

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Replication & Expansion - 4: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Noble Network of Charter Schools (U282M150026)

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:

Though applicant does not provide data on the "other end" of achievement gaps (i.e., White students at the State level, non-low-income students at the State level), in comparing Noble's students, who are predominantly Black, Latino, and low-income, to State averages for all students, applicant consistently performs well in this regard, particularly in terms of graduation rate (Element 3) and PSAE and ACT performance (all Elements). Some data points are either missing (e.g., State-level retention and attendance) or inadequately explained (e.g., 2013 to 2014 drop in applicant's EL population PSAE performance from 2013 to 2014 (25 to 11%).

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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

Applicant outperforms district and State averages for all students on PSAE (p. 7) and on ACT (p. 7), with 2014 State performance being the exception. Applicant's historical ACT performance has effectively eliminated achievement gap between its Chicago students and State-wide average. The performance of Noble's educationally disadvantaged students far surpasses district and State averages for those populations (p. 11).

Weaknesses:

Whereas CPS and State did not experience such sharp declines (5 to 4%, 3 to 3%, respectively), Noble's EL population dropped from 25 to 11% PSAE proficiency from 2013 to 2014, a rather concerning drop that the applicant does not explain.

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 appears to have closed achievement gap between its students, who are predominately low-income and Black or Hispanic, and the State-wide average (p. 7, 8, 10). Of particular note is the applicant's robust EPAS growth compared to its surrounding district (p. 9), which demonstrates that Noble is providing its students with an education that vaults them from a low-performing district to the State-wide average over the course of high school.

Weaknesses:

A comparison against the State average is only one type of achievement gap, and it does not compare Noble's subgroups to relevant, specific subgroups (e.g., Noble's Black students to Noble's, CPS's or State's White students; Noble's low-income students to Noble's, CPS's or State's non-low-income students). While one can assume that Noble has closed a portion of those achievement gaps based on the demographics of those populations, without separate comparisons, it is not possible to determine the extent to which Noble has closed those specific achievement gaps. In other words, it may be that there is still a large and/or stagnant Black-White achievement gap between Noble and CPS or the State.

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

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Applicant has consistently and impressively outperformed district and State in high school graduation rates for educationally disadvantaged students, by as much as 12 percentage points for low-income and Black students in 2014.

Applicant's students' performance on PSAE and ACT compared to State-wide averages for educationally disadvantaged subgroups is impressive to say the least, often more than triple the State-wide average for PSAE and more than two points on the ACT (p. 11).

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not provide State-wide attendance, retention, college enrollment, or college attainment data by subgroup. The national average may serve as a reasonable State proxy for college enrollment (p. 15).

There was also a fairly significant drop in the graduation rate for Noble's EL population from 2013 to 2014 (p. 13).

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 selected to receive 2015 Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools, an impressive achievement that recognizes Noble's accomplishments in serving educationally disadvantaged students (p. 2).

"Green-Lighting Criteria" requires that 80% of current students being from low-income families (p. 4).

Applicant has a strong historical record of increasing performance of educationally disadvantaged students when compared to district and State (p. 7-13), thanks in large part to its rigorous and continuously reflective curriculum and instructional model. Furthermore, the persistent and intense focus on college-going seems to be directly improving college enrollment, persistence, and achievement.

Educational model (CAP, discussed on p. 18) is thorough and reflects a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all learners.

Applicant proposes to continue its commitment to serving educationally disadvantaged communities in Chicago, specifically in the south and southwest areas (p. 20).

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 very clear and ambitious criteria that the network must meet prior to expansion efforts (p. 22 and Strategic Plan 2020 - Appendix H). With these criteria, it's clear that Noble holds itself to high student performance standards (ACT score and growth) while serving an educationally disadvantaged population (> 80% low-income). Furthermore, the human capital and operational elements of the criteria indicate that the applicant has firm standards in place to ensure effective replication of its model through the right financial and non-financial assets.

Goals outlined 2020 Strategic Plan (Appendix H, starting on p. e248) are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. The college and academic goals (p. e250) are particularly ambitious, as they would launch Noble students into a new category of performance, especially in terms of college completion.

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:

Given its history of performance in replicating high-performing charter schools, both in terms of student achievement and school/CMO operations, and the strength of the key personnel and board members associated with the proposed project, applicant appears well-suited to execute this replication and expansion effort, at least from a high-level perspective. However, the application lacked a level of specificity that is very necessary for this component. The applicant often referred to its strategic plan in this section, and while that document is strong in its own way, it does not function as a management plan. Therefore, the applicant did not appear to address certain specific details associated with this criterion. Furthermore, applicant explicitly noted that it does not have a plan for closing underperforming schools.

