

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Panel 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: WI Department of Public Instruction (U282A090003)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Summary Comments

General:

Overall the applicant has done a wonderful job of identifying and responding to the criteria stipulated in the application process.

The applicant has clearly stated the milestones and objectives in detail. The activities are clearly stated and will impact the success of the proposed program.]

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter schools grant program will make...

1. The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, including steps taken by the SEA to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA's charter school grant program and how the SEA will disseminate best or promising practices of charter schools to each LEA in the State.

Strengths:

Three years of achievement data reported to the U.S. Department of Education in June, 2008, as part of Wisconsin's annual performance report show charter schools exceeded statewide proficiency targets in both reading and math in 2007-08. Pp 25

Of those surviving schools that served a high risk or high poverty population, many have achieved success by improving attendance and graduation rates, reducing dropouts and raising levels of parent satisfaction. Please note the chart on previous page identifying the number of charter schools closed during last federal grant period. Pp 25

The project provides information that specifies that the Wisconsin Charter School Program (WCSP) plan is aligned with the state educational goals designed to assure a quality education for every child and to close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students or children of color and their peers. According to s. 118.30, Wis. Stats., Pupil Assessment, all charter school students must participate in the state assessment system. Additionally, to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged children, Wisconsin charter school law . pp-25

The project will target federal charter school grant dollars to encourage the development of charter schools committed to helping educationally disadvantaged students

who live in areas where the largest number of schools are identified for improvement. Currently, one third of Wisconsin's operating charter schools are targeted for at-risk students or students in need of an alternative method of schooling. Additionally, the WCSP will support through only those charter schools that identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who need special education and related services, including those children who are under three years of age of 3. pp 27.

The project will implement the federal charter school grant process annually and provide additional financial incentives to successful grant applicants in secondary charter schools with high poverty rates and low student achievement. Pp-29

The project has developed in collaboration with state educational partners a strong federal charter school program plan that includes objectives, action steps and outcomes designed to assist educationally disadvantaged and other students meet student achievement standards. pp 30

Weaknesses:

The project does not aggressively target disadvantaged students.

The activities were too broad to determine how the project's growth would occur.

The project does not show how school closures will be addressed.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of how the State's law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and exempts charter schools from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy charter schools have achieved over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with their State's law.

Strengths:

The project will align itself with the laws of Wisconsin that allows unlimited flexibility in terms of the types of charter schools that can be created and how they achieve their results. However, a charter school must participate in the state assessment system, the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE), report their students for membership and have licensed teachers. The state does provide some flexibility in licensure through administrative code PI 34.34, by offering a charter school instructional staff permit to qualified staff who obtain an emergency license while seeking necessary training. pp-38

The project indicates that an external peer review panel will recommend for funding subgrant applications that meet the federal and state definitions of a quality charter school, focus on student outcomes, and

describe rigorous student assessment systems. The WCSP will help guarantee success for all, particularly disadvantaged students, by aligning the charter school program objectives with the State Superintendent's pledge to meet the needs of children at-risk and to close the achievement gap. The WCSP objectives will also increase parent and community involvement, and promote successful models for all public schools. Through partners, key contacts and the Superintendent's Advisory Council on Charter Schools, a concerted and coordinated effort has been and will continue to be made to inform teachers, parents, community members and all LEAs of the Wisconsin Charter Schools Program.

Weaknesses:

The project does not show of the ramifications of the law for full school autonomy.

The project is vague regarding how issues of school quality are measured.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - The number of high-quality charter schools to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State.

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new charter schools to be authorized and opened in the State during the three-year period of this grant.

The Secretary also considers how the SEA will inform each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and ensure that each charter school in the State receives the school's commensurate share of Federal education funds that are allocated by formula each year, including during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly.

Strengths:

The Project indicates that In the fifteen years since the state charter school law was established in 1993, Wisconsin ranks seventh (7th) in the country in the creation of high quality public charter schools that have increased parental choice and offered flexible and meaningful educational opportunities for children (this ranking comes from the document Operational charter schools for SY 2007-08! reported in ED Facts by State). Pp 41

The project indicates that the proposed Projected growth during the proposed 2009-2014 federal grant cycle is estimated at 130 additional charter schools located in all geographical areas, including rural and urban. School districts and independent authorizers have currently authorized charter schools in all 12 Cooperative Educational Service Agency. Pp 41

The program's state has made a commitment to assisting both charter school developers and authorizers during the grant process. Grant Writing Workshops for authorizers and developers are provided prior to each application deadline and during the annual charter schools conference co-sponsored by the DPI. The workshops provide information on the charter school law; grant requirements, application process and approval procedures. In addition, the staff provides assistance through telephone, email and the web site on a continuous basis.

