

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

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: RePublic Schools and RePublic Schools Nashville (U282M150025)

## 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:

Generally speaking, applicant demonstrates increased achievement over a three-year period, and performance above State averages in 2012, 2013, and 2014. Though applicant appears to have been successful in reducing the achievement gap between its students and State averages, there still appear to be sizeable and persistent achievement gaps between RePublic students.

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:

Applicant demonstrates increased achievement from 2011-12 to 2013-14 for all students as well as FRL, African-American, and Hispanic students (p. 9). In most cases (SWD being the exception), RePublic student subgroups outperform local and State respective averages (p. 12). Applicant also demonstrates that it has ranked high within

## Sub Question

the district in terms of composite growth (p. 9/10).

### Weaknesses:

Applicant does not provide historical data for SWD and EL populations, which makes it difficult to determine the extent to which applicant has increased achievement for these groups (p. 12). Only 2014 TCAP data is provided in the narrative. Though more data are available in Appendix F, they don't have every year and the results are not consistently trending upwards.

### 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 demonstrates that it has closed Black-White and Hispanic-White achievement gaps when comparing RePublic Black and Hispanic students to State average (p. 9). Furthermore, low-income RePublic students outperform State-wide overall average in both Math and ELA by 2014 (p. 9).

### Weaknesses:

There still appears to be sizeable achievement gaps within RePublic students between SWD and non-SWD and EL and non-EL populations in both Math and ELA (p. 12). Similarly, White RePublic students dramatically outperform non-White RePublic students in ELA in 2014 (p. 12).

### 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:

In all three years of comparison, RePublic students outperformed State averages for respective subgroups, including educationally disadvantaged students (p. 12).

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

Applicant doesn't provide attendance and retention data for RePublic students and State averages that would allow for the necessary comparison for this criterion.

### Reader's Score:

## Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.**

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

### Strengths:

Applicant has already identified the broader communities where it intends to replicate and expand, and demonstrates a firm understanding of the educational needs in those areas (p. 14, 27-28).

Applicant has a strong college- and career-readiness philosophy (p. 16). Particularly impressive are the goals of having students 1.5 years ahead in reading level by high school, an average ACT score of 25, a robust college advising program that begins in upper-elementary grades (p. 16), and 10+ AP courses offered at RePublic high schools (p. 21).

Applicant expresses deliberate and structured approach to supporting all learners, including SWD and EL populations (p. 23-26).

2014 TCAP Math results demonstrate strong SWD and EL performance at RePublic schools. 2014 TCAP ELA results do the same for EL (p.12).

### Weaknesses:

2014 TCAP ELA results for SWD are a bit concerning, as RePublic lagged MNPS results (p. 12).

**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:

Applicant has clear replication and expansion plans under CSP funding (p. 29). The growth during the grant period - growing from 468 to 4100 students - is impressive. Along with this projected growth, applicant demonstrates deliberate and structured approach to determining where and when it is appropriate to replicate and expand, which suggests the replication and expansion efforts funded through this grant will be well-researched, deliberate, and targeted (p. 29-30).

Applicant has clear, measurable, and rigorous goals, objectives, and outcome measures for its project (p. 35-40). In particular, the CS AP exam outcome measure is quite ambitious (p. 35) and will ensure that RePublic maintains a strong focus on developing a CS curriculum and instruction model that exposes traditionally underserved students to rigorous CS education.

Goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes communicated in pages 35-40 are diverse and address critical elements of replicating high-quality schools. The focus beyond student achievement demonstrates that the applicant understands the many facets of launching and maintaining high-quality schools.

**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:**

Applicant outlines a deliberate, sophisticated plan for ensuring the project's success in schools and at the CMO level. Roles, responsibilities, and tasks are clearly defined and assigned, and the applicant has a clear financial plan that will ensure sustainability beyond CSP funding. Closure plan is robust and accompanied by an equally strong plan for monitoring and addressing school performance internally. Key personnel and others involved with the project are well positioned to execute this project given their prior experience.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**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

## Sub Question

### accomplishing project tasks (4 points).

#### Strengths:

Applicant has clearly delineated responsibilities and assignments (p. 40-42) as well as the broader strategy and overarching structure of the project (p. 42-46). Applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of which entity/office/position is best suited to tackle the many challenges associated with replicating high-quality schools.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

#### Reader's Score:

### 2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 2

**(2) The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools (4 points).**

#### Strengths:

Applicant demonstrates a sophisticated CMO network structure to support the long-term operation and success of the replicated schools. The responsibilities of talent management, financial management, and other non-instructional elements of the replicated schools are clearly assigned to CMO network resources.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

#### Reader's Score:

### 3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 3

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

#### Strengths:

"Break-even" timing for schools and regional offices seems appropriate and realistic given applicant's enrollment plans.

