

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/08/2010 08:07 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

Reader #4: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	20
Sub Total	30	20
Selection criteria		
(ii) Flexibility afforded by State law		
1. Flexibility	30	30
Sub Total	30	30
Selection Criteria		
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	23
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	19
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	30
(vi) Dissemination activities		
1. Dissemination activities	30	6
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	25
Sub Total	150	103
Total	210	153

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

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:

This application proposes a clear and measurable goal of doubling the states number of charter schools. The state provides a formal statutory preference for chartering activity that focuses on educationally disadvantaged students. Additionally, the state will utilize preferential weighting of the OSCP sub-grantee application and review process to maximize charter expansion in areas of educationally disadvantaged students - urban settings.

The application presents 3 objectives and related activities over three years. The applicant was specific within the narrative to quantify clear and measurable objectives to double the number of new schools (22 new schools in three years).

Weaknesses:

The applicant presented object #2 and #3 to improve instruction and student outcomes in existing charter schools and to increase participation in the incubation program. Both objectives are lacking in quantifiable outcomes that can be measured.

The applicant presented contradictory numbers of projected new and existing through the application. Examples include 11 to 35, pg #19, 11 current schools, pg #2, 8 current schools listed on pg #3 and 10 current schools listed on pg #25. Page #24 states 22 new + 9 in planning + 11 currently open (50 total). Page #31 states 22 new schools over three years.

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:

The RI Charter School statute specifically provides charter schools the flexibility to operate with autonomy and exempts the charters varying degrees of freedom from rules and laws that inhibit flexible operation. The state statute provides In District Charters with less flexible policies compared to Non-District Charter. Mayoral Academies are provided the most statutory freedoms. RI public law provides large amounts of autonomy in areas such as budget and daily operation for all types of charters. RI public law provides freedom to Mayoral Academies to develop and deploy personnel in ways that are not restricted by collective bargaining agreements. The academies also do not have to respond to the restrictions of the Rhode Island Teacher Retirement programs.

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:

The state provides comprehensive technical assistance sessions with new directors and boards around federal program access. New charter schools are able to access their full federal formula allocation for each program prior to the first day of school. RIDEs program staff offer flexibility in permitting schools unable to meet application requirements funding opportunities outside the typical funding cycle.

RI public law permits for a single charter to operate multiple campuses. This structure, in addition to the expired moratorium and a 3,000 student waiting list, supports the reasonable estimate of new charter schools to be authorized.

Weaknesses:

The application presents contradictory numbers of new schools. The evaluation will be difficult without a clear target.

Reader's Score: 23

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 describes a clear plan of organizational redesign of RIDE. The charter school services have been moved into a new division, the Office of School Transformation. This is convincing evidence that charter initiatives are in the heart of school reform. The charter school office will lead cross-division education department staff representing Title I, Instruction, Finance, and Assessment.

The application proposes a clear and responsible process for sub-grantee fund application and review. RIDE ensures that grants are never awarded to individuals and the fund distribution process is based on the charter applicants remaining actively engaged in the charter authorization process to maintain access to the funding.

Weaknesses:

The application goals, objectives and activities generally provide vague measurable outcomes. The objectives should provide measurable expectations. Phrases such as promote widespread understanding and will offer technical assistance to charters are insufficient to measure success.

Reader's Score: 19

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 for holding authorized chartering agencies accountable. The application presents three activities that will increase the states capacity for authorizing and monitoring charter schools. Page #37 describes these activities as 1) the reorganization of the Charter School Office to focus on technical assistance and communication. 2) Training RIDE charter school review teams to effectively use criterion-based review scoring. 3) The implementation of research based protocols (including a comprehensive set of criteria and indicators that must be inherent in any high quality charter application) for closure or re-chartering as a turnaround strategy. The application presents an external Charter Review Committee comprised of educational professionals to review the application

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - (vi) Dissemination activities

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

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

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

(a) the quality of the dissemination activities.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description 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 proposes minimal criteria for high quality for dissemination activities.

