

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

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: UP Education Network, Inc. (U282M150022)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

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

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

(2) Either

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

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

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

#### General:

Applicant demonstrates strong increases in achievement for its students at the UAB school, both in terms of absolute growth, but also in terms of performance prior to UP management. Applicant demonstrates a successful track record of closing achievement gaps, with Math performance for its low-income students being a good example. Whereas there was still a sizeable income achievement gap on Math tests in 2014 at the district and State levels, UP's low-income students cut the gap tremendously by boosting their Math proficiency from 42 to 61% between 2012 and 2014.

The applicant's SWD population does not seem to be experiencing the same results as other subgroups, at least not historically. Most results from 2012 and 2013 for the SWD population are below State average (with 2013 Math being the exception). Additionally, applicant does not provide attendance and retention data broken out by subgroup.

Reader's Score: 47

#### 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

## Sub Question

**schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).**

### **Strengths:**

For its UAB school, applicant demonstrates strong three-year history of improving achievement and attainment for its students when compared to that school's performance prior to UP management. Particularly impressive is UAB's performance in terms of student growth, especially Math MCAS results (p. 10 and 12).

SWD and EL population performance is similarly impressive (p. 36).

### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

### **Reader's Score:**

## **2. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 2**

### **(2) Either**

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

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

### **Strengths:**

Applicant demonstrates impressive progress in closing achievement gaps at its UAB campus (p. 3-4). For instance, from 2012 to 2014, low-income UAB students moved from 46 to 61% advanced/proficient in Math, while the comparison school moved from 30 to 32%. By 2014, the low-income/non-low-income achievement gap at the District and State levels were still sizeable: 39 vs. 66, and 41 vs. 73, respectively. Though low-income UAB students still trail non-low-income District and State students in this example, the gap is significantly smaller. The progress for UAB's SWD and EL populations is even more impressive.

### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

### **Reader's Score:**

## **3. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 3**

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

### **Strengths:**

Though there are a few exceptions for UAB's EL and SWD population in 2012 and 2013 (p. 3 and 4), in every other instance, UAB students outperform State averages. Particularly impressive are the differences between UAB and State averages in 2014 MCAS Math results (e.g., UAB low-income students are 20 percentage points higher than the State average).

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

UAB SWD population does not seem to be experiencing the same results as other UAB subgroups, at least not historically. Though 2014 data for this subgroup are higher than the respective State average for Math and ELA, 2012 and 2013 results are mostly below State average (with 2013 Math being the exception).

Applicant also does not provide attendance and retention data broken out by subgroup.

### 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:

Tables on pages 3-4 and 36 demonstrate that applicant has a strong track record of improving academic outcomes for SWD and EL populations, particularly compared to those students' experience prior to UP managing their school (p. 36).

Applicant communicates deliberate plans and support systems for SWD and ELL populations (p. 33-36). These approaches are data-driven, student-focused, and based on models of continuous improvement, which is reflected in the student performance data for SWD and EL populations at UP UAB and UAD.

### Weaknesses:

Applicant doesn't explicitly mention school location in this section, though that information is available in abstract and the subsequent section. Still, applicant does not indicate the expected student population to be served in those locations.

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 communicates clear projections for its replication and expansion efforts (p. 23) such that the CMO will more than triple over the five-year grant period.

Applicant demonstrates a rigorous instructional model (p. 28-36) that prioritizes preparation for high-quality high schools through math, literacy, science, and social studies instruction. Given the applicant's status as a turnaround operator, this approach allows for flexibility in implementation, but still retains critical elements of the school model to ensure student

success.

Applicant has a clear plan for expanding schools and launching turnaround schools, including intense efforts to develop school culture with students, parents, and staff before the school even opens. This type of advance work is critical in turnaround efforts.

**Weaknesses:**

Goals, objectives, and outcomes are relatively scant in this section, aside from the projections data noted in the strengths section.

**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:**

Applicant outlines clear lines of responsibility (school and CMO personnel) that maximize time and human capital devoted to instruction and students. Additionally, budget narrative and financial/operating model are extremely detailed and closely aligned with replication and expansion plans.

