

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 02:29 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement,
Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	15
(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law		
1. Flexibility	30	25
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	15
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	15
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	21
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	15
Sub Total	180	106
Total	180	106

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2010 84.282A - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement, Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Questions

Selection Criteria - (i) CSP contribution to student achievement

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 applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain 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:

Strengths:

The application details the state's legislative support for schools serving high risk students (p. 6). The state describes outreach steps the SEA will take to inform the community about the charter school program, including partnerships with the state charter association and the St. Louis mayor's office (p. 7). Although the plan's objectives are overly broad, the state provides clearly measurable outcomes associated with each objective (p. 8-9).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The application does not identify the current percentage of educationally disadvantaged students that Missouri charter schools serve. The application lacks details on how the state will encourage future charter schools to serve educationally disadvantaged children. The application provide an inadequate, one-sentence plan for disseminating best practices (p. 7).

The application's objectives are overly broad.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law

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:

Strengths:

The application adequately describes the flexibility granted to the charters in the state over hiring/firing, budgets, curriculum and instructional methods (p. 5,10). By allowing charter schools to be LEAs, the schools receive state and federal funding directly from the SEA (p. 11). The charter's sponsor and the charter's governing board & staff jointly review the performance, management and operations at least once every two years (p. 10).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The law limits charter schools to just two districts in the state (p. 5).

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - (iii) Number of high-quality charters 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:

Strengths:

Despite the geographic limitations of charters in the state, the application's data proves that high numbers of charters are possible (e.g. 30.95% of Kansas City enrollment and 26% in St. Louis) (p. 3,11). There are 33 charters on 48 (47?) campuses in the state with six new charters anticipated in 2010-11 (p. 3,11). The state anticipates funding 18 new charter schools with the grant (p. 13). The application clearly states that all charters are LEAS, and, therefore, receiving federal and state funds directly from the SEA (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The state law limits charters to two districts, Kansas City and St. Louis City (p. 0). Identification of the anticipated number of new charter schools should be included earlier in the answer (p. 13). The application does not address how the new charters will be of high quality. Statements such as "will partner with" are overly vague and outreach efforts such as the annual Federal Programs conference and the Fedpro and SELS listservs will reach districts, not potential charter organizations (p. 13). The application includes large sections of the Missouri charter law (p. 14-16), which could be included in an Appendix if considered essential to the application. Furthermore, the charter law does not always reflect the reality in the state; a description of the current experience of Missouri charter schools would be more useful.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - (iv) 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:

Strengths:

The application includes objectives and a cursory list of activities and describes the subgrant award process.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The management plan narrative and the accompanying table insufficiently detail the state's plans for the grant (p. 16-19). The implementation table, for example, is missing outcomes and milestones, and focuses on broad, basic SEA tasks (p. 19). Components of the table are included in another section (Evaluation, p. 25). The plan should connect the objectives, activities, timeline, responsible parties and anticipated performance outcomes. The application lacks proof of existing relationships and partnerships between the Department and organizations in the state that would assist with the implementation of the plan (e.g, there are no letters of support). The application provides an inadequate and overly simplified description of the subgrant award process (p. 17).

Overall, the application is missing a table of contents, as well as many crucial headings, including a heading for the start of the Selection Criteria section.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability

- 1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools.**

Strengths:

Strengths:

The state has a wide variety of authorizers, and all are currently authorizing charter schools (p. 3,4). The state's application repeatedly cites a two-year NACSA grant, started in 2007, to improve the quality of charter school sponsors in the state (p. 2,19). NACSA provided technical assistance and developed resources for authorizers, including a monitoring guide and a model application, scoring rubric and charter agreement. The application identifies additional activities the state will undertake to improve authorizer capacity, including implementing charter sponsorship standards and developing guidelines for closing poor performing schools (p. 20).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The activities identified are not clearly connected to the management plan or to a timeline.

Selection Criteria - (vii) Quality of the 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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

Note: 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 will serve as evaluator and to describe the qualifications of the 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:

Strengths:

The application identifies an evaluator, the Northwest Missouri State University (p. 22). The application provides a limited list of data to be collected (p. 22-3).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The response is poorly organized and confusing. For example, the (1.) on page 22 does not seem to have an associated (2.) or a header to identify the context. The overarching goals of the evaluation are missing, and the description of the evaluation of the grant performance is insufficient (p. 24) and limited in scope. The application appears to be missing goals related to basic GPRA measures of student performance.

