

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

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: West Denver Prep DBA STRIVE Preparatory Schools (U282M150030)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

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

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

(2) Either

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

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

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

General:

Though applicant appears to be outperforming "similar" DPS schools in nearly every way, consistently meeting or exceeding DPS averages, and in some instances meeting or exceeding State averages, the applicant is generally trending downwards in student performance while the comparison groups are either trending downwards, but not as dramatically, or remaining flat across the past three years. It is also concerning that the applicant failed to provide data on the performance of its SWD population. Given the focus on educationally disadvantaged students in this criterion, and the general focus on the performance of that population in charter schools more broadly, this omission is particularly concerning. Applicant also does not provide attendance and retention data at the State-level (p. 23-24), or other necessary data points to fully assess its performance in closing achievement gaps, though comparisons to the State averages serves as a reasonable proxy.

Reader's Score: 30

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:

Across almost all measures (p. 9-16), STRIVE schools outperform what the applicant defines as similar DPS schools. Of particular note is the applicant's performance in the following areas in this regard: TCAP Reading, grades 6-8 ELLs (p. 9); TCAP Math, grades 6-8 ELLs (p. 10); all TCAP charts for Hispanic/Latino students (p. 11-12); all TCAP charts for low-income students (p. 13-14); and all TCAP charts for all students (p. 15-16). In select instances, STRIVE also outperforms DPS and State averages (most ELL charts, p. 9-10; most Hispanic/Latino charts, p. 11-12; TCAP Math low-income, grades 9-10, p. 14).

Weaknesses:

In many instances, applicant appears to be trending downwards in terms of student achievement, though it may still outperform similar schools, DPS, and/or State averages. Examples include: TCAP Math, grades 6-8 ELLs (p. 10); TCAP Math, grades 6-8 Hispanic/Latino (p. 12); TCAP Math, low-income (p. 13-14). Though the applicant provides details on these declines on page 8, they are nonetheless concerning.

Applicant does not provide performance data for students with disabilities.

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:

As noted previously, applicant demonstrates some success in outperforming DPS and State averages. Given that the DPS and State averages are likely to encompass higher percentages of student subgroups on the "other side" of historic achievement gaps (i.e., White, non-low-income), STRIVE's performance suggests that it has at the very least narrowed some historic achievement gaps, particularly when one compares the "similar" schools to those same DPS and State averages.

Weaknesses:

Without direct comparisons to relevant subgroups (e.g., DPS non-low-income, State non-low-income; DPS White, State White), it's not possible to analyze relevant subgroup achievement gaps. In other words, the applicant does not provide data in a way that allows for the comparison of, for example, STRIVE Latino students to DPS White students or State White students, which would truly demonstrate the extent to which the applicant is closing historic achievement gaps.

Applicant does not provide performance data for students with disabilities.

Reader's Score:

3. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 3

Sub Question

(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:

As previously mentioned, applicant has had some success in outperforming State-wide averages on the TCAP, namely for ELLs (p. 9-10), Latino students in Math (p. 12), and low-income grades 9-10 Math (p. 14). The applicant's performance with ELLs is particularly impressive given its high percentage of ELL students (p. 6-7).

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not provide attendance and retention data at the State-level (p. 23-24).

Applicant does not provide performance data for students with disabilities.

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 demonstrates strong track record of student performance for ELLs (p. 9-10) and low-income students (p. 13-14), particularly when compared to "similar schools" (as defined by the applicant).

Through rigorous, research-based professional development, curriculum design, and instructional methodologies, applicant demonstrates a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners, including SWD, EL, and low-income populations. The focus on continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making and instruction ("Continuously assess ELLs" p. 26; "Weekly assessment cycle allows for immediate feedback on student comprehension" p. 27) demonstrates that the applicant had adopted and leveraged regular feedback loops on student performance.

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not provide performance data for students with disabilities, which makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the applicant has effectively served this population.