The program specifies multiple strategies for informing each charter school in the State about federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and federal programs in which the charter school may participate. These strategies include activities such as maintaining an agency-wide grants web page, posting announcements on the department's web site, sending direct mailings to eligible applicants, using list serves and distribution lists, and offering

workshops and presentations on grant funding opportunities for all of the state's districts and charter schools. A calendar of deadlines for federal program applications is created annually for all independent charter schools. This calendar is also sent through a distribution list to the schools, and is posted to the department. The calendar is maintained by the WCSP and is developed collaboratively with all NCLB Title program consultants and agency teams. Each charter school is assigned a unique school code number that is entered into the department database system that drives all communications to schools throughout the state. All school administrators, authorizers and non school board sponsored charter schools receive biweekly mailings from the department. pp -44

Weaknesses:

The project is not clear regarding how many charter school are needed in the state.

Reader's Score: 26

Selection Criteria - The quality of the management plan...

- 1. The quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

Note: In addition to describing the proposed objectives of the SEA charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, the Secretary encourages applicants to provide descriptions of the steps to be taken by the SEA to award subgrant funds to eligible applicants desiring to receive these funds, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for assistance, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

The project indicates that Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has well-established and excellent working relationships with key stakeholders in the state charter school movement including the Wisconsin Charter Schools Association, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the Wisconsin School Board Association, and the multiple authorizers and operators in Milwaukee and around the state. Input was sought from these partners and the State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Charter Schools (SSACCS) in crafting the objectives for this grant application. pp-45

The program has full DPI administrative and departmental staff support. Additional support will come from the following DPI teams: Office of Educational Accountability, Data Management and Reporting, School Management Services, School Financial Services, Teacher Education, Professional Development and Licensing, Special Education, Title I and School Support, Content and Learning, and Legal Services. pp-48

The project's management plan is to ensure that the Wisconsin Charter School Program achieves its outcomes, objectives, and activities on time and within budget. Pp 48

The project outlines the milestones and activities of the program. Pp 48

Weaknesses:

Some of the projects activities did not indicate milestone.

The project is vague on how timelines and mile stones would be achieved.

Inadequate information is given regarding technical assistance.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination

1. In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6) of the ESEA,

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

The project will have an external peer review team comprised of individuals knowledgeable and experienced with charter school authorizing, teaching and administration is assembled to review dissemination grant applications. The external peer review team represents a diversity of disciplines, institutions, regions and cultures. An orientation to state and federal law, to priorities in funding, and to selection criteria is provided by WCSP staff. The peer reviewers work in small teams and individually rate applications pp-56

The program proposes to use up to 10% of the federal charter school grant funds awarded to the WCSP for dissemination of promising practices of charter schools in their fourth year of operation. Wisconsin has a growing list of charter schools that will be eligible for these funds. During the next federal grant period, 2009-2014, roughly 132 Wisconsin charter schools will be eligible for dissemination funds. Pp 57

Weaknesses:

The project does not clearly tie activities to overall objectives.

The project does not clearly indicate how activities will improve student achievement.

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1. (b) the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 11

2. (a) the quality of the dissemination activities.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - The quality of the evaluation plan...

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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a strong evaluation plan in the application narrative and to use that plan, as appropriate, to shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The Secretary encourages the applicant to design the plan so that it includes (a) benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives and (b) outcome measures to assess the impact on teaching and learning or other important outcomes for project participants. In its plan, we encourage the applicant to identify the individual and/or organization that has agreed to serve as evaluator for the project and to describe the qualifications of that evaluator. We also encourage the applicant to describe, in its application, the evaluation design, indicating: (1) the types of data that will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) the methods that will be used; (4) the instruments that will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports of results and outcomes will be available; and (7) how the applicant will use the information collected through the evaluation to monitor progress of the funded project and to provide accountability information both about success at the initial site and effective strategies for replication in other settings. Applicants are encouraged to devote an appropriate level of resources to project evaluation.