Weaknesses:

The states dissemination plan does not provide a plan for how resources will be identified or leveraged. In addition, the application does not provide a thorough description of the review process for funding high quality dissemination sub-grants. (Page 45)

Reader's Score: 6

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

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

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:

None noted

Weaknesses:

The states dissemination plan does not provide a plan for how resources will be identified or leveraged. In addition, the application does not provide a thorough description of the review process for funding high quality dissemination sub-grants. (Page 45)

It is unclear how the dissemination activity will improve student achievement.

Reader's Score: 0

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 objectives 1 & 2. The report will yield a rich grade, school and program level view.

Weaknesses:

The application does not propose a clear evaluation of objective #3 (increased participation in the RIDE Incubation Program) or the stated objective of enhanced outreach, communication, support to teachers, parents, community organizations and other public schools. In contrast, the evaluation focuses on post-authorization assistance from RIDE.

Reader's Score: **25**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/08/2010 08:07 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 02:26 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	25
Sub Total	30	25
Selection criteria		
(ii) Flexibility afforded by State law		
1. Flexibility	30	25
Sub Total	30	25
Selection Criteria		
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	20
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	20
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	21
(vi) Dissemination activities		
1. Dissemination activities	30	7
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	30
Sub Total	150	98
Total	210	148

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

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 provides a convincing argument for the Rhode Island's intention to assist educationally disadvantaged students by mentioning the state's formal statutory preference for charters focusing on these students. The state intends to focus charter school growth in urban areas, where most charters are currently located (p. 10). The application includes data to support claims that the charter schools serve higher percentages of high-needs students (e.g., 64% free and reduced priced lunch as compared to 38% statewide average for FRPL) (p. 12). In addition, the state intends to provide preferential weighting for sub-grant applications from urban settings and recruit "well-qualified CMOs to enter high need urban communities." (p. 11).

The application adequately outlines objectives and related activities and provides an interesting "logic model" that reflects thoughtful consideration of the grant's relationship to the existing chartering process. A comprehensive list of outreach activities to inform the community about the program mentions opportunities to partner with the state's League of Charter Schools (p. 20).

The application includes many letters of support, indicating the possibility of numerous potential partnerships.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

Many of the activities associated with the state's objectives are mundane tasks inherent to the sub-granting process (p. 12-13). The state inadequately describes the steps RIDE will take beyond grant processing and annual monitoring duties to reach the objectives.

Reader's Score: 25

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 provides evidence of the autonomy the three types of charter schools receive in Rhode Island in a helpful table format (p. 22). The narrative adequately details the freedom Rhode Island charter schools have to recruit, control financial resources and structure their schedule (p. 21). The state presents a convincing statement of funding autonomy: "state funding flows directly to the school, without 'passing through' a district." (p. 23). Federal categorical aid also flows directly to the schools.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

According to the application's distinctions between the three types of charter schools, non-district, in-district and mayoral academies, in-district charters have significantly less flexibility than the other types of charters. For example, they are subject to the district's collective bargaining agreement (p. 5). The application lacks details on the number of existing charters in each category.

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:

The state clearly states their objective to double the number of charter school in urban communities. The application includes evidence of the pent-up demand for the schools by providing detailed information about the 3,200 students on waiting lists (p. 24). The option for charter-holders to operate multiple campuses without applying to additional charters provides some explanation for the state's ambitious charter expansion target.

The application adequately describes the extra steps RIDE takes to ensure that charter schools understand the federal fund distribution process (p. 26).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The state's claims that RI has been rapidly expanding charter schools in the state (p. 3) is confusing, as only 11 charter schools exist in Rhode Island currently, in part due to a now-lifted moratorium. In addition, the state has a cap of 35 charter schools (p. 6, 24).) The application provides no evidence of the capacity and interest for organizations to develop charter applications.

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:

Strengths:

Based on the description of the state's organizational redesign, it appears that RIDE allocates sufficient staff to charter schools, particularly considering the small number of charters in the state (p. 27-29). The application clearly defines the responsibilities of each staff member. The management plan's "Implementation Table" outlines activities and timelines related to each objective (p. 30-34). As required, the application identifies the subgrant award steps for planning, implementation and dissemination grants (p. 35-37).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The management plan's activities are all process-oriented, with a exclusive focus on grant-related tasks. The state's plan lacks outcome measures identifying the change expected from the objective. The plan also lacks performance measures that indicate the extent to which the project objective is being accomplished. These are mentioned in the evaluation section (starting p. 46), but not in the management plan.