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:

Applicant demonstrates a clear growth plan. The proposed pace of expansion is realistic, as it is both ambitious and attainable. Given the CMO's prior performance, the proposed objectives in this application, and the CMO's current status, overall, this appears to be a manageable growth plan.

Additionally, the applicant presents clear outcomes and a strong logic model. Of particular importance, these elements cover the entire grant period, not just the project launch and/or the ultimate assessment of the project's production.

Finally, the applicant details clear plans for specific individual elements of replication, once again demonstrating a strong focus on all the things that matter to replicating high-quality schools. The applicant outlines clear plans for ensuring strong student performance, robust talent management, general school model replication (i.e., curricular and instructional elements of the proposed project schools), and effective, prudent operations.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-

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

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

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

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

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

General:

Applicant has strong key personnel associated with the proposed project who have demonstrated success in these types of efforts. Furthermore, the attention to detail communicated in the project design is continued into the management and business plans for the proposed project. Applicant's financial sustainability plan is somewhat concerning, specifically that

it does not appear to ensure sustainability on non-CSP public funds until 2021-22, a full year after the CSP project would be complete. There is also a strong emphasis on detailing the applicant's fundraising methodology, which is similarly concerning given the nature of such funds.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 1

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

Strengths:

Applicant provides strong, specific information about responsibilities, tasks, and timelines for the proposed project (p. 45 - 48). Of particular note, the distinction between parties involved and "decision-makers" (p. 45-46) for CMO operations ensures that clear lines of responsibility for action and decisions are established and known from the beginning.

Weaknesses:

The timelines on pages 47 and 48 are pretty broad, and not very incremental. For certain elements of the management plan, simply indicating that something will be complete "by" a certain time does not indicate when much of the lead-up work will be complete, when that work will begin, or how long that work will take.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 2

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

Strengths:

Applicant demonstrates strong CMO support in terms of "back-office" functions, but also a strong network approach to driving student achievement. It's clear that the applicant understands the benefits of economies of scale and taking a collaborative approach to both the operational and curricular/instructional components of running high-performing charter schools and a CMO. Speaking specifically to the curricular/instructional components (p. 49-50), the applicant's plan is well-thought-out, deliberate, inclusive of critical parties involved, and rigorous, all of which ensures a consistent, sophisticated focus on student achievement.

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not appear to have a plan for full financial sustainability until 2021-22, one full year after the CSP project ends. Even planning to be financially sustainable for the first year after the CSP project ends (i.e., 2020-2021) would be cutting it close as it leaves no margin for error. Therefore, the applicant's proposed plan in this regard does not seem to demonstrate responsible financial planning.

Along the same lines, the applicant seems to make a lot of references to fundraising, which doesn't demonstrate stability beyond federal funding, as that type of support is also discretionary and not directly tied to student enrollment.

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:

Applicant includes a detailed, multi-year financial model at the CMO level (p. 52) built through projection data, which would seem to be an appropriate approach. The model also appears to be part of a consistent and professional focus on financial health (i.e., monthly cash-flow analysis mentioned on p. 53), which further speaks to the applicant's attention to this very important part of CMO operations, school management, and replication and expansion efforts.

Applicant demonstrates strong support from area leaders, state leaders, and noteworthy members of charter school community (e.g., Charter School Growth Fund).

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:

Applicant presents a very explicit, functional plan for closing an underperforming school that includes important details on parent/family communication and communicating with DPS. The plan also includes critical operational details to ensure effective staff and resource management in a closure procedure.

Weaknesses:

Though the applicant provides a detailed plan for actually closing a school, the applicant did not outline why a school would close. Obviously a revoked charter would initiate that process, but it would have been helpful to read about the applicant's broader plans for continuously assessing school quality, including some broader benchmarks for school quality, which would demonstrate an internal commitment to evaluating schools, improving those that struggle, and closing ones that fail to meet certain criteria.

