e36]

Overall, LEARN has been able to demonstrate success in increasing student academic achievement for its students. On state assessment data provided in the application, LEARN has outperformed its host Districts (Chicago Public Schools and North Chicago) and the State as evidenced by Table 10 [e37], which compares performance on the ISAT (composite of reading, math, science) of LEARN vs. Comparison schools and districts.

By 8th grade, "LEARN's students have not only closed the achievement gap in reading compared to the state average, they have surpassed the state average in math." [e34] LEARN students meet proficiency standards on ISAT at similar rate to statewide averages for reading (55%, 1 percent below state) and a rate that surpasses averages in math (77%).

Weaknesses:

Information and data are not consistently provided. The grouping of information and details varies from table to table. For example, Table 10 [e37] compares LEARN versus area schools and districts on the ISAT indicate LEARN students outperform both. The ISAT performance is a composite of reading, math and science. A breakdown of subject specific performance of LEARN, the districts, and comparison schools was not provided on the table. On Table 7 [e35], the comparison data did include Reading and Math scores from 2012-14 between LEARN and the State but did not include the North Chicago or CPS or other schools. In comparing student populations to similar schools [Table 9, e36], the table only included minority and FRL percentages; there was not similar data provided for EL or SWD.

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:

LEARN has consistently been on par with or outperformed CPS, North Chicago and Illinois in achieving results for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students. On state assessment data provided in the application, LEARN students have outperformed the State. This is evidenced by student performance in 2014. That year, 41% of LEARN's low-income students meet/exceeded reading standards which was on par with the State; 52% meeting/exceeding math standards which was 7% above the State. [e24]

Sub Question

Tables 15 (percentages of students that meet/exceed on the ISAT) and Table 16 (8th grade performance) further illustrate subgroup performance in comparison to State subgroups. [e45] and indicates that LEARN African-American, Hispanic, Low-Income and ELL students outperform their State counterparts.

The application includes a break out subgroups performance versus the State. [Table 11, e38-e39] For African-American, Hispanic, ELL, and Low-Income students, LEARN has outperformed the State in 4th and 8th grades. SWD was the only subgroup for which LEARN is not outperforming State [e38]. As a means to address this, in 2015 LEARN hired its first Director of Special Education to oversee network-wide improvements in serving students with disabilities.

LEARN has been able to show progress over the past three years and has achieved results in attendance and attrition rates. In 2014, for almost all LEARN schools, attendance rates exceeded CPS, North Chicago SD, and comparison schools. "All but one school also met or exceeded the state attendance average." [e42] Subgroups (African-American, Hispanic, low-income, LEP and IEP) demonstrate higher attendance rates. [Table 13, e43] For attrition, rates are lower than the State (except for 2014), CPS, North Chicago, and comparison schools. [Table 14, e44]

Another indicator of achievement discussed in the application is that in 2014, 90% of 8th graders matriculated to a college preparatory high school, "meaning at least 75% will later enroll in college." [e56]

Weaknesses:

LEARN has indicated stronger results for EL and FRL student but not for SWDs. The performance of SWD on state assessments has been under the State's for all three years that data is presented (2012-2014). It is unclear why LEARN hired a Director of Special Education to oversee network-wide improvements in 2015 when the first school was founded in 2001. It was not explained why it took 14 years for a Director of Special Education to be placed or if the need for better special education supports has only been within the past three years.

As mentioned previously, information and data are not consistently provided. The grouping of information and details varies from table to table. Tables 15 & 16 further illustrate subgroup performance in comparison to State subgroups but Table 15 does not include SWD and Table 16 (which is specific to 8th Grade performance) does not include ELL or SWD. [e35]

In the attendance rates data was not provided for all subgroups for all schools. Specifically, African-American and Hispanic students data from LEARN North Chicago was not included. In addition, IEP/SWD attendance information for LEARN schools was only from 2014 and there was no LEARN low-income data indicated on Table 13 [e43]. Though the application does state that this data is not available there is no clear explanation why network-based information for three years is unavailable.

Though the attrition rates (Table 14, [e44]) rates are lower than the State (except for 2014), CPS, North Chicago, and comparison schools, the rates have actually increased from 2012-2014, from 9% to 10% to 13%. The application does not address the increase or what measures the network has taken to reverse this trend.

