

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Replication & Expansion - 1: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Uplift Education (U282M150004)

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:

Uplift Schools have a solid track record of increasing academic achievement, closing achievement gaps, sending students to college, and outperforming the state on various metrics.

Reader's Score: 46

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 1

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

Strengths:

Students aren't able to graduate unless they are accepted into a 2 or 4-year college, and the college acceptance rate has been 100% over the last 6 years. On average, students enter network 2-3 years below grade level, but then outperform students across the district and state. Uplift students outperform national peer schools on the MAP assessment. On MAP, students begin the year below average, and end the year well above grade level.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

STAAR results across all subgroups fall slightly below Dallas ISD.

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:

MAP results indicate the Uplift effectively closes the achievement gap across all subgroups of students in the data provided, as seen in table 14 on pg. e30.

Weaknesses:

Grade 3 and 4 scores appear to be the highest on the MAP assessment, and then taper off in the middle school grades.

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:

Uplift outperforms the state and district on STAAR assessments in most recent data (pg. e28). 100% of students are accepted to college for the last six straight years, and they have an 82% persistence rate (pg. e15).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not include data on student retention rates or attendance.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with

disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

New proposed schools will be located in North Texas, where 250,000 low-income students live. 80% of Uplift's schools will educate low-income students. To assist educationally disadvantaged students, Uplift has a college preparatory program (IB program). They also offer a full continuum of services, including speech, OT, and POT. Applicant includes information about how they will serve SWD (through utilization of an RTI model, with a student support team if the student needs additional remediation). Uplift has demonstrated success in serving educationally disadvantaged students, with economically disadvantaged slightly outperforming the region and state on STAAR exams.

Weaknesses:

20% of Uplift's schools will not be located in a low-income area. Applicant does not include information on its program for English language Learners (ELLs). STAAR data for ELL and SWD subgroups was not provided.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

Uplift's goals appear to be measurable and attainable. They specified goals such as serving students from educationally underserved communities, adding two new schools by 2020, and offering an IB program at their schools. A logic model was also included, which provides detailed impact goals, all of which appear to be reasonable strategic priorities. (Pages 20-29)

Weaknesses:

No identified weaknesses in this section.

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:

Overall, most aspects of the selection criteria were met in this section. The applicant has a well-established timeline with key milestones, a sound business plan and financial operating model, a plan for closing the charter school, and has identified highly qualified key leadership. Financial management information was missing in the applicant's business plan.

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:

A detailed project timeline was provided, including the person responsible for each task and milestone. It appears that this timeline would allow Uplift to achieve objectives of the project within the given timeframe. (Pgs. 30-31)

Weaknesses:

No identified weaknesses were found in this section.

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 part of their business plan for sustaining beyond the initial grant period, Uplift plans to invest in recruiting strong people, to provide multiple opportunities for their people to grow, and to provide incentives to encourage people to stay. Uplift structures each school leadership team so that responsibility is distributed logically. The central management team supports the directors of schools and regional operations directors (pg. e61). Uplift will use academic data to guide decisions across schools. New schools are provided with additional supports to ensure a smooth start-up process. The governance structure appears organizationally sound, as they describe a dual-board structure that meets 10 times per year and reviews student achievement at each meeting (pg. e59).

Weaknesses:

Financial management/oversight details (and person responsible) were not included in the school's business plan.

Reader's Score:

Sub Question

3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 3

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

Strengths:

Uplift has a sound multi-year financial plan in place. The applicant provides examples of current and future funding partners, including numerous foundations (such as the Communities Foundation of Texas). They are able to demonstrate support of key stakeholders, such as the superintendent of GPISD. (pg. 45)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 school has established a plan for closing their charter schools that do not meet high standards of quality. Uplift will follow Texas Education Agency's guidelines. If a school receives the lowest state rating for 3 consecutive years it will be close the the charter will be revoked. Uplift also included details on their intervention system, which would be triggered if a school has performance risks. This intervention will include a dedicated CMO team focused on providing additional support and intervention until the school receives two years of positive ratings as measured by the Texas Accountability System. (Pg. e49)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 leadership appear to have relevant qualifications in overseeing this program. (pg. 50) For example, the CEO worked for McKinsey & Co. and various foundations.