Applicant also demonstrates strong relationships with proposed partner LEAs, including considerable support from those groups to conduct turnaround efforts, as well as work experience with an LEA from one key member of the project.

Applicant could have been more detailed in addressing responsibilities and specific tasks associated with replication and expansion. Furthermore, applicant does not communicate in detail a separate process by which it reviews its own performance and manages school closures of any kind.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Sub Question**

## Sub Question

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

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

#### **Strengths:**

Applicant has clear lines of responsibility in terms of instruction and operations. Central office staff provides necessary supports to free school-based staff to focus on instruction and culture.

The budget narrative is extremely detailed and closely aligned with replication and expansion plans. From that perspective, it appears reasonable that the project will be completed according to the budget. The goal of having schools fully funded through public dollars (i.e., non-CSP public funds or private funds) by the time the schools reach scale is appropriate.

#### **Weaknesses:**

In a previous section, applicant broadly addressed responsibilities for particular school-based and central office positions, but a more detailed overview of those responsibilities and specific tasks for replication and expansion would be helpful in this section. Otherwise, it's a little difficult to determine the extent to which the applicant's project can be completed on-time. And those details are the heart of a solid management plan, so it's concerning that they appear to be missing from 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:**

Applicant has already completed a robust analysis of its school support costs and what's reasonable and effective in this regard, which means the replication and expansion efforts will benefit from this analysis. Applicant also demonstrates a thorough understanding of how it will be able to operate on public funds, as well as a history of being able to do so (UAB, p. 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:**

Multi-year budget narrative is detailed and appropriate for replication and expansion efforts. Additionally, applicant demonstrates a detailed understanding of how CSP funding and similar discretionary, temporary sources of funding will support its replication and expansion efforts in a way that ultimately allows for its schools to be fully supported by public dollars.

### Sub Question

Applicant demonstrates critical support from State and local education agencies, including BPS and Springfield Public Schools, where applicant plans to replicate and expand.

#### 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:

There is clearly a procedure by which Massachusetts charter schools are held accountable for performance and closed if necessary.

#### 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:

Key personnel have impressive and rich experience in charter school operations, turnaround management, LEA management, instructional leadership, and other critical areas. In particular, the UP President has considerable experience with Boston Public Schools, which seems like it will be very beneficial in navigating the relationship with that critical partner.

#### 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:

Achievement growth goals are clearly stated and appear to be rigorous given student performance at UAB and UAD prior to UP management, as well as local and State data outlined earlier in the application.

In addition to student performance goals, applicant includes goals related to staff and student retention and staff diversity, all of which speak to applicant's broader understanding of what makes a school successful. Likewise, the ASPIRE/TIGER system appears to be a helpful tool for staff to conduct ongoing qualitative assessments of students' behavior.

Though not in this section, applicant has clear, objective measures related to its replication and expansion efforts in terms of the number of schools it will run and the number of students it will serve.

**Weaknesses:**

It would have been beneficial to review comparison points for applicant's goals for staff retention (p. 54), student retention (p. 55), and staff diversity (p. 55). Without understanding local and State context for these figures, it's difficult to assess these goals. The applicant also did not provide adequate detail regarding evaluation methodology. Most of it was communicated rather broadly throughout this section.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**Priority Questions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applicant demonstrates strong relationships with partner LEAs, particularly Boston Public Schools, including the Superintendent and the city's mayor.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applicant did not meet all three elements of this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant's data for UAB and UAD schools do not demonstrate a history of serving SWD and EL populations at a rate at or above the surrounding schools (p. 8), except for SWD UAB compared to the District (BPS).

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   08/28/2015 02:26 PM

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: UP Education Network, Inc. (U282M150022)

## 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:

UP is a highly successful Horace Mann Turnaround Model Charter School in Massachusetts. The past success demonstrated by UP schools is highly promising, particularly considering their student bodies are almost identical to those of previous schools before turnaround.

Reader's Score: 45

#### Sub Question

##### 1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 1

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

#### Strengths:

UP measures academic achievement in terms of proficiency rates and student growth percentile (p 9). Since the majority of students at UP schools were enrolled in the same school as the year prior, the test scores from pre and post-restart directly indicate the relative success of UP. The scores listed on page 10 thoroughly document the significant growth in the percent of students at advanced/proficient, the median SGP and the SGP rank in the state

### Sub Question

of Massachusetts. The gains over the past 3 years have been consistently upward trending. The results are consistent across all pupil subgroups.