Reader's Score:

5. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 5

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

Strengths:

Applicant's key personnel possess strong backgrounds in charter management and other relevant elements of this project. Many have strong experience with STRIVE, as well as impressive educational credentials from rigorous schools (e.g., Vanderbilt, Yale, NYU).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Applicant doesn't demonstrate explicit expertise with SWD and EL populations among its key personnel. Given the applicant's omission of data regarding the performance of its SWD population, this is another concerning fact related to serving this particular element of the educationally disadvantaged population.

It's a bit concerning that the project director is only a half-time employee (p. 56). Given the scope of the project, that may be inadequate.

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:

Taken in combination with the performance targets laid out earlier in the application (p. 41-44), applicant proposes a rigorous evaluation plan, including multiple data points, that fully addresses how the proposed project will be continuously and summatively assessed. The methods of evaluation appear to be comprehensive and overall the proposed evaluation appears to be very diverse. To that point, the evaluation covers multiple elements of the project (i.e., not just student performance), and as a result will ensure that the applicant consistently focuses on the diverse elements of this project (i.e., curriculum and instruction, operations, CMO development).

External evaluator (Wexford Institute) appears well-qualified to conduct the evaluation, given its history and specific focus on schools with similar student populations.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

Applicant's Southwest Kepner MS 3 (p. e7) will be operated as part of DPS turnaround strategy for Kepner MS.

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) and "Schools' Civil Rights Obligations to English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html).

Strengths:

Applicant did not meet all three elements of this priority.

Weaknesses:

Applicant makes little effort to explain how it actively avoids racial isolation, both in terms of student enrollment and activities/programming that the applicant offers to students to expose them to diverse experiences

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: West Denver Prep DBA STRIVE Preparatory Schools (U282M150030)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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(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:

STRIVE demonstrates that for many metrics and subgroups, their students outperform Denver Public Schools. However, STRIVE fails to demonstrate consistent results for some subgroups.

Reader's Score: 31

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:

Strive demonstrates that their Latino, ELL and low-income students in English and Math as compared to Denver Public Schools (p 21) based upon TCAP data showing the percentage of students proficient and advanced. STRIVE shows that their programs work in increasing ELL achievement in middle school. STRIVE ELL students performed better than students in state schools in Reading and Math for 6-8 grades, reading in grades 9-10 and math 9-10 (p 23).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The TCAP scores for students in Mathematics have trended downward for STRIVE prep students from 2012 to 2014, while declining from 2013 to 2014 in Reading (p 8).

In order to demonstrate success at closing the achievement gap, readers must assume that STRIVE is using the district scores as a proxy for their students' baseline scores. STRIVE does not adequately show their own students growth in achievement.

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:

Strive sufficiently demonstrates that the schools are closing the achievement gap for Latino, ELL and low-income students in English and Math as compared to Denver Public Schools (p 21) based upon TCAP data showing the percentage of students proficient and advanced.

STRIVE shows conclusively that their programs work in increasing ELL achievement in middle school. STRIVE ELL students performed better than students in state schools in Reading and Math for 6-8 grades, reading in grades 9-10 and math 9-10 (p 23).

Weaknesses:

For all subgroups, the percentage of students scoring advanced or proficient as compared to DPS have been inconsistent over the past 3 years (p 22).

STRIVE's results for reading and math are inconsistent for Latino and FRL students (p 23).

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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

STRIVE adequately demonstrates that their students outperform surround public schools in attendance rate, attrition rate and retention rate. STRIVE's attendance rate is 95%, compared to 91%, the attrition rate is 11% compared to 21% and attrition rate is 88% compared to 78% (p 23).

Weaknesses:

STRIVE's performance for these metrics is inconsistent, with many school boasting fluctuating attrition rates and inconsistent retention rates (p 24). Further, there is no data presented for Students with Disabilities.

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:

STRIVE is not proposing to locate any schools in areas in which the demographics will be different from current demographics, removing the necessity to reevaluate the potential success of the model with a new student body and setting themselves up for success (p 25). STRIVE plans to replicate their current model, which includes extensive PD and best-practice based curriculum.

The ELL program is designed in accordance with research backed standards and uses the SIOP model, in accordance with Federal Law. Since the schools have a high (66%) EL population, the attention to EL programs is important and indicated an ability to replicate their model (p 26-27).