Weaknesses:

Key leadership personnel do not have backgrounds in school leadership or classroom instruction, which is relevant to the scope of opening a new charter school.

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:

An external evaluator will be hired to analyze the effects of Uplift's replication and expansion schools. She will use a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures to determine programmatic impact, and will analyze outcomes such as implementation of key model elements, sustainability of the school models, academic outcomes, and identify areas of growth. The identified performance measures outlined in the evaluation description are clearly aligned to the intended outcomes of the replication and expansion grant. (pg. 57)

Weaknesses:

The specifics of the qualitative and quantitative measures used to determine programmatic impact are not provided.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note: Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as

appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects would complement efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in the State's approved request for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

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

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

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

Strengths:

In collaboration with the Grand Prairie Independent School District (GPISD), Uplift will take over LEE Elementary School (a low-performing school), serving its current student body, and describes how this process will take place in collaboration with GPISD (Pg. 3) The supporting letter from the superintendent notes that 6 k-12 classrooms will be operated by Uplift in GPISD.

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

Weaknesses:

It is unclear whether or not this takeover is a part of restructuring under section 1116 of ESEA. If the takeover is part of the School Improvement Grant, it is unclear if the school is on corrective action, or mandated to close or restructure.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

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

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

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

Note 1: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

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

Strengths:

The Uplift student population is economically, linguistically, and educationally diverse. They promote diversity through multicultural events and activities. They also have a greater percentage of ELL and students with disabilities (SWDs). The school's population of SWDs is equal to other charter schools in Texas. Uplift's ELL population is greater than other Texas charters and the state average.

Pg. 2

Weaknesses:

The majority of the student population is Hispanic, and the applicant does not describe efforts of how they plan to increase African American, Asian, or other ethnicities. The school is not economically diverse, with 74% of students classified as educationally disadvantaged. The school's population of SWDs falls below the district and state. Uplift's ELL population falls below the district average (by 5%).

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Replication & Expansion - 1: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Uplift Education (U282M150004)

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:

State assessment (STARR) results are overwhelmingly positive with consistent improvement, with the exception of the results for SpEd students, which are mostly negative. A 100% college acceptance rate is noteworthy, particularly as 50% of the students will be first generation college attendees. Although NWEA MAP and ACT results are also positive, the data is not detailed by subgroup. Overall data presented for economically disadvantaged students shows consistent improvement. Results for the ELL subgroup are limited to state assessment results. (Please see the responses to subquestions below for page citations).

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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

The three year comparison results detailed in Appendix H1 (pp. e88-127) by subpopulation presents State assessment results in which the Applicant demonstrates consistent improvement in most grade levels and subjects for total students, economically disadvantaged students, and ELL students. Data is provided for 2013-2015 for grades 3-8 in Reading, grade 5 and 8 in Science, and grade 8 in Social Studies. 2012-2014 data is provided for Grades 3-8 in Math. End of course data is provided for Algebra 1, English 1 and 2, Biology, and US History. Exceptions to improvement are noted below.

Weaknesses:

Although most grades and subjects show improvement, in the subgroups, Special Education scores in the comparison cited above are lower, mixed, or flat for grades 3-8 in Reading and Math, grade 8 Science and Social Studies, Algebra 1, and U.S. History.

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 reports that in the past six years, graduates have had a 100% college acceptance rate and that nearly half of those students are first-generation college attendees (pp. e31-32). NWEA MAP data for grades K-8 (pp. e1247-1255) shows consistent improvement against benchmarks, and ACT data presented (pp. e1258-63) also generally shows consistent growth in composite scores in the Applicant's preparatory schools during the last two years.