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

#### **Reader's Score:**

### 2. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 2

#### **(2) Either**

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

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

#### **Strengths:**

Students from all pupil subgroups (low income, African American and Hispanic) experienced significant gains in performance under UP management. In the 3 years operating as an UP school, UAB students have doubled in rates of advanced or proficient in both ELA and Math as compared to the pre-UP rates (p 12). For the first year at UAD, students for all subgroups have doubled, if not tripled, in the rate of scoring A/P (p 13). The Student Growth Percentage gains are impressive and effectively demonstrate that UP has increased student achievement.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The scores for UAB under UP management have not been consistently upwardly trending over the past three years (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:**

UP has structured programs for both ELL and Special Education students, including a Sheltered English Instruction program for ELL students and Response to Intervention for Special Education. Students from these subgroups have experienced significant gains in performance on MCAS testing (p 34-36).

#### **Weaknesses:**

Despite making significant gains since the UP takeover, Special Education students and ELL students are still performing significantly lower than their peers on the MCAS test (p 36).

## Sub Question

Reader's Score:

### Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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

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

#### **Strengths:**

UP has demonstrated success in restarting two schools and has codified best practices for this transition under the theory of change model (p 14-15). The test scores from each school clearly indicate that the change in school management has significant positive impacts on student achievement.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The pre-turnaround period is not funded, therefore requires resources outside of per pupil funding. The insufficient time, network office capacity and money (p 20) is a weakness for the UP CMO and could be a barrier to scale. There is a \$1,000,000 gap between the required activities for launch and the funding available.

UP does not include an adequate discussion of the student populations they're expecting to serve.

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:**

UP has demonstrated their leadership and governance is adaptable to the unique circumstances presented at restart. This indicates that the school would likewise be adaptable and flexible when faced with future adversity or unique circumstances as well (p 19). Further, the leadership is aware of unique challenges presented to Horace Mann Charters and has noted them with appropriate strategies (p 21).

UP engages in continual assessment as to whether they can accomplish their mission of preparing to be college ready while only teaching through grade 8. The organization is cognizant of their strengths, for example committed to prioritizing schools that end in 8th grade (p 16). This indicates strong leadership and realistic expectations for growth and expansion. The high school prep classes help further this mission within the realm of their specialty (p 32).

UP prioritizes community engagement and advocacy, ensuring that community and political support remains for restart schools. The governance structure allows for the flexibility of a more traditional charter school in terms of procurement, receiving grants, operating a bank account and managing compliance (p 17).

**Weaknesses:**

UP does not give as much detail into their objectives as would be necessary to fully evaluate whether they are measurable or attainable. Further, without discussion of proposed demographics, the reviewer is unable to determine if they can be successful in meeting the outcomes for potentially different student subpopulations.

**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:**

Overall, the management plan is strong in describing UP's management structure, financial situation and key stakeholders. However, the absence of a timeline makes it difficult to judge whether their actions will be sufficient.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**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:**

Despite the network's relatively large size, UP delegates responsibilities well between a variety of teams to accomplish organization goals. There is a successful balance between top-down goals and school-level activities regarding instructional models (p 41).

UP employs a functional model, focusing on Operations, Talent and Academics at the network level (p 41), creating economies of scale and a consistent network culture.

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

The plans for increasing Network staff capacity as UP scales are vague, making it difficult to judge how well the organization capacity will be able to increase as the number of schools and students increases (p 45). UP does not provide a detailed management plan for their scaling plans.

### 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:

UP's functional, rather than regional, model provides adequate functional support to the school-level staff, ensuring quality and consistency in the areas of Academics, Operations, and Talent across the UP network (p43-45). UP is also committed to a diverse and inclusive staff, better reflecting the student populations served (p 44).

### Weaknesses:

This section lays out general responsibilities, but does not explicitly delegate tasks to individual roles/teams. There is no distinct business plan from which to judge the potential for improving, sustaining and ensuring high quality.