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:

LEARN's academic program has shown, via the data provided, to assist educationally disadvantaged students to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. The vast majority of LEARN students are educationally disadvantaged students and as indicated in Table 10 [e37], on the ISAT, LEARN students outperform its host districts and comparative schools (schools located within 1 mile of LEARN campuses).

LEARN's model is based on a System of Learning that provides differentiation under the components/framework of: high academic standards; aligned curricula standards; assessment driven instruction; robust instructional monitoring and accountability; and intensive instructor support. [e46] It has a longer school day and year (17% more classroom time than Chicago Public Schools and 20% more time than North Chicago SD [e45]). The LEARN model also includes more adults in the classroom with a full-time teaching assistant in every K-2 classroom and a part-time assistant in every classroom 3-6th. LEARN has the ability to hire, develop, retain its own teachers and principals.

LEARN's assessment driven instructional practices incorporates NWEA MAP for internal assessments. As provided in the application, LEARN students surpass national growth average every year at every grade level K-8 [e33]; Table 12 [e41-42].

The Education Program consists of:

- ELA: Common Core standards and aligned; TC Reading & Writing Workshop; Balanced Literacy, Differentiated instruction
- MATH: Everyday Math
- Science: Next Generation Science Standards, FOSS, Science Education for Public Understanding

For subgroup populations, SWD are provided with the least restrictive environment. LEARN is currently revision its EL to better serve these students in anticipation of the school opening in Waukegan, which has a large ELL population.

LEARN intends to bring model to underserved communities in the Chicago area, especially to the suburbs of Chicago where more minorities, especially African-American students, are relocating.

Weaknesses:

LEARN is in the process of revising its EL program to better serve students and will potentially offer Transitional Bilingual Education. [e53] LEARN will also employ a bilingual Lead Teacher specific to the Waukegan campus. It is not clear in the application what has been implemented in the past and why LEARN is revising its program when it appears, based on the data submitted, their EL students are doing well in comparison to the State and Districts. According to network data, it has proven to be more effective.

A revision to the SWD program, beyond hiring a Director of Special Education wasn't articulated. Given the performance differences with LEARN SWD, an assessment on the special education program may be warranted.

LEARN does not yet have approved charters for the replications.

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Strengths:

The application adequately describes the design of the proposed project. LEARN has a strong and long track record (over 13 years) and currently has a working relationship with its authorizers. LEARN plans to replicate and expand its current network of schools and will enroll an additional 3,520 students. The Project for \$6.547M [e20, e56] seeks to:

- Open 8 new K-8 and expand an existing campus by 2 grades
 - o Objective: to expand enrollment at LEARN Hunter Perkins by 2 grades
 - o Objective: to enroll additional 3,520 students from communities that are at least 60% low-income
- Close the achievement gap by meeting/surpassing Illinois averages on all state tests by 2020
 - o Objective: to meeting/exceeding state averages in math, reading, science
 - o Objective: to work with EL and SWD [e57]
 - o Objective: to create formative assessment, using data driven instruction
- Use CSP funds also for intensive staff development
 - o Objective: to share best practices with school districts

The proposed new 8 K-8 schools and the expanded 2 campus will serve EL & SWD comparable to the schools in surrounding areas. Though the charters have yet to be received, LEAN seek those charters in areas that are similar to where LEARN schools are currently located.

A copy of management agreement which delineated responsibilities between the network and school was provided with application.

Weaknesses:

It is noted that there is a discrepancy on the request for CSP funds. Within the narrative the CSP request is for \$6.547M [e20] which differs from what's on form SF-424, (\$1.661 M, [e5]).

Elsewhere in the application the project also contained plans to share PD with district schools. [e27-e30] It is not clear how this correspond with goals/objectives as stated in the project plan of replication, expansion and closing the achievement gap for LEARN students. It appears the best practices component is supplemental to the main objectives of the plan and grant. It is not clear when the application mentions that CSP funds will be used for intensive staff development that this is the same as sharing best practices with local school districts. [e20]

The charters for the new schools have yet to be received. There is broad (but probably accurate) assumption that more charters will be received and that the current charter for Hunter Perkins will be revised to allow for continued expansion.

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 should achieve the objectives in a timely manner and within the proposed budget.

The application has made assumptions on a number of elements, including receipt of the additional charters, securing facilities, and enrollment demand from the intended communities to be served.