Applicant demonstrates strong support from local partners as well as prominent players in charter school industry (CSGF, Walton, TFA) (p. 49-50).

#### 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).**

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

Applicant employs both quantitative and qualitative data to monitor school performance: organization-wide dashboard and regular site visits and audits (p. 51). These regular and diverse points of evaluation and analysis ensure that appropriate decision-makers are well-informed with diverse and relevant data.

Applicant expresses a clear and reasonable plan to close underperforming schools based on the aforementioned school analysis systems (p. 52).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

CEO and board chairs are well-positioned to ensure the effective implementation of this project. All have impressive experience in managing projects of this scope (or larger) and demonstrate strong commitment to student success.

### 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:

"Gold standard" of evaluation design (lottery winners vs. losers) appears to be the best that an evaluation of a charter school can be, as it controls for motivation bias (p. 53).

Evaluation partner has strong experience in this regard, which will ensure an effective, rigorous evaluation of the project.

Evaluation framework and performance measures are diverse, clear, objective, measurable, and ambitious. Applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of what's important to evaluate in creating and operating high-quality schools.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Priority Questions

## Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

**Note:** Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at [www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility](http://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](http://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](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf).

#### Strengths:

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant did not 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](http://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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html)).

**Strengths:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant did not meet all three elements of this priority.

Applicant fails to demonstrate that it serves SWD population that is "at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area." Applicant's SWD rate (10%) is less than MNPS (12%) and applicant does not provide data for closest MNPS schools, as it did for EL population (p. 4)

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/28/2015 02:27 PM

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: RePublic Schools and RePublic Schools Nashville (U282M150025)

## 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, RePublic has demonstrated impressive gains in academic achievement across all sub-groups.

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).

#### Strengths:

RePublic schools were ranked first and third in Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) district for Tennessee composite growth scores, indicating their students improved dramatically as a result of attending RePublic (p 10). RePublic Schools are also performing well in comparison to other district and charter schools. The two RePublic campuses had the two highest scores for the Tennessee Academic Performance Framework, an indicator of academic progress, attainment, college-readiness, achievement gap and school culture.

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

There is limited evidence and a lack of hard data to corroborate the claims made in the application (p 9-10), there is an allusion to composite growth scores, but they don't include this data.

The TCAP ELA scores dropped from 2012-13 to 2013-14 (p 9).

### 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:

With the exception of 2012, RePublic students have outperformed MNPS students across all subgroups, including FRL, African American and Hispanic students on the TCPA Math and ELA tests (p 9). More impressively, the scores for RePublic have increased, while the scores for MNPS have decreased or remained constant. Further, the scores for FRL and African American students are the same as the total school body for Math and 1-3% points lower for ELA, with Hispanic students outperforming the general student body in ELA. The convergence around a mean indicated success in providing successful instruction to all student subgroups (p 9).

### Weaknesses:

There is a gap between white students and other student subgroups as demonstrated on page 12 and there is a larger gap between RePublic's white students and ELL students than compared to MNPS and 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 above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).**

### Strengths:

RePublic Schools demonstrate a higher daily ADA than MNPS, ranging from 96%-99% versus 95.5% for the same grades in the district (p 10). The retention rates for the RePublic system, which ranged from 77%-93% per year, are significantly higher than the 13% for MNPS students in grades K-8. Overall, RePublic outperformed the state and the district in these categories.

### Weaknesses:

The ADA for RePublic schools dropped in 2014 to 96% after ranging from 97%-99% for 2012-2013.