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/08/2010 08:09 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement,
Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	20
(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law		
1. Flexibility	30	30
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	18
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	20
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	20
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	16
Sub Total	180	124
Total	180	124

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2010 84.282A - 1: 84.282A

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement, Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Questions

Selection Criteria - (i) CSP contribution to student achievement

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 applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain 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:

Charter School law in Missouri requires authorization priority to charter schools oriented to high risk students and to reentry of dropouts into the school system. Additionally, if a sponsor grants three or more charters, at least one-third of the charters granted by the sponsor shall be schools that actively recruit dropouts or high-risk students.

The application proposes clear and measurable objectives for improving student performance. Specifically, clear and measurable expectations around MAP performance and graduation rates. Additionally, object 2 speaks to measurable tasks around improved administration, governance and sponsorship practices. The application details a partnership with NACSA to develop a best practice program.

Weaknesses:

The states plan lacks clarity and detail around the proposed objects prerequisite tasks to accomplish the stated objectives.

The states plan should reflect the cost of the NACSA project in the budget.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law

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:

Charter schools in Missouri experience large amounts of autonomy. The Center for Education Reform recently gave Missouri's law a B grade and ranked it the 10th strongest law of the 39 states with chartering laws. By Missouri law, charters are exempt from all rules and regulations relating to schools, governing boards and school districts unless specifically identified in the charter law. Additionally, charters may elect to be independent LEAs and have autonomy regarding their budget, expenditures, daily operations, calendar, curriculum and staffing.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - (iii) Number of high-quality charters 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:

Missouri's law limits the establishment of charter schools to the State's two urban districts. However, it does not establish a limit to the number of charter schools that may be established within the two permissible districts.

The application presents the training program called CharterStart for groups developing their charter. The applicant proposes a series of technical assistance workshops for charter developers in geographical areas in which large numbers of traditional public schools are identified as in need of improvement or restructuring (page 12).

The application proposes partner with organizations and sponsoring institutions that sponsor or provide technical assistance to charter schools to ensure that all individuals and planning groups are aware of Federal, State and local funds available.

The application presents that charter schools receive a commensurate share of state aid and federal program monies that a local school district might otherwise be entitled.

Weaknesses:

Missouri's law limits the establishment of charter schools to the State's two urban districts, the Kansas City 33 District and the St. Louis City School District. As a result limits access to charter schools by students outside the geographical permitted areas.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - (iv) 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 presents clear activities within a reasonable timeline to strengthen the charter school authorization process and increase accountability for charter school performance.

Weaknesses:

The application needs to account for tasks such as contracting technical assistance providers, developing applications, department processes and specific application review.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability

1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools.

Strengths:

The application proposes a clear plan to hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. Working with NACSA the DESE and charter sponsors are engaging three activities. First, developing technical assistance to support new and existing sponsors. Second, developing model sponsoring resources and third, facilitating the sharing of best practices with all sponsoring institutions. Additionally, the application states, that Missouri is developing an evaluation instrument to review the work of charter school sponsors. This will be useful for constructive feedback and provision of technical assistance.

Weaknesses:

The work of the state regarding sponsor accountability and specifically the partnership with NACSA has the ultimate goal of improving sponsorship and quality of charter schools. However, the application does not provide a plan for how the resources will be leveraged and deployed.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - (vii) Quality of the 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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

Note: 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 will serve as evaluator and to describe the qualifications of the 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 proposes clear and measurable detailed process for evaluating. The plan includes types of data such as compliance with law, student achievement, academic progress and demographic data. Qualitative survey analysis will also be applied in areas of student and parent engagement and learning conditions. Additionally, teachers and administrators will be surveyed to determine selection and implementation of curriculum and professional development needs.

Weaknesses:

The application proposes a vague connection to benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives.

Reader's Score: 16

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/08/2010 08:09 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 10:22 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement,
Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	17
(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law		
1. Flexibility	30	23
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	16
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	15
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	16
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	15
Sub Total	180	102
Total	180	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2010 84.282A - 1: 84.282A

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement, Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Questions

Selection Criteria - (i) CSP contribution to student achievement

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 applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain 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:

Presents well-described, specific, performance based objectives (8-9). Offers concise and easily-understood definition of at-risk (6).