Reader's Score: 17

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 should achieve the objectives in a timely manner and within the proposed budget. LEARN has a strong and long track record (over 13 years) and currently manages relationships with two different authorizers. The CMO provides oversight and support to each school site. It has a robust staff in place which includes a CEO, seven Chiefs and Directors; nine managers, and eleven associate managers. There are currently thirty-five people serving eight schools. [e27]

LEARN had previously received a Charter Schools Growth Fund grants to build the management infrastructure to support the expansion of the network [e23]. The CMO has been created to support the existing schools and to launch the new ones by overseeing teacher recruitment, disseminating best practices and ensuring consistency among the schools, providing academic support, providing back office operations, and providing professional development. During the life of the CSP grant, LEARN will add another 30 people with funding from the Charter Schools Growth Fund and other funders.

Within the application, timelines and milestone are provided that correspond to the goals and objectives of the plans. In addition, a detailed table delineates Task, Milestones, Timelines and Responsible person [e62-63] for the project. The roles and responsibilities are laid out [e68-e74] and the Board is part of the description of responsibilities. The majority of roles and responsibilities are those of the CMO.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The continued capacity across the CMO is not explained beyond adding another 30 central staff members. It is unclear what those staff members will do and how they will augment LEARN. There was no organizational chart provided in the application.

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 the life of the grant is adequate. The CSP funds will provide critical one-time start-up money as delineated in the budget narrative [e66].

The proposed budget is compliant to the restrictions of the grant. LEARN has existing controls in place to ensure that each school receives its allocated funds, i.e. a fiscal control structure is in place for the schools.

Based on its experience with its current schools, LEARN will be able to continue growth and support of the new schools after the grant expires. It has the ability to manage state and federal funds received per school and has demonstrated past fundraising capacity. Since 2008, LEARN has demonstrated an active fundraising history.

- 2008, Charter Schools Growth Fund award of \$3 million
- 2010 Recipient of CSP of \$1.6 million
- o replication of 3 schools and expansion of 2 existing schools
- 2015 CSGF award of \$4.8 million

Weaknesses:

LEARN made large enrollment assumptions to cover per pupil funding gaps. [e64-e65] It is assumed that demand for those seats is prevalent; however there is no indication within the application that illustrates the demand. For example, no waitlists were included in the application.

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:

The financial and operating model for the organization demonstrates commitment from current and future partners. Based on its experience with its current schools, LEARN will be able to continue growth and support of the new schools after the grant expires. LEARN has a strong and long track record with working with its authorizers and managing its schools operationally and financially. It is currently manages relationships with two authorizers.

In addition, the network has garnered support from stakeholders as evidenced by the letters of support (4) provided including from a foundation, a politician, and two non-profit organizations. In addition, the Charter Schools Growth

Sub Question

Fund other funders committed \$6.6 mill to LEARN. [e60]

Weaknesses:

There is not a clear indication of how LEARN will secure facilities and funding for the schools. It was also not apparent how much community support there is for the proposed schools. The letters of support submitted did not include any from parents or community leaders in the areas of where LEARN is intending to expand.

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:

The application gives assurances that the "Network will not hesitate to close a school that is not meeting high standards." [e68] A School Closing Task Force will be created that will ensure that the closure is as seamless as possible.

LEARN has not yet have to close one of its schools.

Weaknesses:

The application did not define how it will determine a school is under underperforming. How it define what a school that falls below high standards is not done.

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 CMO staff has credentials and is qualified to continue growth of CMO. The work of replication is a continuation of growth of LEARN. CMO management supports and specific roles are provided. [e68-73] The management structure includes Financial, Information Technology, Development, Human Resources, Teaching and Learning, Facilities, Real Estate, Student Support Services and Compliance. As evidenced by the LEARN Design Team credentials, staff is qualified to continue grow CMO. [e70-e73]

The administration and centralized staff have experience in public education, charter school development, and implementation. LEARN is currently managing the eight (soon to be nine) existing schools and relationship with its authorizers. Additional supports will be provided by the Board.

Weaknesses:

The ongoing capacity of the CMO is not detailed. Though the network intends to add another 30 central staff members how those new staff members will support LEARN is unclear. There was no organizational chart provided

Sub Question

in the application to indicate the current staffing model and the planned model.

The newly hired Director of Special Education is not specifically mentioned as part of the management team. It is not clear how the Director will coordinate special education services across the current schools and how s/he will work with the new schools.