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:

Noble's board has strong history of supporting this CMO through its impressive growth and understanding the charter school environment. As such, the board seems well-poised to support this replication and expansion effort.

Applicant has spelled out a broader plan for these replication and expansion efforts as part of its 2020 Strategic Plan, though not to the level of detail one would expect in a management plan. Still, the plan serves as a high-level structure by which the applicant can guide its replication and expansion efforts.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's strategic plan serves mainly as a broad vision for the next five years, not a specific management plan for this particular project. The strategic plan references responsibilities, timelines, and milestones broadly; these should be more detailed in a management plan. For instance, it's not clear which specific positions are responsible for executing the talent management component, or under what timeline the applicant will select staff for new schools.

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:

As previously mentioned, applicant's 2020 Strategic Plan provides a detailed, comprehensive plan to support these replication and expansion efforts "in the classroom" and in the CMO's central office. Of particular note is the applicant's strong financial plans for sustainability. Applicant demonstrates a clear track record in this regard and even still proposes to focus on improving its financial operations to ensure an even stronger foundation.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 3

Sub Question

(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 demonstrates support from local political leaders (Sen. Kirk, Mayor Emanuel) as well as State-level charter school association. Furthermore, Noble's board of directors has far-reaching connections throughout Chicago, including the philanthropic and educational communities, specifically most of the major colleges and universities in the area.

Weaknesses:

Though board of directors has far-reaching connections, applicant did not demonstrate considerable support from local organizations, specifically any neighborhood groups where it may replicate.

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 and does not appear to be in the process of creating a plan for closing underperforming schools.

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:

Key personnel have impressive and relevant experience. Most leaders have been with Noble network for years, or have extensive experience in urban charter schools. These individuals have experience with highly successful schools, including Noble, which ensures a strong foundation for this replication and expansion effort. The experience of the operational leaders (e.g., CFO) appear to ensure that Noble's non-academic assets will be managed in a way that is responsible and strategic.

Many of the leaders, including Superintendent and CEO, Asst. Superintendent, Head of Schools, COO, Chief Talent Officer, and Development Director had leadership responsibilities during previous CSP R&E grant, which suggests that this proposed project will be in good hands, given the successful execution of that previous R&E project, as noted on p. 21.

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:

Through its strategic plan, applicant demonstrates ambitious, measurable objectives that are closely aligned to the success of this project. If the applicant is able to achieve these goals and objectives, the network of high-performing charters will grow in a way that's organizationally sound and that produces even more impressive outcomes for students.

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not provide great detail on interim evaluation measures. In other words, though the 2020 goals/objectives may be measurable and ambitious, the applicant does not provide much detail on how it will continuously evaluate its performance up to that point, particularly in terms of ACT performance and college completion for its graduates.

Reader's Score: 6

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 did not explicitly address this priority.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not explicitly address this priority.

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:

Applicant did not explicitly address this priority.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not explicitly address this priority.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Replication & Expansion - 4: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Noble Network of Charter Schools (U282M150026)

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:

Nobel Public Schools, which enroll nearly 10% of Chicago Public School high school students, is the "most consistent, highest performing charter." The data presented in the application corroborates this statement, however, some results, particularly for some subgroups, such as ELLs, has been inconsistent.

Reader's Score: 41

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:

Noble has demonstrated that they can achieve consistent test scores at scale. Noble enrolls 10% of Chicago Public School students, with a subgroup profile that includes more minority, low income, and special education students than CPS. Noble students have consistently scored higher than their peers on PSAT and the ACT, with increasing scores for the PSAT (p 6-7).

Sub Question

Noble has a best-practice sharing system in place so that teachers and school leaders can share best practices across campuses (p 8).

Weaknesses:

PSAE and ACT results are somewhat inconsistent over the past three years, particularly for ELL students (p 11).

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:

Over the past 3 years, Noble continued to improve test performance rates and consistently surpass CPS averages by an average of 20 percentage points (p 10). Even when compared to ACT scores for the whole country, Noble students still outperform their peers and have shown an elimination of the achievement gap (p 11).

Weaknesses:

The performance of ELL students was inconsistent over the period in the application.