Weaknesses:

Only the State assessment (STARR) data is broken out by subgroup, the NWEA MAP and ACT data is presented in composite. ACT comparison data is also not positive for several schools in either English, Math, or both Explore exams across the eight preparatory schools.

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 addition to the mostly positive State assessment results detailed previously, attendance rates at the five preparatory schools for which data was presented for 2010-2013 demonstrated only minor fluctuations within one percentage point and exceeded state rates by a consistent average of 1.5 %. Dropout rates for grades 7 -12 were at or near 0% for all five schools, whereas state rates averaged .03% for grades 7 and 8 as well as an average of

Sub Question

2.3% for grades 9-12. Graduation rates were also at 100% with only three exceptions, exceeding the state average of 88% (pp. e964-1206). State data on economically disadvantaged students (pp. e1613-1694) show consistency in the dropout rates from 2010-2013 of 0% across schools, as well as graduation rates for this subgroup at 100%.

Weaknesses:

Graduation rates with a comparison to state results is only presented for the classes of 2012 and 2013. Attendance rates and dropout rates did not show data for ELL students. Lower performance results for various SpEd assessments are mentioned above in subquestion 1.

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 details the communities to be served by the schools to be established (pp. e39) which are overwhelmingly minority in composition (50% minimum, 96% maximum, with most schools in the 79% level) and low-income (53% minimum, 83% maximum). Prior success by the Applicant in State assessments, graduation rates, dropout rates, college acceptance, and attendance is detailed above. Attention to Special Education students is detailed (pp. e34-36) with identification, instruction, staffing needs, and evaluation addressed.

Weaknesses:

Prior data showing lower results for SpEd students is detailed above, conflicting with statements made in the narrative, Bilingual Education is listed in two section titles (pp. e34-35) but is not addressed. Data for ELL students, as noted above, is also lacking.

Reader's Score: 7

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 project design in the Logic Model (p. e44) and the chart detailing priorities and goals (p. e45) well-detail key outcomes of the project design, including student achievement goals, teacher, leadership, and classified staff retention, college readiness, graduation rates, scholar growth, student retention, and acceptance to college.

Weaknesses:

The Activities/Milestones chart (pp. e46-48) is more broadly presented by quarter and across quarters, and clear milestones are lacking.

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:

The roles and responsibilities of the management team are well-detailed in the Logic and Uplift models presented, and the plan for closing schools follows state directives. The business plan, financial plan, and budget are all robust. The Campus Dashboard and Checklist presented are well-defined oversights. The backgrounds, work-experiences, and skills of the management team outline a well-trained and experienced team to successfully execute the project. No weaknesses were noted. (Please see the responses to subquestions below for page citations).

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 accomplishing project tasks (4 points).

Strengths:

The Uplift Model presented (pp. e1802-1808) well-details the scorecard that the Management Team will follow, expanding upon the Logic Model previously mentioned. Policies and procedures at the daily level are finely detailed and shape the Applicant's philosophy concerning all aspects of school operations (behavior, communications, community outreach, goal-setting, progress measuring, data evaluation, teacher development and reflection, and college exposure, amongst others) which complement the Logic Model.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 2

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

Strengths:

The narrative presents the business plan (pp. e48-60) that addresses recruitment and retention of teachers, administrators, and classified staff, including professional development; the managerial structure at the school level; campus operations; supports for new schools; a Campus Dashboard with financial, human capital, student achievement, and parent satisfaction goals; CMO functions; and board governance and oversight. Additional structure is provided by the Checklist (pp. e1785-1792) which details monthly and daily timelines, with managerial responsibility, in the areas of leadership, teachers, students, families, operations, and facilities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 3

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

Strengths:

The Applicant's financial model (pp. e1901-1906) is robust and detailed, providing clear revenue and expense generators and a complete breakdown of net income per student over the three years. Support from several national and local philanthropic supports (Charter School Growth Fund, the Gates Foundation, the Dell Foundation, and local family benefactors) are referenced. Support from a local school district and politicians are presented for stakeholder support.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

4. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 4

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

Strengths:

Clear adherence to state directives regarding school closure is presented and the Focus Schools program is outlined to avoid the need to do so (pp. e65-66).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

5. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 5

(5) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, chief executive officer or organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project (6 points).