Strengths:

The project clearly identifies the project's external evaluators and identifies stake holders. Pp 60

The project currently has in place several methods for collecting quantitative data on charter schools. The DPI's Office of Educational Accountability has the primary responsibility for collecting student achievement data from all public schools, including charter schools. pp-61

The project provides detailed information that will be collected through: statewide student assessments, the school performance report and the annual charter school survey that will be used to assess and monitor the DPI's progress toward meeting the WCSP project objectives or to suggest changes to the proposed activities. Finding and sharing information about which charter school strategies are successful in improving student achievement is the overall project goal. Pp-62

Weaknesses:

The standards for graduation rate appear to be low. The bar should be raised.

The performance measure 3a is very difficult to measure.

The performance measures did not focus on all of the intended outcomes.

Reader's Score: **25**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Panel 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: WI Department of Public Instruction (U282A090003)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Summary Comments

General:

This is a strong proposal that fully answers each selection criteria. The proposal has clear goals linked to appropriate activities, a solid management plan and a thorough evaluation plan.]

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter schools grant program will make...

1. The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, including steps taken by the SEA to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA's charter school grant program and how the SEA will disseminate best or promising practices of charter schools to each LEA in the State.

Strengths:

The application describes four clear objectives paired with appropriate activities (p.29-31). These activities align in a solid logic model that conveys the short, medium, and long-term outcomes state would like to accomplish (p.32). The application describes multiple notification steps informing the public about grant program (p.31).

The state requires authorizers preference at-risk charters applicants (p.1). The state superintendent has initiated the New Wisconsin Promise to close the achievement gap. The Wisconsin Charter School Program will prioritize grant applications for secondary schools in geographic areas where students are struggling to meet the states academic achievement goals. The state will grant additional five to applicants to help them implement strategies to improve student achievement graduation rates (p.3). The states sub grant application process requires applicants to describe how they will serve students who are at risk they will close the achievement gap. The grant program will provide extra funding for secondary schools in geographic areas where schools have been identified for improvement and those that serve more than 50% eligible for free and reduced price lunch (p.4).

The applicant has multiple strategies for disseminating best practices including a yearly conference, A Mandatory Reporting Session, and the New Wisconsin Promise conference. The state has also formed partnerships with other education organizations for dissemination (p.)5.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear what level of academic progress the state

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of how the State's law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and exempts charter schools from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy charter schools have achieved over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with their State's law.

Strengths:

The applicants demonstrates that it has extensive knowledge of the flexibility charter schools enjoy under the Wisconsin law. According to the application, Wisconsin charter schools have flexibility over school calendars, curriculum, professional development, staffing, and other activities. Charter schools also have the choice to oversee the employment of staff or to allow district to oversee dysfunction page 36. The state has no cap the number of charter schools (p.37). Charter school staff may obtain an teaching license emergency license while of attaining training. The application provides a description of the charter school contracts with the district page 39. The state has many charter school authorizers (p.14)

Weaknesses:

While the application makes it clear that non-school board sponsor charter schools have total autonomy over their budgets and expenditures (p.39), it does not fully describe how much autonomy school board sponsored schools have over their budgets.

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - The number of high-quality charter schools to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State.

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new charter schools to be authorized and opened in the State during the three-year period of this grant.

The Secretary also considers how the SEA will inform each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and ensure that each charter school in the State receives the school's commensurate share of Federal education funds that are allocated by formula each year, including during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly.

Strengths:

The state of Wisconsin has a history of offering parents abundant school choices. The state has 221 charter schools and met its goal during the last grant period (p.10). The applicant predicts that the state will open 130 new charter schools (p. 41). This is an ambitious but reasonable goal came in the states proactive history. The application breaks down how many schools will open in the state in each year during the grant (p.42).

The state employs multiple strategies to inform charter schools about federal funding opportunities including a grants webpage, direct mailings, list serves, presentations, and a comprehensive calendar (p.43). The department instructs schools to fill out an ESEA form and then notifies them of the award amounts. All chartering authorities are required to provide written assurances that there schools will receive a commensurate share of federal funds.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how much remaining demand there is for additional charter schools.