RePublic has not demonstrated consistent retention rates. The rates varied widely from 2012-2014, from 93% to 77% to 90% (p 11). Additionally, the retention rate at the newest campus had a relatively low retention rate of 83%.

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:**

RePublic's growth plans to eventually serve more than 7,300 students are reasonable, feasible and well-thought out because of the variety of types of expansion based on local context and plans to slowly scale (p 14). RePublic has demonstrated an ability to adapt to adversity, for example, in the face of lacking a comprehensive computer science curriculum, RePublic developed its own and created it so that instructors do not need to have a computer science background. This eliminates two potential barriers to scaling their model (p 20) and indicates a willingness to creatively problem solve future issues. Their prior academic success shows that this model has been successful in educating educationally disadvantaged students.

The focus on computer science prepares students to be career-ready in the face of a changing labor market and RePublic has embraced a culture of college readiness, including college campus visits beginning in fifth grade, college-readiness curriculum beginning in 9th grade (p 16) and a commitment to providing support to graduates once they enter college. With low rates of college success for educationally and economically disadvantaged students, the culture of college readiness and provision of supports after graduation demonstrates an understanding of these barriers and willingness to invest resources in mitigating causes (p 16). RePublic has appropriately created an instruction model that both ensures students are on grade-level and prepares them for college by building upon basic skills then exposes students to AP and college-formatted classes (p 21). Particular care is made to ensure educationally disadvantaged students are not falling behind through the use of daily "exit ticket" assessments (p23). Further, the use of best-practice tiered supports and interventions and a commitment to inclusion as much as possible for ELLs and Special Education students demonstrate knowledge and awareness of research-based models for increasing achievement for educationally disadvantaged students (p 23-26).

The decision to expand into Mississippi and Louisiana are well-informed and align with RePublic's mission of supporting historically underserved populations in the South to be college and career ready.

#### **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:**

Jackson, MI and New Orleans, LA are similar to Nashville in percentage of FRL students and the presence of race-based achievement gaps, so RePublic should not have to drastically alter their model.

Pace of growth is fluid, allowing for flexibility depending on a range of factors already established by RePublic, such as success of current schools, academic achievements, organization viability, success in fundraising and the relationship with the community. RePublic appropriately notes factors impact the viability of schools, such as private funding levels, the political environment and long-term facility options (p 30). The factors, while often unspoken, are critical for the success of a school.

There is a demonstrated commitment to parental feedback and community involvement both in Nashville and new regions and RePublic has already formed partnerships in Mississippi, as well as hiring staff from the area (p 33).

RePublic has clearly defined goals, objectives and outcomes, as well as the strategies necessary to reach these outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

A portion of RePublic's growth strategy revolves around opening two high schools, yet the school lacks experience teaching these grades (p 15). It is unclear what steps RePublic has taken to adapt their curriculum to high school and how the school will accommodate students who matriculate into a RePublic school at grade 9 without attending a RePublic school for middle school.

Much of RePublic's college-readiness strategy is focused on high school programs, yet only plans to operate 2 high schools of 12 total schools (p 15). College readiness strategies that begin in middle school are inadequately developed.

**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:**

RePublic presents a strong management plan, although part of it is vague. The leadership and financial capabilities of the organization make it seem like the CMO will be able to reach the targets set forth in this application.

**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:**

RePublic's organization structure includes a National office as well as regional offices in each of the areas it operates, and the management plan clearly delineates responsibilities to the regional offices (p 40). The plan is extremely detailed, including both owners and support, and demonstrates the understanding for the need to get buy-in from the regional level, as well (p 40).

**Weaknesses:**

The Board structure, with two boards and the possibility of an additional board for Mississippi is in flux, indicating the potential for leadership instability (p 43).