In order to close the achievement gap, STRIVE uses a multi-tiered model to provide a continuum of services to all students, ensuring that each student has equal access to resources promoting success for all (p 28).

Weaknesses:

STRIVE did not enroll enough Special Education students to report data (p 24).

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:

STRIVE's goal of dramatically increasing the number of low-income students prepared for college seems to be achievable based upon the plan detailed in the application. The pace of expansion is realistic, with half of the proposed growth coming after the grant period (p 35).

Performance measures are qualitatively based on reasonable targets and allow for growth over the course of the grant period (p 41-44).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**1. (Note: Please provide your detailed comments for each of the following factors in the Quality of the Management Plan Sub-Questions.)**

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-

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

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

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

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

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

General:

STRIVE has a well-organized Central office, or C-Team to support back office operations. This team, which is structured around functions. The governance structure, accountability, business plans, financial/operational model and leadership suggest that STRIVE will to have to worry about having to close schools.

Reader's Score: 17

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

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

STRIVE's model of governance ensures that the schools are well-run, both at the school level and network level (p 48). There is a commitment to accountability that suggests that STRIVE will meet the targets set forth in the implementation plan. The timeframe given is detailed and sets specific targets, and includes separate activities for both new and expanded schools (p 47-48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 2

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

Strengths:

STRIVE has a clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for Operations, HR/Talent & Instructional Management at the Central Office level, allowing economies of scale and observing trends across the whole network (p 49-50).

Weaknesses:

STRIVE will need an injection of over \$16 million dollars over the next five years to open and operate 8 new schools and expand one (p 50) because STRIVE opens schools one grade at a time, taking several years to reach full enrollment.

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 STRIVE Prep financial model is extremely detailed, showing the revenue and expenses for each of the 5 years of the program (p 52) and does not, during an year, plan to operate at a deficit. STRIVE will make up the deficit between public funding and expenses of school start up using the CSP grant and private philanthropy (p 52). STRIVE has policies in place to ensure financial sustainability and accountability, such as role assignments, review procedures and timelines for financial operations. STRIVE includes their assumptions for financial projections, as well.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

4. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 4

Sub Question

(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:

STRIVE would proactively relinquish their charter to DPS prior to being asked to do so. They have a specific plan for notifying parents and transferring documents, including timelines for completion (p 53-54).

Weaknesses:

STRIVE does not present a plan for independently evaluate when or why they would close besides a revocation of their charter.

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 STRIVE leadership team has significant experience with STRIVE, as well as external training specific to charter schools. Most members have advanced degrees in areas relevant to their position (p 54-56).

Weaknesses:

The project director is a .5 FTE employee, which is somewhat concerning since STRIVE plans to expand significantly (p 56).

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:

STRIVE has an independent evaluation plan in place, and will target four phases of charter school development, directly mapping back to their program goals (p 56).

The external evaluator has experience in evaluating "federal projects with a focus on serving students from low-income communities and English Learners."

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STRIVE has been designated by DPS to assist in the turnaround of Kepner Middle Schools because of ELL performance and parent demand in the community (p 30).

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) 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:

STRIVE does not adequately detail how their schools avoid racial isolation.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/28/2015 12:21 AM

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: West Denver Prep DBA STRIVE Preparatory Schools (U282M150030)

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:

The applicant serves a high number of educationally disadvantaged students, but the results with those students are mixed when compared to statewide and district averages. There is not sufficient evidence to definitively conclude that the applicant significantly increases student academic achievement and attainment, closes achievement gaps, or achieves results significantly above statewide averages.

Reader's Score: 27

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 1

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

Strengths:

The average growth for one year at one STRIVE Prep school is substantial based on data from an assessment designed by the University of Chicago (p. e40). There are arguably increases in student achievement for some educationally disadvantaged students that may have otherwise been underserved in neighborhood schools based

Sub Question

on single year comparative proficiency rates (p. e30-35).