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - The quality of the management plan...

- 1. The quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

Note: In addition to describing the proposed objectives of the SEA charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, the Secretary encourages applicants to provide descriptions of the steps to be taken by the SEA to award subgrant funds to eligible applicants desiring to receive these funds, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for assistance, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

The application provides a solid management plan that describes the timeline, resources, and milestones for each activity (p.46-49). The application also describes the responsibilities of each person on the team (p.51).

The application provides a detailed description on how it will maintain quality in the Charter School Grant Program by providing training and oversight (p.30) and the allowable uses for grant funds (p.55). The application includes the specific steps and time frames for the activities sub grant process (p.52-54.)

Weaknesses:

The application provides little information about the technical assistance the department will provide.

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination

1. In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6) of the ESEA,

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

The application provides a full description of its dissemination subgrant program including eligibility standards and the kinds of dissemination activities schools have exercised (p.58). The state requires that subgrant applicants include a distribution plan (p.58).

The dissemination subgrant process will prioritize funding for projects that target replication of successful practices to promote start up a new charter schools to increase achievement of the secondary level.

Dissemination subgrantees must provide evidence of superior student academic achievement, high parental satisfaction, and fiscal soundness (p.13).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not explicitly tie the dissemination activities to improvements in academic achievement or overall grant objectives.

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

1. (b) the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement.

Reader's Score: 12

2. (a) the quality of the dissemination activities.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - The quality of the evaluation plan...

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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a strong evaluation plan in the application narrative

and to use that plan, as appropriate, to shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The Secretary encourages the applicant to design the plan so that it includes (a) benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives and (b) outcome measures to assess the impact on teaching and learning or other important outcomes for project participants. In its plan, we encourage the applicant to identify the individual and/or organization that has agreed to serve as evaluator for the project and to describe the qualifications of that evaluator. We also encourage the applicant to describe, in its application, the evaluation design, indicating: (1) the types of data that will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) the methods that will be used; (4) the instruments that will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports of results and outcomes will be available; and (7) how the applicant will use the information collected through the evaluation to monitor progress of the funded project and to provide accountability information both about success at the initial site and effective strategies for replication in other settings. Applicants are encouraged to devote an appropriate level of resources to project evaluation.

Strengths:

The application includes a thorough evaluation plan. The plan includes the types of information the evaluator will collect (p.62). The application provides a detailed workplan that describes the benchmarks, data collection, methods, and analysis required for each performance measure (p.63-66).

Because the applicant will choose an evaluator through a competitive process, it did not specify the evaluator. However, the application includes the qualifications (p.60).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides little information about the specific outcomes under Performance Measure 4.

Reader's Score: **26**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WI Department of Public Instruction (U282A090003)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Comments		
Summary Comments		
1. QUESTION 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
The contribution the charter schools grant program will make...		
1. QUESTION 3	30	25
The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA		
1. QUESTION 4	30	25
The number of high-quality charter schools to be created		
1. QUESTION 5	30	25
The quality of the management plan...		
1. QUESTION 6	30	25
In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination		
1. QUESTION 7	30	23
The quality of the evaluation plan...		
1. QUESTION 8	30	24
Sub Total	180	147
Total	180	147

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Panel 1: 84.282A

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: WI Department of Public Instruction (U282A090003)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Summary Comments

General:

This application is fairly complete and proposes solid objectives, activities, and measures. There were a few areas where more consistent, clear linkages could have been made to tie everything together.

It also would have been helpful to have a sense for the demand that exists for charter schools in the state, to ensure the proposed supply will be accepted and well-utilized.]

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter schools grant program will make...

1. The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, including steps taken by the SEA to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA's charter school grant program and how the SEA will disseminate best or promising practices of charter schools to each LEA in the State.

Strengths:

The use of a logic model is promising and employs a sound methodology for thinking through the objectives and activities - and ultimately the performance measures - proposed through the grant application.

Dissemination activities are incorporated well into the overall thinking surrounding the program, which ensures that such activities are integrated into a comprehensive SEA strategy, rather than just tagging along at the end.

There is a clear linkage between proposed activities and the objectives to be served ? that of increasing opportunities for at-risk children.

Communication/information strategies are clearly presented and well thought out.

Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful to see the levels of anticipated growth and other enumerated expectations in this section to know how much change will occur. To get full point value, the application should have connected the problem statement to the objectives more clearly and set forth the expected and specific levels of progress the state will make as a result of this funding.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of how the State's law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and exempts charter schools from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy charter schools have achieved over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with their State's law.

Strengths:

Statutory flexibility is clear, along with the lack of a cap that will inhibit charter growth.

Applicant spends additional time assessing authorizer quality and establishing the state's stature across the nation.

Weaknesses:

The notion of school closure, or other negative consequences for failure to perform are not addressed. This raises questions about the "freedom in exchange for accountability" question. How are issues of school quality managed?

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - The number of high-quality charter schools to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State.

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new charter schools to be authorized and opened in the State during the three-year period of this grant.

The Secretary also considers how the SEA will inform each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and ensure that each charter school in the State receives the school's commensurate share of Federal education funds that are allocated by formula each year, including during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly.

Strengths:

Plans for growth are ambitious and appear to be attainable.

A very complete series of strategies are being used to ensure charter schools access federal funds in a timely manner.

The State's past experiences with chartering have been positive and provide a good indication that the capacity for positive growth and quality exist.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how much demand exists for charter schools in the state, either from parents and community members, or from would-be authorizers eager to charter the number of new schools being proposed. More statistical evidence would have been helpful to justify and support the growth being proposed.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - The quality of the management plan...

- 1. The quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

Note: In addition to describing the proposed objectives of the SEA charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, the Secretary encourages applicants to provide descriptions of the steps to be taken by the SEA to award subgrant funds to eligible applicants desiring to receive these funds, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for assistance, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

Management plan is realistic, attainable and if completed will allow for completion of proposed grant objectives.

The plan allows for interim "checkpoints" to ascertain progress and shift direction if needed.

Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful to have the performance measures correlated directly to the management plan, to determine what levels of progress the state has in mind.

More information about the nature of the technical assistance described throughout the management plan would also be helpful. Technical assistance may be simple or all-consuming depending on the level of service provided; it would have been useful to gain a greater idea of scope.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination

1. In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6) of the ESEA,

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

Earlier in the grant application (Selection Criteria I), the applicant made an explicit connection to the need for high-quality dissemination activities. If executed as proposed, the work described in this section will allow the state to accomplish its objectives in this regard.

Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful for the applicant to tie these activities back to the overall grant objectives in an explicit way. To receive the maximum score in this section, this would have been necessary.

An earlier statement alluded to the types of subgrants that would be solicited (page e5); that is an important detail and was missing from this section.

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1. (b) the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement.

Reader's Score: 11

2. (a) the quality of the dissemination activities.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - The quality of the evaluation plan...

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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

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Strengths:

Items set forth in this section were clearly organized, specific, measurable, and tied back to core objectives and performance measures as set forth in Selection Criteria I.

An external evaluator is planned to allow for objective third-party review.

Weaknesses:

Performance measures discuss "increased awareness" which is difficult to measure. In addition, it is not clear how increased awareness ties back to the program objectives.

Under Objective 3, Performance Measure 3a; this does not seem like a very effective measure. It would perhaps have been more appropriate to indicate how the awarding of the dissemination grant will change something, rather than simply that the activity was completed. The same is true of the workshops. What will the workshops accomplish? How will they advance the state's objectives?

Some activities in Selection Criteria 1 went unmeasured.

The logic model got lost. This would have been good to link and close the loop on.

Reader's Score: 24

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: WI Department of Public Instruction (U282A090003)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Comments		
Summary Comments		
1. QUESTION 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
The contribution the charter schools grant program will make...		
1. QUESTION 3	30	26
The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA		
1. QUESTION 4	30	25
The number of high-quality charter schools to be created		
1. QUESTION 5	30	28
The quality of the management plan...		
1. QUESTION 6	30	27
In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination		
1. QUESTION 7	30	22
The quality of the evaluation plan...		
1. QUESTION 8	30	26
Sub Total	180	154
Total	180	154

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Panel 1: 84.282A

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: WI Department of Public Instruction (U282A090003)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Summary Comments

General:

This is a very strong application for funds. The application begins with a strong case for the support of at-risk students and shows the success Wisconsin charters have already had with this population. The management plan and evaluation plan both contain clear objectives, performance measures, activities and data collection strategies. There are only a few places within the plans that could be developed more, and some activities could be broken down even further. The department has the knowledge and capacity within their staff to handle the additional workload of creating 120 high-quality charter schools. The law gives charter schools a great deal of autonomy, and having no restrictions on any type of charter school, allows the charter movement to continue to grow. The sections on dissemination and subgrant awards were also very thorough and had clear timelines and peer review processes outlined.]