Weaknesses:

The explanation of how the applicant plans to increase the number of charters is vague and the approaches described seem passive rather than active (5). The objectives do not seem to be connected to concrete activities or strategies (8-9). The proposed collaborative with the charter association does not appear as a cost or in-kind in the budget (6, Budget Narrative).

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law

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 are a number of authorizers in the state, thus increasing the opportunities for charter applicants (9). Oversight of charter schools is part of statute, thus increasing chances for maintaining charter quality (10).

Weaknesses:

Autonomy generally described, but the applicant should have added examples of how each aspect of autonomy is implemented in fact. (10)

Reader's Score: 23

Selection Criteria - (iii) Number of high-quality charters 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 office of the St Louis mayor provides support for the establishment of high quality charters (12).

Weaknesses:

Limits on where charter schools may be established seriously limits wide-spread establishment of quality charters (11). The application does not address the criteria adequately. Rather it presents a plan for funding new charters that does not mention how this will encourage quality or even what outcomes will be expected and monitored. (11-16).

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - (iv) 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 includes development of partnerships with key charter organizations in state (16-17).

Weaknesses:

The management plan and associated descriptions provides inadequate detail regarding a number of key components: for example, specific staff responsible for making and carrying out decisions and the nature of monitoring processes, the rubrics guiding it, the monitoring timelines, and the staff conducting it (16-19).

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability

1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools.

Strengths:

Involvement of NACSA to assist with development of critical sponsor evaluation processes, benchmarks, and documents (19-20).

Weaknesses:

NACSA involvement not listed as project cost or in-kind (Budget Narrative, 20). No indication of how far along in its development is the authorizer evaluation process and no samples provided of the support documents or standards being developed (19- 21).

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - (vii) Quality of the 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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.

Note: 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 will serve as evaluator and to describe the qualifications of the 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:

Subcontracting evaluation has the potential to promote objectivity and rigor in the evaluation (21).

Weaknesses:

Evaluation plan as presented does not adequately describe an evaluation of the project. It describes school evaluation plan strategies and processes pretty comprehensively, but contains no project evaluation plan detail. In addition, the plan as described is weakly linked to the stated objectives and many of the costs do not appear in the budget (21-25, Budget Narrative). The resume included for the evaluator shows no evaluation training, experience, or publications (Appendix).

Reader's Score: 15

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 10:22 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2010 09:22 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement,
Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	16
(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law		
1. Flexibility	30	20
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	25
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	15
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	8
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	20
Sub Total	180	104
Total	180	104

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2010 84.282A - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement, Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Questions

Selection Criteria - (i) CSP contribution to student achievement

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 applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain 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 is clear and succinct, one third of the charters granted must focus on drop-outs, measurable performance goals.

Weaknesses:

The partnership with NACSA is a strength but not supported by budget line. it is unclear how this task will be paid for. A major limitation of state law is that it limits charter schools to two cities in the state. There are limited details about the charter growth plan. There is no budget line item for the MO charter association or a discussion of how to reach/serve rural disadvantaged students.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law

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 appeals process is a strength in terms of charter developers having the theoretic option to seek a supportive authorizer that will extend autonomy. Charter schools operating as LEAs reflects a high level of flexibility to establish own policies/practices which is a strength.

Weaknesses:

Multiple authorizers operate in the state but it is unclear how many of specific types of authorizers are actually active. The fact that charter schools are limited to two urban districts is a significant limitation.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - (iii) Number of high-quality charters 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 proposed growth in the two urban districts is a strength as is the St Louis Mayor's commitment to supporting growth in the city. The technical assistance programs are also strengths of the application (e.g., Charter Smart). The ambitious growth goals are a strength in that the applicant has proposed a bold initiative.

Weaknesses:

Due to a lack of specificity, it is unclear of the degree to which the state has the structural ability to support growth.

Reader's Score: 25

Selection Criteria - (iv) 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 proposal to manage the project outlines DESE's role in managing the grant application process. Plan to reach out to key stakeholders to promote grant opportunities is a strength.