### 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:

Public funds are used to sustain core operations of the schools (p 46) and receive rent-free facilities from the district as a stipulation for being a Horace Mann school (p 46) and UP is committed to operating solely on public funds. In the past UP has been able to successfully fundraise from private donors for the cost to start-up schools and based upon results, would seem to be able to continue to do this (p 47).

### Weaknesses:

UP receives significantly less funding from the Commonwealth than do traditional public schools, and there's no fixed formula funding, making it impossible to anticipate funding levels each year (p 46). Additionally, UP schools have to operate on Union pay scales, taking away the autonomy to pay teachers more or less depending upon performance.

### 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:

As part of its operating agreement, UP has a closing plan which trustees are responsible for completing should UP close (p 49). The closure plan includes methods for notifying stakeholders, including students, parents, employees, etc. Further, they have plans in place to transfer student records.

### 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 CEO of UP has significant experience in both education and the private sector and has been a part of successful school turnarounds in the past. Other members of the team also have significant experience in both consulting and education, bringing a unique combination of business and education understanding (p 50-52).

### Weaknesses:

None of the leadership has experience in managing a charter school network the size of UP's proposed growth.

### 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 goals denoted are directly tied back to the mission of UP Schools (p 55) and include reasonable, measurable metrics, such as retaining 80% of instructors from year to year.

UP demonstrates an understanding of their unique model and the limitations on testing students using traditional assessments. UP's decision to create benchmark assessments indicates this understanding (p 56-58), for example, developing the ASPIRE/TIGER report of student performance.

Student assessments are aligned to Common Core standards and the PARCC test.

### Weaknesses:

UP does not include any plans for independent evaluation. Further, there is no mention of benchmarks, providing little context for the performance goals.

**Reader's Score: 5**

## Priority Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

UP has demonstrated use of following criteria to ensure UP schools serve the target population: interest in local school districts to collaborate, record of under or low performance by existing school district, sub-population of low-income students, SWD and ELLs, and interest from families (p 7). Additionally, UP is a school restart model and partners with the

local school district to restart failing middle schools (p 7).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 4

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

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

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

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

UP has a cultural commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, as demonstrated through teaching time-sensitive lessons about the power of civil disobedience and non-violent and participation in panel discussions in the wake of Furguson-Michael Brown and New York City-Eric Garner cases (p 8). UP students are also engaged in their community as "responsible citizen-scholars" (p 8).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/28/2015 12:11 AM



# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: UP Education Network, Inc. (U282M150022)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

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

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

(2) Either

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

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

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

#### General:

Overall, the applicant demonstrates success in significant academic achievement for all students, with the exception of a few inconsistencies. There is evidence of substantial growth for students and all educationally disadvantaged student subgroups have experienced increases in proficiency rates over the past three years. There is evidence that UP has reduced historic achievement gaps between 2012 and 2013, although there is not enough data to illustrate consistency over the past three years. The applicant has better achievement results with educationally disadvantaged students than state averages over the past three years except for some inconsistencies with students with disabilities in 2012 and 2013. However, there is not enough compelling data to demonstrate better results in student attendance and retention rates.

Reader's Score: 43

#### 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 student achievement growth at UP's UAB school over the past three years is impressive and inspiring (aside from a reduced growth rate in English language arts in 2013), especially in math where UAB has been ranked first in growth among middle schools in Massachusetts for three years in a row (p. e24). UP has significantly increased proficiency rates at its UAB over the past three years for educationally disadvantaged students, especially low-income students and students with disabilities and, to a lesser degree, ELL students. Proficiency rates for low-income students at UAB have increased from 53% in ELA and 46% in math in 2012 to 64% and 61%, respectively, in 2014, which is also significantly higher than the 2011 rates, prior to UP's turnaround of the school, of 32% and 25%, respectively (p. e26). Students with disabilities experienced similar increases, as proficiency rates increased from 15% in math and 21% in ELA in 2012 to 37% and 33%, respectively in 2014. While the increases are not as significant, proficiency rates for ELL students at UAB have increased from 44% in math and 50% in ELA in 2012 to 57% and 55%, respectively, in 2014 (p. e17-18).