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter schools grant program will make...

1. The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, including steps taken by the SEA to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA's charter school grant program and how the SEA will disseminate best or promising practices of charter schools to each LEA in the State.

Strengths:

There are four clear objectives stated that target different aspects of the charter movement and that are reachable (p. 29-31). The logic model on page 32 is thorough as far as planning out objectives and short, medium and long term goals for charter movement in Wisconsin.

This section begins with a strong discussion of how the state serves at-risk students and uses demographic data to prove their case. Authorizers are told to give preference to at-risk schools (p. 26) and the state's definition of at-risk includes a lot of different students. Strong data highlights at-risk students' achievement rates compared to conventional students (p. 1), and the progress charters have made in closing the achievement gap (p. 26-27).

There are many different avenues to share information about grants to schools and the state is not just relying on their web site or the Internet (p. 33). The department is taking into account rural schools and different ways to reach them. Partnerships are already strongly established with the charter association and similar organizations. Publications are

written annually that are shared with the general education sector about charter school movement (p. 33-34). The department presents at conferences to reach out to other areas of the state besides urban centers, like Milwaukee (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

The activities listed within the objectives of the program could have more details. Some of the activities were not specific enough when explaining action items, and were somewhat general or tied to together a few activities into one.

Reader's Score: 26

Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of how the State's law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and exempts charter schools from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy charter schools have achieved over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with their State's law.

Strengths:

There is a high degree of autonomy for charter schools regarding their daily operations and schools have a general automatic waiver from rules and regulations as stated in the law (p. 36). There are two types of charters and non-instrumentality schools have full autonomy over all operations (p. 39). Multiple authorizers give schools the opportunity to find the best avenue in terms of a sponsor, and these include local school boards and various universities (p. 36). Nonprofit organizations and other developers are allowed to work with charters as far as management or operations without needing approval from the state (p. 37), which also adds to the autonomy of charter schools.

Weaknesses:

Instrumentality charter schools is the other type of charter in the state, where the district employs the staff (p. 36). These type of schools have less autonomy regarding operations, specifically regarding personnel, and collective bargaining. The appeals process for rejected charter school applications only applies to those schools rejected by Milwaukee Public Schools, and allows them to appeal to another board (p. 37). However, this appeals process serves a very small number of charter applications.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - The number of high-quality charter schools to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State.

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new charter schools to be authorized and opened in the State during the three-year period of this grant.

The Secretary also considers how the SEA will inform each charter school in the State about Federal

funds the charter school is eligible to receive and ensure that each charter school in the State receives the school's commensurate share of Federal education funds that are allocated by formula each year, including during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly.

Strengths:

There are a number of authorizer options for schools (p. 36), which help to create a large amount of charter schools. Consistent growth each year is shown in the chart on page 41. There is no cap on the number of schools that can be open in the state, so the estimated number of 130 new schools over 5 years is reasonable (p. 41). Wisconsin is currently seventh in the nation regarding the creation of quality charter schools.

Funding in the state is targeting areas where large numbers of schools are identified as need for improvement (p. 42), meaning that charter schools created in those areas are needed and will serve under represented populations.

The department has many different avenues to ensure information about federal funds is distributed to all charter schools. In addition to using their web site, there are also direct mailings to make sure rural and urban schools receive information in a timely manner (p. 43). The department has a standard calendar and deadlines to make sure funds are given to schools that are commensurate to their enrollment counts (p.43). They also communicate with the authorizers so they understand the process and can help their charter schools receive all the correct information (p. 44). The chartering authorities are part of the process to distribute funds, which ensures funds are sent properly, and they are held to a contractual obligation to do so (p. 44).

Weaknesses:

The methods to contact charter schools, while thorough, are lacking in innovation (p. 43). While there is a lot of mail and website postings, there does not seem to be a lot of direct contact between the schools and the department.