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:

Nobel graduates low-income African American and Asian students at a better rate than Chicago Public Schools and the state of Illinois across all student subgroups (p 12-13). 96% of Noble graduates enrolled in four-year colleges, far surpassing the national average. This success is helped by the College Program that helps students with the application and financial aid process (p 14).

Weaknesses:

The performance of ELL students for graduation rate decreased from 2013 to 2014.

Sub Question

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:

Noble focuses not only on student academic achievement but on promoting well-rounded students, through extracurricular programs, athletics and enrichment programs, setting up students for greater success in applying to college (p 18). It is this commitment to college-readiness and the programs Noble employs to promote it that make their application strongest. Noble has created systems to measure the success of these programs and adjusted goals and the Strategic Plan 2020 accordingly (p 18-19). The Greenlighting plan is particularly impressive in understanding Nobles commitment to strategic growth and not compromising quantity over quality. Expansion plans are into communities that Noble already serves.

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:

Noble has grown from 1 to 15 schools over the course of 10 years, representing a steady growth rate of over 1 school per year (p 20). The guiding performance indicators set goals for each area of operations and are measurable and achievable (p 23).

Weaknesses:

The project design does not address current baselines, making it difficult to understand how achievable the metrics are (p 23).

Reader's Score: 8

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:

Noble does not adequately address many of the requirements listed under this section. The key personnel section is the strongest, describing both internal and external stakeholders. However, the lack of detail in other areas makes drawing conclusion about the ability for the plan to succeed difficult.

Reader's Score: 10

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:

Noble has a detailed Strategic Plan which guides the CSP application and includes applicable objectives, next steps and responsibilities tied back to their three goals of: best in industry performance, enduring industry health, and disciplined growth (p 24). There is particular attention paid to student recruitment and enrollment and how they will meet their enrollment goals (p 24).

Weaknesses:

The timeline for implementing this program is not included in the application. The strategic plan is not a functional management plan and does not adequately serve as one.

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

Sub Question

schools (4 points).

Strengths:

Noble has delegated role appropriately, including governance from the board (p 24) as well as plans for becoming self-sustaining within the grant period.

Weaknesses:

Despite referencing other sections, there is a lack of detail to appropriately describe Noble's business plan and instill confidence that it will be successful. The strategic plan does not reach a level of detail necessary in terms of timelines, delineation of responsibilities to be a strong business plan.

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 operational budget is both a predictive model and an operation model for how Noble is financially sustained. This detailed budget sufficiently explains how the school uses various funding sources to support itself (p 25).

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:

Noble does not have a plan for closing charter schools in place.

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:

Noble has a wide portfolio of stakeholders, including internal and external personnel such as foundations, venture philanthropy firms and educational consulting firms that provide financial and educational support (p 28). The support of the community indicates that Noble is well respected among educational experts. Further, the key internal personnel listed have significant experience at Noble and in the education sector. The CEO oversaw Noble first period of growth, which invokes confidence that he will be able to again as well (p 29).

Sub Question

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:

Noble dictates Key Performance Indicators to measure growth across all of their schools (p 34). There are both qualitative and quantitative metrics described by Noble for measuring success (p 32-34).

Weaknesses:

Noble does not indicate any external evaluation in their plans for evaluating this program. Additionally, Noble does not include a data collection for plan for how they will acquire the data necessary to evaluate progress toward achieving the Key Performance Indicators.

Reader's Score: 5

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 weaknesses 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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/27/2015 05:46 PM

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Replication & Expansion - 4: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Noble Network of Charter Schools (U282M150026)

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:

Overall, the applicant demonstrates success with increasing student achievement and achieving results with low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students. However, more data may have helped paint a clearer picture.

Reader's Score: 40

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:

Noble Network's consistently improving overall results on the state assessment suggest increases in student academic achievement and attainment (p. e26).

The applicant's internally-developed assessment system demonstrates student achievement growth (p. e27-28); however, there does not appear to be comparable data to the district or state, making difficult to determine how

Sub Question

Noble stacks up to other public schools when it comes to student achievement growth.

Weaknesses:

Aside from one example in which a cohort of Noble students experienced a higher growth rate on the ACT exam between their freshman and junior years than their district counterparts (p. e28-29), there is no other data illustrating student growth as individuals or cohorts. However, it is reasonable to assume that if Noble schools enroll a student population that mirrors that of the district and those students are at or around the same academic level as their district peers upon entering high school (p. e25), Noble's consistently higher academic achievement is an indicator of probable consistently higher student achievement growth.

Noble's overall scores on the ACT exam have remained relatively stagnant over the past three years (p. e26-27).