**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:**

RePublic already has a strong system in place for monitoring and improving the quality of the schools, including a set board structure, a CMO and regional offices (p 43). There are teams specifically in charge of operations, academics, talent, assessments, curriculum and specifically computer science (p 45). This allows staff to specialize in particular areas and become more effective.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

(4 points)

**Reader's Score:**

**3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 3**

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

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

RePublic's delegation of financial management to the CMO allows for financial expertise to occur, instead of having school-level staff worrying about financial operations (p 44). Additionally, RePublic delegates development and private fundraising to the CMO, which has cultivated relationships with donors (p 49), indicating a level of relative certainty that some private fundraising support will continue. RePublic operates with Federal Funds and has systems in place to make sure that these are spent in compliance with the grants (p 49).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

(4 points)

### 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:

RePublic has a strong monitoring system in place to help prevent a school from having to close. However, should a school need to, RePublic will partner with the authorizer to make sure it is closed properly (p 52).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The RePublic CEO, [REDACTED] has an extremely impressive resume in the public and private sectors, particularly in the areas of politics, mobilizing volunteers and fundraising (p 47). He has experience in managing projects of a similar scope and was named to the Forbes 30 under 30 list (p 47). The team in place has experience running and managing large projects.

### Weaknesses:

The RePublic leadership seems to lack education experience, particularly at the scale RePublic aspires to reach (p 47-48).

(5 points)

### 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:

RePublic has a demonstrated history of sharing learnings with the field (p 52) and presents a thorough plan for evaluating the impact of the RePublic model on student achievement. They have designed a randomized trial with both a treatment and control group to be studied longitudinally: the “gold standard” for charter school evaluation.

The evaluation design will use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data (p 53-54). The partnership with Bellwether Education Partners, experienced consultants particularly in federal grants and reporting, indicates a commitment to high-quality work (p 54).

RePublic has created a comprehensive, detailed plan for evaluation, including evaluation questions, analyses, indicators, data capture methods and timing (57-58). This plan, if implemented to the level described in the application, should provide results that are not only useful to RePublic, but the charter education community at large.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or

restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

**Note:** Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at [www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility](http://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](http://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](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf).

**Strengths:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

Competitive Priority preference not addressed.

**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](http://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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html)).

**Strengths:**

RePublic Schools actively works to promote a racially and ethnically diverse student body by locating schools in areas of high racial diversity (p 5) and by engaging in outreach activities to support a diverse student body and the enrollment demographics in comparison to the state and region corroborate this state commitment. RePublic's percentage of economically disadvantaged students is 7% points higher than MNPS, 21% higher for African American students and 1% higher for Hispanic students. This commitment to diversity is further enhanced by the lack of questions regarding disability and EL status on applications (CITE PAGE). Additionally, RePublic goes beyond ensuring their student body is diverse and focuses on "empathy and promoting understanding across differences" (p 5).

**Weaknesses:**

Although RePublic claims to enroll ELL and Sped students at a rate comparable to their surrounding region, the percentage of Sped students is 2% points lower than MNPS and the percentage of ELL students is 10% points lower than MNPS.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

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**Status:**             Submitted

**Last Updated:**    08/21/2015 10:59 PM

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: RePublic Schools and RePublic Schools Nashville (U282M150025)

## 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, RePublic Schools demonstrate strong academic achievement and growth, including the ability to close achievement gaps. While there are some inconsistencies in performance from year to year for some subgroups, the applicant is overall successful with educationally disadvantaged students.

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:

The proposal states that RePublic's two existing schools were ranked first and third in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools district as compared to other district middle schools in 2014 for composite growth scores (p. e 24-25).

## Sub Question

Consistent overall increases in math proficiency at RePublic schools over the past three years suggests impressive student achievement growth, especially when considering that Tennessee state and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools district averages decreased or remained stagnant over this period (p. e24). This trend of increased proficiency applies to students with disabilities as well (p. e114).

Overall, RePublic schools have experienced an increase in ELA proficiency over the past three years, although there was a dip in overall proficiency from 2013 to 2014. Still, over this same span, state and district averages decreased (p. e24). The overall increase in ELA proficiency applies to RePublic students with disabilities as well (p. e114).

### Weaknesses:

The proposal does not include the composite growth data it alludes to when it notes, "State composite growth scores from 2014 indicate that LCA and Nashville Prep were ranked first and third in the district, respectively, compared to other MNPS schools serving middle school grades" (p. e25). Other than that statement, the application does not mention composite growth again. Without that composite growth data, it is difficult to better understand how well RePublic schools increase student achievement, as proficiency rates must be solely relied upon.