### Weaknesses:

While the proposal provides growth data for the overall student body at UAB, the proposal does not contain growth data specifically for educationally disadvantaged students, making it difficult to get a more accurate picture of how well UP is increasing academic achievement with these students. While proficiency rates have ultimately increased between 2012 and 2014, there have been a few inconsistencies over the past three years. For example, the math proficiency rates for low-income and ELL students remained stagnant at 61% and 57%, respectively, between 2013 and 2014, and ELA proficiency rates for students with disabilities and ELL students slightly dipped between 2012 and 2013 (from 21% to 19% for students with disabilities and from 50% to 48% for ELL students) before rebounding in 2014 (p. e17-18, e26).

### 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:

Based on calculations using the student proficiency data for UAB and comparing educationally disadvantaged and minority student subgroups to the non-low-income subgroup, UP has success in closing historic achievement gaps as compared to similar gaps at the Boston Public Schools district (p. e17-18). This is due to both higher proficiency rates for UAB's educationally disadvantaged and minority students as well as lower proficiency rates of UAB's non-low-income students as compared to the district. Still, between 2012 and 2013 UAB reduced every proficiency rate gap, and in some instances educationally disadvantaged or minority students outperformed non-low-income students, such as in 2013 when African American, Hispanic, and low-income student subgroups each had higher proficiency rates in ELA than non-low-income students. While UAB's gaps decreased between 2012 and 2013, every gap at the district level has steadily increased over the past three years, making UAB's success more impressive.

### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not offer any of its own achievement gap calculations, so this evaluator made calculations using the non-low-income student subgroup as the comparison subgroup to all educationally disadvantaged and minority student subgroups. However, the proposal only has two years (2012 and 2013) of proficiency data for non-low-

### Sub Question

income students at UAB (p. e18), so consistency over three years cannot be determined using this calculation method.

### 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:

For the past three years, low-income and ELL students at UAB outperformed Massachusetts statewide averages in math and English language arts proficiency rates for such students (p. e17-18). In 2014, students with disabilities at UAB had higher proficiency rates in both math and ELA (37% and 33%, respectively) than statewide averages for such students (23% and 30%, respectively).

#### Weaknesses:

UP has not consistently produced academic achievement results for students with disabilities that are above Massachusetts state averages for such students over the past three years. In 2012, students with disabilities at UAB performed below statewide averages in math and English language arts (15% and 21%, respectively, compared to state averages of 21% and 31%, respectively), and in 2013 they performed below state averages in English language arts (19% compared to the state average of 29%) (p. e17-18).

The proposal only provides student attendance and retention data for 2014, therefore making it impossible to evaluate consistency over the past three years. In 2014, the retention rate (students not promoted to the next grade level) at UAB was significantly higher than the statewide average, and the attendance rate was slightly less than the statewide average (p. e19).

### 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 (p. e17-20, 24-27). All educationally disadvantaged student subgroups have experienced increases in proficiency rates over the past three years, there is evidence that UP has reduced historic achievement gaps, and the applicant has better achievement results with educationally disadvantaged students than state averages.

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant intends to partner with communities that have students with “academic needs,” the proposal does not include information on the proposed locations of the schools to be created and the student populations to be served in the response to this selection criteria (p. e27). However, the proposal explains that “UP does not select which schools it turns around; rather, a local school district or the state will identify and determine which school it would like UP to restart” (p. e33).

**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:**

Because the applicant does not discuss the proposed locations of the schools to be created and the student populations to be served in its response to the previous selection criteria, it is unclear whether the project proposes to serve substantially different populations than those currently served by UP. However, the proposal explains that UP has an “adaptable school model” that is designed to meet the unique needs of an underperforming school’s existing student population and provides essential services to support each turnaround (p. 33).

**Weaknesses:**

Within the narrative proposal, the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project are not clear. For example, the proposal describes the applicant’s mission and “theory of change” (p. e28-29), but it does not explicitly state what the applicant seeks to achieve through this project, such as the number of schools to be replicated or expanded, the number of students to be served, and academic achievement targets for new schools. However, the abstract narrative more clearly identifies project goals and outcomes (p. e13), which appear to be measurable and attainable, although there does not seem to be an explanation connecting the project goals, objectives, and outcomes.