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:

The application provides CSP project objectives and those will be used for plan evaluation [e75-e76]. A table of qualitative/quantitative data to be collected based on these objectives is provided. The table includes Benchmarks, Data for Collection, Schedule for Data Collection, and Method for Data Collection. For example, one of the benchmarks is to raise student achievement each year on state reading and math assessments until the percentage of LEARN students meet/exceed state standards. The data to be collected is assessment data, to be done annually. Part of project will be deemed successful if that benchmark is met.

The CAO will monitor progress towards academic goals and the CEO will monitor progress towards school openings and enrollment targets.

Weaknesses:

As provided in the application, there is nothing in place to specifically gauge the success of the grant project; data collection is not the same as plan evaluation. Quantitative data seems to be limited to State assessment and enrollment numbers. Other measures such as Attrition, Retention, Graduation, and Attendance rates are not specified. The measures to increase in subgroups and their performance are not detailed in the methodology of the plan evaluation. It is also unclear how LEARN will measure/gauge shared best practices.

Though data will be monitored by the CAO an CEO, it is unclear how data collection will be used to evaluate the plan. If course corrections need to take place it is unclear how that will occur.

There will not be an outside evaluator for this grant.

Reader's Score: 7

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:

The application states that it qualifies [e20] for this Priority Preference because LEARN will seek to partner with North Chicago School District 187 and will offer PD. LEARN will also invite district and priority/focus school leaders to participate in 'walkthroughs' [e27]. In Year 1 of grant, up to 18 North Chicago SD 187 administrators/school leaders will be invited to participate in two walk throughs; in addition sixty-eight hours of PD will be offered.

Within the project management of shared practices, a Table of Action, responsibility, and timeframe are provided [e30]. The plans include additional outreach/sharing in Years 2 & 3 of grant.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has intentions of seeking a formal relationship with the North Chicago School District 187 to share best practices. There are no current, established mechanisms in place for this to occur and it is unclear NCS D 187 is willing to enter into a partnership with LEARN.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

LEARN schools promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity. As stated in the application, LEARN 'promote student diversity and serve students with disabilities and English Learners at a rate that is at least comparable to those of public schools in the surrounding areas.' [e30]

The network has expanded its recruitment efforts for ELs (e.g. marketing materials, direct mailings, hiring more Spanish speakers) to closer mirror districts schools in proximity of LEARN campuses.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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: Lawndale Educational and Regional Network (U282M150008)

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:

LEARN has relevant and compelling data showing they are able to close the achievement gap and target students in the documented subgroups. LEARN also has recognition from Charter school growth fund.

Reader's Score: 45

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:

LEARN's metrics, goals, and mission are in line with the criteria. LEARN 92% low-income status fits target criteria (e20) and expansion of 3,500 students is ambitious and feasible given the management plan. Documented track record of success that outpaces its peers (table 1, e22) This is especially noticeable in target subgroups with results as high as 30+ % points above state norms and peer schools within the community. Recognized by charter school growth fund as the strongest results in Chicago (e26). There is compelling evidence that achievement grows with

Sub Question

retention at LEARN. (e39)

Weaknesses:

Achievement rates dropped over time which is consistent with the State, however the tools have changed in this period. (e24) There are still gaps in SPED achievement. (e37)

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:

Documented track record of success that outpaces its peers (table 1, e22) This is especially noticeable in target subgroups. There is compelling evidence that the LEARN demographic mimics the general community. Table 4 documents the low income status of school community. (e27)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

Consistent attendance at 95% (table 13) and retention rates are stronger than city/state norms.

Weaknesses:

Attrition rates increased from 9 to 13% over the last 3 years (table 15) and no role of SPED director.

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:

LEARN serves educationally disadvantaged students as described in tables and explanation in criteria 1 and again seen in table 15/16, as well as the longer day/year model. (e45)

Weaknesses:

Only starting more detailed support for students with special needs.

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 plan to add 8 schools and grow by 3,500 students over the next 5 years is ambitious and feasible given the track record in achievement, serving target populations and the model of LEARN. The locations around Chicago fit the criteria of low-income which is consistent with existing LEARN schools. They are attaining the stated objectives with regards to exceeding state averages with adherence to approved tools. (e55)

Detailed explanation of the teaching and learning model, its alignment to CCSS with a focus on differentiation is a strength. The instructional methodology is strong with proven reading, writing, math, and science strategies. (e47-50) The focus on ELL is also strong, including the Transitional Bilingual Education model (e53). The strong attention to bilingual marketing is compelling as a focus area. (e61).