Noble's state assessment results for students with disabilities have remained relatively stagnant over the past three years, and results for ELL students declined over that same span (p. e30).

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:

Nearly all the schools' students fall under the subgroups described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA, the applicant demonstrates its success in closing achievement gaps by pointing its overall state assessment results and ACT scores as compared to those of the state and nation, as applicable (p. e29-30). Although not entirely accurate, this appears to be a reasonable indicator of this success. Noble students have performed at a level comparable to state averages on both the state test and the ACT, and they are nearly at the national averages for the ACT (p. e26).

Noble's African American, Hispanic, ELL, and students with disabilities subgroups have all consistently performed significantly better on the state test than the statewide averages for each respective subgroup over the past three years. Further, Noble's African American and Hispanic subgroups have consistently scored better on the ACT than the statewide averages for these respective subgroups over the past three years (p. e30).

Weaknesses:

The achievement data provided is only for some subgroups, making it difficult to get a more accurate picture of the applicant's success in closing achievement gaps (p. e30, e140).

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

Sub Question

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:

Noble low-income students have consistently performed significantly better on the state test than the statewide averages for low-income students over the past three years (p. e140-141). For additional strengths on the performance of low-income and educationally disadvantaged students on state tests, see the comments in the previous two elements.

Noble has a much lower overall dropout rate than district or state averages (p. e31).

Noble consistently has a significantly higher graduation rate for its low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students than statewide averages for these subgroups over the past three years (p. e32) and has a significantly higher overall college enrollment rate than district and statewide averages, where available (p. e35, e137).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not provide attendance, retention, or college enrollment data.

The ELL graduation rate is inconsistent over the past three years (p. e32).

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:

See the previous criterion for comments on Noble's academic achievement success with educationally disadvantaged students.

Noble schools serve a high population of educationally disadvantaged students (p. e25) and are focused on college readiness and preparation (p. e37-38) with the aim of having every Noble graduate obtaining a college degree (p. e35).

The proposal notes that the project seeks to continue to serve "predominantly low-income and minority communities mainly in Chicago's south and southwest communities" (p. e39).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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 proposal provides goals that are related to Noble's strategic plan (p. e40).

The proposal provides key performance indicators that appear to be the proposed outcomes of the project (p. e42).

The strategic plan outlines a strong growth strategy, including a green-lighting process that set standards for growth (p. e261-265).

Weaknesses:

While the proposal provides a strategic plan developed in 2010 to achieve a vision set for 2020 (p. e248-269), it does not provide goals, objectives, and outcomes specific to the proposed project that are clearly connected together. Overall, it seems as though the applicant expects evaluators to translate the strategic plan into a project design.

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 applicant has a strong leadership team and support from important partners and stakeholders. However, the proposal is over-reliant on the strategic plan that is provided, even attempting to substitute it for a project management plan.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

It appears as though the applicant expects evaluators to translate the provided strategic plan (p. e248-269) into a project management plan. Because the strategic plan is not a project management plan, it lacks project tasks as well as who will do each task and when.

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:

While this evaluator believes that a strategic plan cannot be substituted for a project design or management plan, it can certainly provide a business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools to be created. The strategic plan appears to do that (p. e248-269).

Weaknesses:

The strategic plan does not extend beyond the life of the grant, so it is not clear how this plan intends to improve, sustain, and ensure the quality and performance of the charter schools created beyond the life of this grant.

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 applicant clearly has demonstrated commitment from key partners, including donors (p. e45), and evidence of support from some stakeholders (p. e86-88).

The budget narrative provides a reasonable operational and financial model (p. e274-283). (Note that the application states that the budget is provided in Appendix G, which is actually financial statements from previous years (p. e145-247).)

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:

The applicant acknowledges it does not have a school closure plan (p. e46).

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:

Noble's leadership team has breadth of experience, including extensive experience with education reform and educational leadership (p. e47-51). Noble was awarded the CSP R&E grant in 2010 and has experience as a collective in managing projects of the size and scope being proposed.

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:

The proposal provides key performance indicators that are measurable objectives related to the outcomes of the proposed project. For example, the performance indicator for its growth rate is a pace of growth of two schools per year (p. e42), which is reasonably attainable given the capacity of the applicant and the size of its current portfolio and also aligns to the outcome of its 2010 strategic plan of adding 25 campuses to its network by 2020 (p. e40).

Weaknesses:

The proposal to not provide a methodology for evaluation of the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 5

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 weaknesses 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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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