Weaknesses:

The average proficiency trends in reading and math for all students attending STRIVE Prep schools appears to have decreased over the past three years while the district and the state have generally trended upward in average proficiency (p. e36-37). This appears to be the case with educationally disadvantaged student subgroups as well. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be system-wide data for STRIVE Prep and for multiple years.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Eligible Applicant - Part 2

(2) Either

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

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

Strengths:

The proposal illustrates that it outperforms "similar schools" in every proficiency measure for each applicable subgroup over the last three years, arguing that this demonstrates success at closing achievement gaps (p. e42-43).

Weaknesses:

The application does not define "similar schools." By not defining this term, it is difficult to understand the data the applicant is trying to highlight. It is not clear if the applicant is closing the achievement gap based on the data. Even when comparing the proficiency averages of the district for various subgroups, the results are mixed.

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:

The average proficiency in reading and math of STRIVE Prep's ELL students in grades 6-10 surpassed the statewide averages for ELL students almost every year over the past three years (p. e30-31).

Weaknesses:

The average proficiency rates of low-income students at all STRIVE Prep schools are often less than statewide averages for those same students (p. e34-35).

No data was submitted for students with disabilities (p. e45).

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:

The applicant points to the data provided in the previous section of the proposal as demonstrated success with educationally disadvantaged students (p. e45). The applicant certainly does well with ELL students, but that assertion cannot definitely be made about the low-income students or students with disabilities.

The applicant provides services to students with disabilities that have severe-needs through Center programs (p. e46).

The replication schools will be located in the same district and neighborhoods where STRIVE Prep schools currently operate to serve more families in those communities (p. e46).

Weaknesses:

The results that the applicant has with educationally disadvantaged students is mixed.

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:

The goals and objectives in terms of replication schools, expansion grades, and additional students for each year of the project are clear (p. e55-56).

The project objectives are clear and attainable and are accompanied by measurable outcomes (p. e62-65).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-

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

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

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

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

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

General:

The proposal provides an adequate project management plan, business plan, and financial and operating model. The applicant has the capacity to implement the proposal.

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

1. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 1

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

Strengths:

Coupled with the replication and expansion project design (p. e56), the implementation timeline for new and expanded school (p. e68) is a sufficient project management plan that clearly defines responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score:

2. Quality of the Management Plan - Part 2

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

The business plan describes a central offices that handles numerous functions to ensure the quality and performance of STRIVE Prep schools (p. e66-67, e70-71).

Weaknesses:

The applicant appears to be heavily dependent on grants and private funds, requiring \$850K for the first three years of operation for each new school, to replicate its model (p. e71).

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 proposal presents a prudent and sustainable financial and operating model (p. e73-74).

The proposal contains evidence demonstrating that the applicant has the support of key partners and stakeholders (p. e125-134).

Weaknesses:

The proposal states that financial model is sustainable without private fundraising in the 2021-2022 school year, which is one year after the proposed project ends (p. e72).

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 proposal provides an action plan for school closure (p. e74-75).

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 senior team has ample experience in educational leadership and management (p. e75-77).

Weaknesses:

The half-time project director has some experience in managing projects, although it is not clear if those projects were of similar size and scope as being proposed (p. e101-102).

Sub Question

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

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

Strengths:

The proposal provides a well-designed methodology for project evaluation, and the independent evaluators are well qualified. The evaluation plan focuses on evaluation questions for each phase of the project, and uses a variety of methods—such as descriptive evaluation, implementation analysis, assessment of progress, and outcome evaluation—to produce data and measure the success of the project in accordance with performance measures. (p. e77-81).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Serving High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to replicate one of its high-quality charter schools in partnership with the district to turnaround a middle school that has poor academic performance and serves a high number of ELL students. The district has already selected the applicant to be a turnaround operator (p. e51).

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) 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:

The racial/ethnic makeup of STRIVE Prep schools is overwhelmingly Latinos (p. e52), and it is not clear how the applicant actively avoids racial isolation given such a student population.

Reader's Score: 0

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