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:

Management plan contains evidence of project team having relevant success with current schools. Strong detail in both operations and developing staff.

Reader's Score: 15

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 structure of Network leaders and CEO creates a capable and experienced project team. The management plan is detailed with clear ownership—parallel plans for PD and HR/Operations expansions show back office strength. (e-62-63) Expansion timelines are feasible (e64).

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:

No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

Based on a large enrollment assumption w/o great detail. (e64-65)

Reader's Score:

Sub Question

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:

Detailed projections and track record of raising funds to open schools. (e66)

Weaknesses:

A large fundraising gap exists and the reserves cover only 4 months of operating. Applicant has never funded this size scale growth. (e67)

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:

Systems with Network Leaders are in place with clear values and non-negotiables for school leaders (e67). Statement of autonomy/accountability balance within network has proven successful as no school are in a process of closing.

Weaknesses:

No actual experience with closing processes.

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:

Structure is sound, differentiated and led by teams that are experienced and capable. The buckets of work and descriptions of ownership have detail and relate to accomplishing project goals. (e68-75) The timelines and meeting loops are feasible.

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:

Cycles of teacher feedback promote reflection and learning with network-wide PD as a data-driven focus (e76). Parent surveys are also a quality tool.

Weaknesses:

No 3rd party evaluation and less detail on connection to goals to make this section as compelling. Limited to enrollment and other basic metrics (e75).

Reader's Score: 7

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:

No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

No evidence noted.

Reader's Score: 0

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: Lawndale Educational and Regional Network (U282M150008)

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:

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Lawndale Educational and Regional Network (LEARN) has met the criteria for Quality of Applicant by demonstrating a track record of success by the following:

- 1- Meeting Absolute Priority 1 of Experience of Operating or Managing High Quality Charter Schools (Pg 1) and
- 2- Meeting Absolute Priority 2 of Serving a Low Demographic (as noted in Pg 5)

Applicant has an impressive record of beginning with 110 students in 2001 to most recently 3400 students attending in grades K-8.

Applicant has shown consistency in the past 3 years in closing the historic gap of subgroups.

However, applicant only conveys data that pertains to minorities or free and reduced lunch even though on Pg 9 the applicant conveys that they have an EL population of 3% and an IEP population of 10%. Not much data for ESL or SPED exists in the application to prove a consistency over all subgroups. Applicant does convey that students with IEP's are the only subgroup considered disadvantaged that are not outperforming the state. (Pg 16) LEARN goes further to convey that in Spring of 2015, they hired their first Director of Special Education to oversee network wide improvements to special education services. Applicant does convey that they do have a multi tiered system of supports, as required by federal law, to prevent the over identification of students with disabilities. (Pg 9) They also cite that USDE has cited the ISBE for the over identification of special education students. LEARN does not elaborate as to how that circumstance does in fact correlate with their method of identifying a SPED student. Also, applicant also states that their ESL and SPED student

population is low compared to other school. LEARN does convey that due to demographic regions(surrounding neighborhoods with gang activity) surrounding families are hesitate to being their child to a different neighborhood. (Pg 9)

Reader's Score: 48

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:

Applicant has shown consistency in the past three years of student academic achievement.

LEARN serves K-8th grade with a population of 92% that is considered low income.

LEARN conveys that by 8th grade, LEARN students meet proficiency standards on the ISAT at a rate similar to the statewide average in reading and at a rate that surpasses the statewide average in Math.(Pg11)

In 2014, LEARN's low income students matched the state average for low income students in reading with a 41% meeting/exceeding standards. The same population surpassed the state average by 7 percentage points. African American, Hispanic, and EL students exceeded the state averages for their subgroups in 2014 by 6 to 32 percentage points in reading and 9-28 percentage points in math.

