

Mr. Paul L. Pastorek, State Superintendent of Education, and Mr. Kenneth Campbell, Director of the Charter Schools Office, 225-342-3640, kenneth.campbell@la.gov, 1201 N. 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, submit this competitive grant application under the “2009 Invitation for Applications”, USDE Public Charter School Program (CSP), (CFDA 84.282A).

Abstract: Louisiana’s 2009-12 Application to USDE Charter School Grant Program

Louisiana’s Charter School Subgrants Program will continue to support and promote the purposes of the federal Charter School Program (CSP) by greatly expanding our current efforts and aggressively implementing a plan to develop and open a significant number of successful, high-quality charter schools during the 2009-2012 award period. Following the worst natural disaster to ever befall our nation, Louisiana moved boldly to rebuild New Orleans’ public school system (where 90% of schools were failing) with a system of charter and charter-like schools. To this end, we have raised awareness of charter schools, delivered technical assistance, and provided subgrant funding to capable charter developers, resulting in the creation of 43 new charter schools in New Orleans over the past three years. Currently, well over fifty percent of students in New Orleans public schools, the vast majority of whom are at-risk and economically disadvantaged, attend charter schools. Our initial success in New Orleans has also created opportunities for new charter growth throughout the state. We believe our efforts over the next three years will expand local and national understanding of charter schools through Louisiana’s newest charter models – 1) the complete “takeover” of failed public schools by independent charter schools; and 2) the “transformation” of low-performing Recovery School District schools by charter operators who phase their programs into these schools one year at a time.

The goals of the grant program during the next grant period are 1) to increase the number of high-quality charter schools available to Louisiana students and families; 2) to strengthen the skills and knowledge of boards and authorizers to build their leadership capabilities; and 3) to improve student academic achievement in charter schools. We will use 2009-12 CSP grant funding to provide assistance to 35 new charter schools over the next three years, as well as to the 26 schools with remaining CSP eligibility. The Department’s Charter School Office is dedicated to providing administrative oversight of the charter school grant program to ensure that objectives are achieved in a timely and efficient manner.