Weaknesses:

The key activity table lacks specificity. The management plan essentially designates 1 person to be responsible for the project and lacks details about how that one person will manage the tasks or how the advocacy work will be conducted.

The proposed activities are not supported by budget line items.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability

- 1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools.**

Strengths:

The applicant acknowledges the importance of authorizer accountability and proposes specific steps (pg 20) to strengthen the authorizer/sponsoring process.

Weaknesses:

Application language regarding authorizer accountability is vague. It is unclear who is doing what to whom or how. There is no budget line item to support authorizer accountability work. It is unclear what if any consequences will be developed for authorizers that do not meet expectations.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - (vii) Quality of the 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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**

Note: 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 will serve as evaluator and to describe the qualifications of the 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 applicant has identified an apparently credible evaluator and proposed a specific timeline, activities and responsible parties (p. 25) .

Weaknesses:

The application's lack of details is a weakness. For instance, it is unclear why the evaluator will conduct case studies or the specifics involved. Furthermore, there appears to be somewhat of a disconnect between the project goals and the evaluation activities. For instance, it is unclear how the evaluator will assess the efficacy of planning grants.

Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/23/2010 09:22 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 02:58 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement,
Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	18
(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law		
1. Flexibility	30	17
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	20
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	15
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	12
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	19
Sub Total	180	101
Total	180	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 2010 84.282A - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Division of School Improvement, Federal Discretionary Grants (U282A100017)

Questions

Selection Criteria - (i) CSP contribution to student achievement

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 applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain 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:

Evidence of need for charter schools is present. History of relevancy of charter schools is included. Objectives are included. Work with NACSA is listed. There is brief discussion of implementation of communication to stakeholder groups.

Weaknesses:

There is not a strong case made for charter schools assisting educationally disadvantaged students. There is no data to support the need for charter schools that work with disadvantaged students. There is not a defined plan for widespread communication.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law

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:

Sponsorship options are listed. Administrative relationship is addressed. Operational flexibility is cited.

Weaknesses:

Listing of some of the flexibility outcomes is necessary. Is flexibility a standard over all of the 33 charter school? If so, what is the determining factor for success in student achievement? A more robust description of the existing charter

schools and examples cited would assist.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - (iii) Number of high-quality charters 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:

No current caps for either school district. Charter Start workshops have been successful. St. Louis Office of the Mayor has provided assistance for charter schools. Commitment to open 18 schools over next three years. Partnership with variety of agencies. Funds delivered directly from DESE.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how many charters attend the Federal Programs conference held by DESE. Are there specific sessions that deal with charter schools, especially new charter schools? Have there been any situations in which federal funds did not reach the charter school? How have those situations been resolved? Edification of the charter law, rather than comprehensive citations of the charter law can be helpful in understanding how they fit into the educational landscape.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - (iv) 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:

Willingness to create partnerships to advance charter school model. Self-monitoring checklist at end of 6 months post award. A management plan is included.

Weaknesses:

How will DESE make funds available in a fair and impartial way? This needs more definition, with steps and outcomes listed. How will the readers be culled? How is the 6 month evaluation corroborated? The management plan needs further clarification of personnel (rather than The Department), roles and responsibilities. It also must include a timeline

that is extensive with milestones. This must align with the objectives as listed previously.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability

- 1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools.**

Strengths:

The state has worked with foundations and NACSA in providing TA for new and existing charters, development of resources and facilitating information sharing. Statewide template documents have been created and are available. State continues to work toward a higher and more standardized deliverable for charter schools.

Weaknesses:

Activities are cited and proposed yet it is unclear as to how the buy-in will occur. Will these be mandatory? If so, just for new charters? How to engage charters that are at the end of their grant period or are previous grant recipients? What is the mechanism to incentivize this plan for all charters? A schedule with a schematic that illustrates how this will lead to the additional new schools proposed is necessary.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - (vii) Quality of the 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 and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.**

Note: 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 will serve as evaluator and to describe the qualifications of the 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:

Plans to standardize evaluations. Survey response for all stakeholder groups. Usage of state-external data sets will allow for regional and national comparison studies. Partnerships are aligned. Case studies will be initiated in years 2 and 3.

Weaknesses:

No historical evaluation sets to compare longitudinally.

Reader's Score: 19

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 02:58 PM