**Reader's Score: 6**

**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 business plan, operational model, demonstrated support from key partners, and leadership team qualifications appear to be strong. However, the overall project management plan is not clear.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Sub Question**

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

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

**Strengths:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal describes a school launch/turnaround process—including the management of pre-turnaround, turnaround, and long-term phases (p. e31-38)—but it is not clear if this is intended to represent the project management plan, and if so, it lacks clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

**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 proposal describes the major “teams” of UP’s central office and the responsibilities of each team in ensuring the quality and performance of UP’s schools, including the areas of facilities, student academic achievement, and human resources (p. e55-59). For example, the operations team provides a variety of centralized supports, such as management of large-scale facilities projects and back-office accounting, allowing UP schools to focus on educating students. Because UP’s central office is well-developed, it has the capacity to support new schools and ensure quality and performance.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:**

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

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

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

UP's operating model is reasonable because it will build off of its already existing and successful organizational structure. The structure of the leadership team will remain constant, and the network's other existing teams will be expanded as more schools are added to the portfolio (p. e59).

The financial model is still dependent on fundraising and grants. The applicant continues to secure large grants from key partners, demonstrating their commitment to the success of UP (p. e62). Further, UP cannot turnaround schools without the cooperation and commitment from the local school districts in which it operates.

### Weaknesses:

The applicant is moving toward a more sustainable financial model, but still requires a significant amount of fundraising/grant funds to launch new schools and sustain and expand its network capacity (p. e60-61, e96).

While the proposal states that the applicant has support from the new superintendent and the Mayor (p. e38), there is no evidence included in the application of that support.

### 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's authorizer has established a school closure procedure. Should an UP school need to be closed, UP would need to close school affairs; provide written notification regarding the impending closure to all students, parents, guardians, employees debtors, creditors, landlords, lessors, and funding sources; submit a student records transition plan; and take appropriate action to terminate any contracts, leases, or obligations that extend beyond the closure date (p. e63).

### 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:

UP's leadership team has broad range of experience and diverse expertise, and members of the leadership team have experience in managing projects and/or budgets of the size and scope being proposed (p. e64-67). For example, the President has experience in managing large budgets of school districts, the Chief Operating Officer has led the launch of five of UP's schools in three years, and the Chief Academic Officer is a co-founder of UP and the developer of the curriculum philosophies and instructional practices (p. e77-79).

### Weaknesses:

The proposal implies that UP's CEO is the point person for launching new restart schools (p. e64). It is not clear who the project director or key project personnel are, and it is therefore difficult to determine if these people have experience in managing projects of the size and scope being proposed.

### Reader's Score:

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

### **Strengths:**

The proposal thoroughly describes the student achievement performance measures that are related to the intended outcomes of the project and the tools to evaluate that performance (p. e67-73). For example, UP sets quantitative goals for new restart schools of 45% proficiency in both math and ELA after one year of UP management; 55% proficiency after two years; and 65% after three years. UP uses standardized tests and interim assessments to measure these objectives (p. e68).

### **Weaknesses:**

The proposal does not describe performance measures, or how they will be evaluated, for the project objective of launching more restart schools.

Overall, there is a lack of evaluation methodology to specifically determine the success of the proposed project.

**Reader's Score: 5**

## Priority Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended

(ESEA), and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

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

The applicant's mission is to turn around struggling schools in historically underserved communities (p. e21) and has so far restarted schools in Boston and Lawrence, Massachusetts (p. e15). The applicant's history in opening charter schools demonstrates its commitment to this mission as well as its dedication to partnering with local school districts to turn around underperforming schools (p. e16-20). The two Horace Mann charter schools in UP's portfolio were restarted in partnership with, and upon receiving invitations from, the Boston Public Schools district (p. e16-17).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

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

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

**Note 2:** For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance

issued by the Department's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" ([www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf](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:**

UP schools do not serve students with disabilities and ELL students at quite the same rate as comparable public schools in the district (p. e22). The proposal does not explain how any new UP schools intend to attract or recruit such students other than stating that UP "actively endeavor[s] to re-enroll the same students that would have otherwise attended the struggling school" that UP takes over (p. e21).

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
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