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:

Strengths:

The state demonstrates a strong commitment to authorizer quality by providing an extensive response to this question (p. 37-44). The state describes NACSA-promoted application requirements (p. 38) and the three-phase charter application review process RIDE conducts before recommending the application to the state's authorizer, the Board of Regents (p. 40-42). The application claims that the SEA's reorganization has elevated the status of charter schools within the agency (p. 42).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The state only has one authorizer, the Board of Regents. Although the application comprehensively details the authorizer's review, renewal and oversight process, it neglects to provide information specific to the selection criteria, such as the plan to improve the Board of Regents (RIDE's) capacity to authorize.

Reader's Score: 21

Selection Criteria - (vi) Dissemination activities**1. In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6) of the ESEA:**

Reader's Score: 7

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description 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:

Strengths:

The application details the criteria for ensuring high-quality dissemination activities, including the Charter School Program's statutory requirement that the schools show substantial progress in improving student academic achievement (p. 45). The appendices describe the review criteria and peer review process.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The goal to "increase communication between parents, teachers, community members and Charter School Office staff about charter schools" is vague and impossible to measure. It is unclear what the dissemination activity encouraging sub-grantees to participate in charter networks will produce. The application does not indicate what dissemination products RIDE hopes to receive and the impact desired (p. 45).

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 7

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

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

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:

Strengths:

None identified

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The application is unclear how a dissemination activity that allows high-performing charter schools to "support prospective charter applicants" in the application process will enhance student academic achievement (p. 45). In addition, this activity's impact will be very difficult to measure.

Reader's Score: 0

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, Brown University's Urban Education Policy Program. The application also clearly identifies the evaluation's purpose, to determine RIDE's efficacy in approving applications most likely to result in high-quality charter schools (p. 47). GPRA measures about student performance are included (p. 54-55), and benchmarks and

evaluation methods, including data collection and analysis, are detailed.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:
None identified

Reader's Score: 30

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/04/2010 02:26 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/04/2010 10:21 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	21
Sub Total	30	21
Selection criteria		
(ii) Flexibility afforded by State law		
1. Flexibility	30	27
Sub Total	30	27
Selection Criteria		
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	22
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	20
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	30
(vi) Dissemination activities		
1. Dissemination activities	30	12
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	19
Sub Total	150	103
Total	210	151

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

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:

State statutes favor urban, disadvantaged students (10). Good mixture of outreach activities described (20-21).

Weaknesses:

Connection between meeting project objectives and promoting high quality charters not adequately described (11). Figure 1 is confusing and labeled inconsistently with narrative descriptions (15). Activity explanations are often vague and some activities are not explained at all (16-19).

Reader's Score: 21

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:

Well described aspects of autonomy: nature of autonomy in finances, and operations (22-23).

Weaknesses:

No description of nature or scope of educational program autonomy (22-23)

Reader's Score: 27

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:

State has lifted the charter cap limit, therefore the possibilities are limited only by quality (24). There are a number of potentially effective support systems already in place that will promote increases in higher quality charter schools(26).

Weaknesses:

There is no elaboration of how the project will capitalize on the regulation allowing one charter to account for multiple campuses (25).

Reader's Score: 22

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:

Having a direct report line to a Cabinet officer will smooth communications and improve efficiency of the project implementation (27, Appendix G). Application provides a very complete and solid description of the sub-grant application and review process (35-37).

Weaknesses:

Percent of time that field liaison devotes to project (60%) seems inadequate in view of all the tasks and schools assigned (28). Field agent salary is not in budget (Budget Narrative). Strategies of management plan lack detail and performance measures (30-34). No definition provided for high-quality schools (30).

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:

Good explanation of what seems a solid authorizing oversight system that has thorough procedures and well-thought-out structures (37-45). Provides clear description of the accountability systems already in place and of the monitoring process from application through renewal/closure (37-44).