Reader's Score: 28

Selection Criteria - The quality of the management plan...

- 1. The quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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.**

Note: In addition to describing the proposed objectives of the SEA charter school grant program and how these objectives will be fulfilled, the Secretary encourages applicants to provide descriptions of the steps to be taken by the SEA to award subgrant funds to eligible applicants desiring to receive these funds, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for assistance, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

The management plan in the application is thorough and highlights each of the required sections. The office is fully staffed and is able to handle the expected increase in applications and assistance (p. 45) if this grant is received. The table on pages 46-50 gives many more details about the proposed activities to reach each objective. The time line, staffing needs and milestones are addressed comprehensively for each defined activity. There is not an extensive amount of activities or milestones, so the workload should not be too difficult to manage.

The subgrant funding process is clearly discussed on pages 52-55 with a very specific time line laid out for the entire

process, including assembling a peer review team, training, application dates, technical assistance, and notification of awards. The discussion of the peer review process and how they will measure the quality of applications is also strong and lays out the priorities of the subgrants (p. 55).

Weaknesses:

Some of the activities within the management plan are too general and involve more than one action item. Some milestones, such as in objective four (p. 47) could be flushed out in more detail, because many say simply "evaluation completed" or are missing altogether for a few activities. Also, did not describe depth of their technical assistance, or what form it would take.

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination

1. In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6) of the ESEA,

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including descriptions of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications.

Strengths:

This section is very well-organized and discusses all aspects of the dissemination activities. Priority is given to replicating successful academic practices that target student achievement for at-risk students in high school grades (p. 56).

Applicants must provide evidence of success in order to be considered. The peer review process, which includes people from different education backgrounds is well thought out and the team works individually and collectively to reward the funds (p. 56). Subgrantees are required to participate in various conferences and reporting sessions to present their findings to the public (p. 57).

Applicants are encouraged from all types of charter schools, such as environmental, at-risk, high school, etc. so there will be an all-encompassing affect of these dissemination grants (p. 58).

Weaknesses:

The timeline was vague and could have been stronger as far as outlining application deadlines and other milestones.

While the application does discuss what types of schools will be eligible, there is only a minor discussion on how these grants can improve academic achievement. A more nuanced discussion of how dissemination grants in the past have helped improve academics would have been helpful in understanding the state's ultimate goal with this program.

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

1. (b) the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

2. (a) the quality of the dissemination activities.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - The quality of the evaluation plan...

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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a strong evaluation plan in the application narrative and to use that plan, as appropriate, to shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The Secretary encourages the applicant to design the plan so that it includes (a) benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives and (b) outcome measures to assess the impact on teaching and learning or other important outcomes for project participants. In its plan, we encourage the applicant to identify the individual and/or organization that has agreed to serve as evaluator for the project and to describe the qualifications of that evaluator. We also encourage the applicant to describe, in its application, the evaluation design, indicating: (1) the types of data that will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) the methods that will be used; (4) the instruments that will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports of results and outcomes will be available; and (7) how the applicant will use the information collected through the evaluation to monitor progress of the funded project and to provide accountability information both about success at the initial site and effective strategies for replication in other settings. Applicants are encouraged to devote an appropriate level of resources to project evaluation.

Strengths:

Under state law, Wisconsin must competitively bid for an evaluator, but details of the minimum criteria for an evaluator are laid out, and the state already has data collection and analytical methods in place (p. 60). The quantitative data that will be collected is from the charter schools (achievement test scores, AYP, etc.) (p. 61), private firms, and the state, which will all be included in an annual report card (p. 61).

The evaluation plan is clearly outlined on a table beginning on page 63. Each of the four objectives discussed throughout the application contains two to three performance measures, that are quantifiable and clear. The benchmarks have clear time frames of when the data will be collected, and the instruments and reporting measures for each benchmark within a performance measure is clearly articulated.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation section describes mostly quantitative data, and with the exception of one survey to all school districts, there was not a sign that qualitative data would be used to evaluate schools.

Based on some of the achievement data cited on page 1-2 of the application, the goals for graduation rate and proficiency on math and reading state tests, at 68, 65 and 77 percent respectively, seem low. The state could raise the percentages to ensure that high-quality charter schools are being created.

Reader's Score: 26

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