While the overall proficiency rates for low-income students have increased from 2012 to 2014 at RePublic schools, the trend has been inconsistent. Low-income student math proficiency rates dipped in 2013 to 66.2% from the 2012 rate of 67.3% before significantly increasing to 77.6% in 2014. In ELA, the proficiency rate significantly increased in 2013 to 65.3% from the 2012 rate of 53.7% but dipped to 61.7% in 2014 (p. e114).

There does not appear to be enough data available for ELL students to determine whether these students have experienced increases in academic achievement over the past three years.

### 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:

Student proficiency scores over the last three years generally demonstrate that RePublic has closed the achievement gap for most subgroups of students. The gaps in both math and ELA proficiency between low-income students and all students have been significantly lower at RePublic than at the state level over the past three years even though RePublic's overall proficiency has generally been significantly higher than state averages. Similarly, the gaps in both math and ELA proficiency between African-American and white students and Hispanic and white student have generally been significantly lower at RePublic than at the state level over the past two years (the proposal does not include proficiency data for white students in 2012 due to the small sample size) (p. e114).

### Weaknesses:

The achievement gaps are not necessarily less than statewide averages for all subgroups during each of the last three years. For example, in 2014, RePublic ELL students performed 68 percentage points behind RePublic white students compared to the state average gap of 53 percentage points. However, even in this example, both ELL and white students at RePublic schools still outperform statewide averages in their respective subgroups (p. e27, e114).

## Sub Question

RePublic struggles to close achievement gaps between students with disabilities and all other students. In each of the last three years, RePublic has had substantially larger gaps in both math and ELA proficiency rates between students with disabilities and all other RePublic students when compared to the statewide average gaps between students with disabilities and all other students in the state (p. e114).

### 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:

Overall, RePublic's educationally disadvantaged students outperformed state averages in both math and ELA over the past three years. RePublic has consistently had significantly higher proficiency rates for low-income students than statewide averages for such students in both math and ELA over the past three years. The one year of proficiency data for RePublic's ELL students shows that those students also had higher proficiency rates than statewide averages for ELL students in both math and ELA in 2014. Over the past two years, RePublic has had higher proficiency rates for students with disabilities as compared to statewide averages for such students in both math and ELA (p. e114).

Over the past three years, both of RePublic's schools have consistently had student attendance rates that surpass the average attendance rate of the district of 95.5% (p. e25).

#### Weaknesses:

In 2012, RePublic's students with disabilities had lower proficiency rates in both math and ELA than the statewide averages for such students (p. e114). While the applicant has consistently had student attendance rates that are higher than district averages, no statewide averages are provided (p. e25).

### 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:

The applicant has demonstrated success in improving academic achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students through generally increased proficiency rates in math and ELA for low-income students, students with disabilities, and ELL students (p. e24-25, e114). Further, the core program elements—college readiness and academic rigor, computer science, character, community, creators, and curiosity—seek to prepare students to graduate college-ready (p. e30-34).

The proposal seeks to create schools in Nashville, Tennessee; Jackson, Mississippi; and New Orleans, Louisiana. The proposed locations have high populations of low-income students: 73% in Nashville, 89% in Jackson, and 85% in New Orleans (p. e29).

**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:**

The proposal discusses the similarities between Jackson and New Orleans, the communities RePublic plans to expand to outside of its home state, including similar demographics of students (which includes a high number of African-American students). However, the proposal also acknowledges that those communities have different interests and presents plans ensure success given this difference, including recruiting staff who are from the communities (p. e48-49).

The proposal provides a very clear logic model that illustrates the project goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes and thoroughly explains the strategies for attaining these goals and objectives (p. e50-55). For example, one of the goals presented is to “engage families and develop infrastructure to transform education in the South” with one of the directly align objectives being “regional and central back-office supports enable schools to focus on culture and academics” (p. e50-51, e55). The general strategy to attain this objective is to “build and enhance operational supports to support effective schools,” and the measurable outcomes to assess the success of this objective are that 90% of principals are satisfied with the supports and that schools are sustainable on public funds by year 6 of operation, both of which are realistic, clear, achievable outcomes (p. e55).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has no history of serving high school students yet the application proposes to expand RePublic into serving high school grades (p. e47).