Weaknesses:

No significant weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 30

Selection Criteria - (vi) Dissemination activities

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

Reader's Score: 12

Sub Question

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

(a) the quality of the dissemination activities.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description 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:

Outline of criteria for application for dissemination funds is clear and should produce appropriately acceptable applications (45).

Weaknesses:

The application does not detail how the dissemination funds will be allocated to successful applicants (Budget Narrative, 45). There is a lack of detail as to what actually happens, how it happens, and what expected/required reporting and oversight activities are (45).

Reader's Score: 8

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

Sub Question

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

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 criteria described for the application for dissemination funds lays out what the quality expectations are (45).

Weaknesses:

The application does not detail how the dissemination funds and activities proposed by the successful applicant will be monitored for implementation quality and effectiveness(45)

Reader's Score: 4

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:

Have identified an external evaluator who potentially will bring objectivity and rigor to the process (46).

Weaknesses:

Presentation of the evaluation plan is confusing in that it keeps moving back and forth between the two types of evaluation without clearly distinguishing differences in time frames, methods, conceptual frameworks, qualitative vs. quantitative activities, etc. (46-57). Reference is made to more elaboration in the appendices, but the application is missing all appendices after the first appendix.

Reader's Score: 19

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/04/2010 10:21 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2010 09:14 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	28
Sub Total	30	28
Selection criteria		
(ii) Flexibility afforded by State law		
1. Flexibility	30	28
Sub Total	30	28
Selection Criteria		
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	30
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	25
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	18
(vi) Dissemination activities		
1. Dissemination activities	30	19
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	20
Sub Total	150	112
Total	210	168

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

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 presents a very strong and well written application that clearly prioritizes low-performing schools and disadvantaged students with a robust plan to develop and support high quality charter schools. The bold focus on restarts, openness to CMO's and the incubator are all programs that may attract more applicants to open schools for disadvantaged students.

Weaknesses:

Some of the numbers in tables don't line up.

Reader's Score: 28

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 state charter law has lots of flexibility built in, especially for the Mayoral Academies. Table 5 (pg 22) clearly summarizes the autonomy extended to the various schools.

Weaknesses:

The application suffers from lack of details about the degree to which developers have been able to access the autonomy. So, while the Mayoral Academies are extend autonomy, it is unclear how many of these schools have been granted and

actually realized the flexibility.

Reader's Score: 28

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 applicant proposes a reasonable charter school growth model both in terms of number of schools to be created and means to support development. The fact that applicants may be able to open more than one school per charter may accelerate growth. The fact that the state raised their cap on charter schools is also a strength in terms of growth goals.

Weaknesses:

0

Reader's Score: 30

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 grant indicates clear and directed support from chief state school officer. The Office of School Transformation appears to be well situated to have an impact on the quality of schools to be developed.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the personnel will be evaluated for performance relative to goals of the grant. It would be helpful to see more details about the Charter School Program Committee. For instance, it is unclear who will serve on the committee and what formal authority will they have.

Reader's Score: 25

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 reorganization of the charter school office sounds promising given focus on TA and communication. The proposed monitoring is a strength that should contribute to quality schools.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks detail about how the state will monitor or hold authorizer's accountable. While there is a great deal of detail about holding schools accountable, the applicant does not address how actual authorizers will be held accountable for performance.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - (vi) Dissemination activities

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

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description 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 explicit standard for who can apply for a dissemination grants is a strength and the state is in alignment with the US DOE's guidance about applicant criteria.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how RI defines "high quality." Absent a clear definition, it is unclear how the state will assess success for the purposes of disseminating information about best practices.

Reader's Score: 11

Sub Question

2. In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204 (f)(6) of the ESEA,
- (b) the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement.

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 applicant is clearly committed to engaging parents via the dissemination process and this holds promise in terms of educating parents about promising practices.

Weaknesses:

The lack of any detailed explanation for how dissemination activities will benefit kids is a weakness. For instance, it would have been helpful if the applicant had provided information about documenting strong instructional practices.