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 the past three years of demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps among subgroups that are represented (Pg 11-18) Applicant conveys data that pertains to state mandated testing. In addition, applicant conveys how they measure beyond proficiency standards according to NWEA's Measure of Academic Progress(Pg 19)

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

Sub Question

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:

LEARN has conveyed a consistency with its student body outperforming demographically similar group of comparison schools on state standardized tests. LEARN provides data to prove that its overall attendance rate is above average. (Pg 20) LEARN also conveys that attrition rates for the campuses cannot be documented due to data available to make those calculations. (Pg 21)

Weaknesses:

LEARN also conveys that all but one of its campuses experienced an attendance rate that exceeded the average for Chicago Public Schools for N Chicago School District and for demographically similar comparison schools. (Pg 20)

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:

Learn does meet the criteria for assisting educationally disadvantaged students with a total of 92% of their student population on free and reduced lunch, 89% African American, and 7% Hispanic. (Pg 22)

Weaknesses:

However, LEARN does not elaborate on all subgroups that exist on campus that would qualify as educationally disadvantaged that they have mentioned previously in the proposal. Such as EL students or students with disabilities. LEARN conveys that their subgroups have "almost always" outperformed the state average. (Pg 22)

Reader's Score: 8

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:

LEARN's project design includes opening 8 new high performing charter schools along with the expansion of an existing campus. This replication and expansion will add an additional 3,520 available seats. LEARN conveys 4 objectives/goals along with milestones to meet each stated objective/goal.

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 the criteria for Management Plan 1,3,4,5.

LEARN conveys 4 objectives/goals in order to implement the proposed project. LEARN also goes further to state all milestones along with objectives/goals in addition to clearly conveying each administrator's responsibility.

LEARN does convey a business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality of the performance school. However, LEARN does convey that in the event this replication and expansion is made possible, a \$16 million dollar operating deficit is anticipated.

In addition, LEARN does provide proof of support from the Philanthropic sector that will supplement 40% of the projects projected shortfall.

An adopted policy does exist for closing an underperforming charter school.

LEARN also conveys more than adequate qualifications of administration and staff that will be involved in the proposed program.

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

Sub Question

time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (4 points).

Strengths:

Applicant has met criteria. LEARN does convey a management plan that is complete with 4 objectives/goals along with milestones, timelines, and responsibilities. (Pg 40-41)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

LEARN does convey a 5 year business plan for the proposed expansion and replication.

Weaknesses:

However, LEARN does on to convey that in the event this project is funded, they do anticipate a funding deficit of \$16 million dollars. (Pg 43)

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 by providing proof of long term stakeholder support through private as well as governmental entities. In the event this project is funded, LEARN anticipates approximately 40% of its anticipated budget shortfall to be supplemented with private funding.

This does provide substantial evidence that speaks highly of the existing administration and impact of LEARN itself.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

Applicant has met criteria for quality of Management Plan Pt 4. Applicant does have an existing policy in place in order to close an underperforming charter school. (Pg 45-46) This includes forming what is dubbed as a "School Closing Task Force," as a last measure that is comprised of school leaders, school staff, and student families.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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 Quality of Management plan Pt 5. (Pg 49-51)

Applicant lists 10 key individuals that will be involved in overseeing the proposed program. Each individual is highly competent and experienced enough to oversee a program of this nature.

LEARN also goes further to elaborate its Board of Director involvement and assigned duties.

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 of project evaluation with 10 benchmarks of program measurement in order to guide them to the 4 objectives/goals previously mentioned. (Pg 53-54)

Along with quantitative data assessment, LEARN also conveys they will collect qualitative data assessment through teacher feedback approximately 6 times throughout the year. Parental surveys are also planned.

Weaknesses:

However, applicant conveys that all evaluations will occur internally.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Applicant conveys that CPP1(b) for school improvement. However, applicant is not absorbing the North Chicago District 187 into its portfolio. Applicant will be offering shared services by providing the opportunity of walkthroughs of LEARN along with PD to administration and staff of schools that have been identified as priority or focus schools under a waiver from the USDE under the ESEA Flexibility. (Pg 5-8) Applicant also conveys which schools administration and staff will be participating from. Reviewer found this description to indeed qualify for CPP1 (b) and awards full points for this section of the proposal.

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 also goes on further to elaborate as to how they promote student diversity on its campuses by mail campaigns, Spanish speaking staff, a public information event, and school opening publications. (Pg 10,11)

Weaknesses:

However, LEARN does not have sufficient data to convey that they do serve EL students or students with disabilities at a rate comparable to surrounding public schools. They convey 3% for EL (the closest comparable statistic is 10% for comparable public schools), and they convey 10% for SPED(the closest comparable statistic is 14% for comparable local schools).

Reader's Score: 0

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