**Reader's Score: 9**

**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 project management plan is clear and the business plan, operational model, and financial model are all strong. The key leadership appears to have the capacity to successfully manage the proposed project, and the applicant appears to have support from key partners and stakeholders in most of the communities it plans to expand and replicate in.

Reader's Score: 18

**Sub Question**

**1. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 1**

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (4 points).

**Strengths:**

The project management plan is clear, easy to read, appears to align with project objectives, and illustrates the responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing the major project tasks (p. e55-57).

**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:**

The governance structure involving regional boards and a nation board makes the lines of accountability, authority, and support clear and likely will help in ensuring high-quality schools, as it allows for localized governance to better respond to the needs of the community while still providing centralized supports at scale (p. e57-58).

The central office is strong and is capable of ensuring that the functions of financial management, development and external relations, talent and performance management, assessment and data, instructional support, curriculum development, and strategic planning are adequately carried out. Furthermore, the regional offices are responsible for carrying out the functions of parent engagement and recruitment, leadership development, operations, and human resources. All aspects of the business plan are set up to allow for the improvement and sustainability of quality and performance at existing and soon-to-be-launched RePublic schools, as the central office supports the network and ensures that regional offices have the resources, systems, and talent needed to best serve schools and students (p. e58-61).

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

### Reader's Score:

## 3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 3

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

### Strengths:

The proposed financial model is sustainable and has the central office providing the same supports to its schools after the life of the grant through per-pupil funding due to scale and efficiency gained from growth (p. 48). Further, the operational model is strong, as the central office supports the network and ensures that regional offices have the resources, systems, and talent needed to best serve schools and students (p. e58-61).

The applicant has demonstrated support from key partners and stakeholders in Tennessee and Mississippi, including policymakers (such as the Mayor of Nashville and Governor of Mississippi), funders (such as the Hood Foundation and Charter School Growth Fund), parents, and community members (Appendix C, p. e96-107).

### Weaknesses:

The evidence of broad support in New Orleans is lacking, which is important because the applicant proposes to create schools within that community. Part of the applicant's model is to meet the needs and different interests of the community by recruiting staff from the community (p. e48-49) and establishing regional offices, both of which will require support from at least community stakeholders.

### 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 applicant has a plan for school improvement, and in cases where school improvement fails, the applicant also has a plan for school closure that involves partnering with the relevant authorizer, thoughtfully communicating the closure to families, and providing support to students and families to ensure students are able to enroll in another school (p. e66-67).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The board chairs of RePublic Schools, Inc., and RePublic Schools, Nashville, have broad experience and are capable of contributing to the successful management of this project. The board chair of RePublic Schools, Inc., has impressive experience in fundraising, financial management, and organizational management. The board chair of RePublic Schools, Nashville, is an attorney specializing in property law (p. e62-63).

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

While RePublic's CEO, who will serve as project director for the proposed project, has impressive experience and credentials—including playing a major fundraising role in [REDACTED] presidential campaign and founding RePublic Schools—he does not appear to have grant management experience, experience with aggressive organizational growth, or other experience that directly relates to managing a project of a similar size and scope as being proposed (p. e62, e81-82).

### 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 proposed methodology to evaluate the success of the project is sophisticated, as it uses an experimental design that the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools considers the “gold standard” for evaluating the impact of charter schools (p. e68), and the performance measures clearly align to the intended outcomes of the project. Further, the external evaluator is a highly capable and experienced nonprofit organization comprised of people with a deep understanding of data analysis and evaluation and substantial experience with federal grant reporting (p. e67-71).

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

goals for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

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

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

**Note:** Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at [www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility](http://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](http://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](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf).

**Strengths:**

N/A

**Weaknesses:**

N/A

**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](http://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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html)).

**Strengths:**

The proposal provides examples of practices that demonstrate the applicant's commitment to promoting diversity and avoiding racial isolation, such as recruitment practices and strategies to develop a diverse student body and a school culture that focuses on empathy and promoting understanding (p. e20).

RePublic schools enroll an essentially comparable number of students with disabilities as the local school district. While RePublic schools enroll significantly fewer ELL students than the local school district, the applicant explains its "student composition of 5 percent ELL students is comparable to schools in RePublic's neighboring communities" (p. e19).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

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**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   08/28/2015 12:40 PM