Strengths:

A highly-qualified and experienced management team is detailed, including the CEO, COO, CFO, CAO, and Project Director (pp. e66-67, e80-81, and e1907-1916).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Strengths:

An external evaluator is named and is presented as experienced and qualified, and five key determinants are identified (key model element implementation, support needs, CMO support evaluation, sustainability factors, student retention and college readiness measurement, and student performance – including subgroups) pp. e73-74.

Weaknesses:

Only one minor weakness is noted. The evaluator is stated to have experience providing research and evaluation services to a wide variety of educational entities throughout the state, however, the statement is not supported by any examples of the entities involved.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

described below:

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

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

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

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

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

Note: Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects would complement efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in the State's approved request for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

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

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

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

Strengths:

No strengths were noted.

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

Weaknesses:

Operating six existing K-2 classrooms in a functioning school is not the replication nor the expansion of an existing school. As referenced in the second letter of support in the appendices from [REDACTED] (p. e83), Superintendent of Schools for Grand Prairie ISD, the plan is for Uplift to assume control of six K-2 classrooms at the Lee School, part of the Grand Prairie ISD. Furthermore, no structural or academic interventions are presented.

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 presents their International Baccalaureate curriculum, multicultural events and activities, speakers, and field lessons as examples of their effort to promote diversity (pp. e18-19).

Weaknesses:

Specifics on how the events detailed above will promote diversity is not presented. Furthermore, ELLs are not provided any assisting curriculum (p. e19).

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/31/2015 03:07 PM

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Replication & Expansion - 1: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Uplift Education (U282M150004)

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 Uplift Education shows strong academic results. The results for individual schools is inconsistent when compared to the district and state averages.

Reader's Score: 36

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:

Uplift implements plans for students that are behind to close academic gaps and meet the needs of all students, demonstrating the desire to increase achievement for all students. (p. 8) Extensive data was provided as support for the academic successes of the Uplift schools in the aggregate. (pp. e67-e1694)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

When reviewing all of the school's data for three years, the data show that the individual results of the schools vary. Data for educationally disadvantaged students was not readily discussed in the narrative.

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:

Uplift's student population shows academic gains overall. (pp. 11-14) Achievement gaps are not readily apparent in the data provided.

Weaknesses:

While extensive data was provided, specific subgroups of students were not specifically addressed for all three years. The results for the middle school grades dropped off and did not show as strong of results. (p.14) Individual school results were not included in the discussion.

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:

A review and comparison of the overall results of the Uplift schools demonstrates that Uplift students perform at levels above both the district and the state. (pp. e656...) Additionally, Uplift students have a 100% acceptance rate and a strong (82%) college persistence rate (p. 16) illustrating the results the schools have achieved over the past three years.

Weaknesses:

When the individual results of the schools are considered, the data shows evidence that is inconsistent with the overall results. Two schools in particular show results that are mixed when compared to the results of the state. Those schools, Hampton and Mighty have results which exceed the state in some grades and subjects for three years, but overall are not as high as the state results. (p.e805-880)

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 provided a map and grades related to the proposed expansion areas. (p. 17) Those areas of Dallas serve similar populations to the schools that are already operating. Specific techniques for working with special education students were discussed in the application. (pp. 19-20)

Weaknesses:

The graph on page 13 shows Uplift performing below the state related to the special education population. Additionally, information regarding the ELL populations and how they will address the needs of this population was not included in the application. Specific demographic data related to all of the new schools was not provided, especially those outside of Dallas.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Strengths:

Uplift provided a logic model that identifies the inputs, activities, and outcomes for the planned activities related to the expansion. (p. 28) The activities and outcomes indicate the project have been thoroughly considered and developed. The outcomes are divided into short-term, medium-term, and long-term that extends out seven years. (p. 28) The project team has determined the overall network priorities, three year strategic priorities and three-year goals with 5 metrics that matter the most. (p. 29)

Weaknesses:

The connection between the outcomes and the three year goals is unclear. Several of the goals (college readiness and retention) discussed in the expansion plan are not addressed in the outcomes and logic model creating some ambiguity related to the goals of the plan. (p. 29) Employee retention is not addressed in the logic model. (pp. 28-29)

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:

The management plan is well developed and demonstrates the capacity of the leadership team and strengths of the Uplift education program and management team.

Reader's Score: 19

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:

Major activities, positions, and timelines are defined for year one. The data that will be collected for to the evaluation is identified in the application. This discussion provides evidence of the team's ability to achieve success with the project. This is indicated by the breakdown of the year one timeline into specific quarters and the assignment of relevant responsibilities. (pp. 30-31)

Weaknesses:

The plan for years 2-5 of the project are less developed and do not contain the clearly defined timelines and milestones. (pp. 31-32)

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 2

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

Strengths:

The business plan provides a well-developed explanation of the board structure, values, teacher roles, business operations, financial management, and other operational aspects of the schools. The additional supports for new schools were also discussed. The discussion provides a convincing case that the business and management plan

Sub Question

will be successfully implemented. The level of detail provided demonstrates the applicants understanding of what makes their program successful and what it is required to implement and sustain this project.(pp. 32-45)

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:

Uplift education has a broad base of supporters including financial, facilities, and academic. (p.47-48) The supporters include national charter organizations, local foundations, and former students. Uplift provided their current revenues and CMO expenses in their narrative.(p. 47) They also included a multi-year budget for their K-5 site. (pp. 1901-1905)

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:

The applicant discusses extensive plans for helping schools that are poorly performing, indicating the efforts to prevent the need for school closure. (p. 49) They stated they would follow the guidelines of the Texas Education Agency. (p. 49)

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 leadership team is experienced with all aspects of school operations. The experience is in both the corporate and educational environments, which may help insure the all aspects of the plan are addressed. For example, the project director has experience opening new schools, standardizing instructional materials, and training/coaching personnel. (p. e1907) The CFO has over 20 years of experience in accounting, marketing, and business management. (pp. e1913-e1914)

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:

The evaluation plan (p. 57) identifies an external evaluator, specific data that will be gathered, and a variety of methods for gathering data. The items to be evaluated are tied to the goals and objectives discussed in the project plan, which serves as an indicator for an effective evaluation. (p. 58)

Weaknesses:

Specific plans for using the evaluation data during the project were not discussed. (pp. 57-60) The plan includes a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) study comparing uplift students with those on waiting list. (p.60) In the age of student data privacy laws this type of study may be difficult to implement. If this is not a possibility it will impact the overall effectiveness of the evaluation plan.

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note: Applicants in States operating under ESEA Flexibility that have opted to waive the requirement in ESEA section 1116(b) for LEAs to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, their Title I schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility", at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility). The Secretary encourages such applicants to describe how their proposed projects would complement efforts to serve students attending priority or focus schools described in the State's approved request for waivers under ESEA Flexibility.

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

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

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

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

Uplift explained that they would be working with Grand Prairie School District and specifically with Robert E Lee Elementary. The school is not one that has been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring," which is a requirement of this priority preference. (p. e83)

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:

It is unclear how Uplift is specifically promoting diversity and taking active measures to serve students at a comparable rate to students in the surrounding area. Currently their ELL population is 5% lower than surrounding schools and the special education population is 2.2% lower than surrounding districts. (pp. 2-3).

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

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/31/2015 01:47 PM