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 a credible evaluator to conduct the evaluation of the project and the evaluation will be guided by clear objectives connected to instruction and student outcomes. Page 46 outlines the details of the proposed evaluation and includes benchmarks for progress and desired outcome measures. The evaluator is credible.

Weaknesses:

The narrative related to the evaluation is confusing and it was difficult to follow logic related to process versus outcomes of project.

Reader's Score: 20

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/23/2010 09:14 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2010 10:41 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
(i) CSP contribution to student achievement		
1. Student achievement	30	28
Sub Total	30	28
Selection criteria		
(ii) Flexibility afforded by State law		
1. Flexibility	30	28
Sub Total	30	28
Selection Criteria		
(iii) Number of high-quality charters created		
1. Number of schools	30	24
(iv) Quality of the management plan		
1. Management plan	30	27
(v) Authorizer accountability		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	24
(vi) Dissemination activities		
1. Dissemination activities	30	7
(vii) Quality of the evaluation		
1. Evaluation	30	28
Sub Total	150	110
Total	210	166

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Office of Accountability and Quality Assurance, Office of Transformation (U282A100008)

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:

Clear focus with need on urban disadvantaged populations. Inclusion of current achievement data. Usage of logic model as project driver. Inclusion of TA with a readiness tests.

Weaknesses:

Extensive "marketing" campaign for charter school developers which serves as an "all call". What is the strategy for focusing on proven successful developers?

Reader's Score: 28

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:

Listing of flexibility within charter schools.

Weaknesses:

Categorization of "tremendous flexibilities" seems standard with many charter states. More detail in how State's law establishes an administrative relationship.

Reader's Score: 28

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:

Three-year progressive building of charter schools. Implies consistency and continuity. Plan for communicating federal funding streams.

Weaknesses:

Will this growth encompass all students on waiting lists? What percentage? Assumed growth of charters is due to lifting of moratorium. Any polling of potential charter developers? E.g. X number of charter developers have formally indicated that they would be willing to create a charter school, should the moratorium be lifted or expire. How is the consolidated resource plan roll out different from that for non-charters or are they combined into one pool and charters are included. Caution would suggest that new charters would need extra assistance. How is this treated? Any broadcast e-communications or posted schedules to assist charters in complying with data requests in order to receive federal funds?

Reader's Score: 24

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:

Staffing responsibilities outlined. Creation of Office of School Transformation. Representation from across department. Comprehensive development of timeline.

Weaknesses:

Although three year intervals are listed in the management plan, there is no discussion as to the continuum from one year to the next. This is especially significant as the state assumes there will be a building momentum for charter schools.

Reader's Score: 27

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:

Strong emphasis on education, organization and finance & facilities. Creation of division of accountability and quality assurance.

Weaknesses:

What is the target audience for the quarterly regional information sessions? Is this centrally located? Is there IHE or foundational sponsorship? Monitoring includes: faithfulness to the charter, academic success and organizational viability, yet previously cited were: education, organization, finance & facilities. Is creation of division of accountability and quality assurance only for charter schools or collaborative with non-charters? No mention of how site visits inform other charter schools or non-charter schools.

Reader's Score: 24

Selection Criteria - (vi) Dissemination activities

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

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description 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:

Evaluation and peer review procedures are developed.

Weaknesses:

Less than fully developed narrative. No mention of using dissemination for the broader public (non-charter, district, state, etc.). Under-developed plan that cites the steps to be taken by the SEA in informing, reviewing, awarding and follow-up of these opportunities.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

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

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

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:

Evaluation and peer review procedures are developed.

Weaknesses:

Less than fully developed narrative. No mention of likelihood of leading to student achievement. No reference to other state or national initiatives which could inform this plan. No timeline provided.

Reader's Score: 3

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:

Evaluation plan includes external evaluator. Addresses benchmarks and outcome measures. Strong levels of evaluation that address student, class, school and district. Citation of NY experiment and similar usage of lottery/non-lottery groups. Strong evaluation and data analysis.

Weaknesses:

Single assessment with comparative model continues the charter vs. non-charter argument. Is the only measurable value of a charter school its academic prowess compared to other similar schools? Inclusion of an additional predictive model, would allow charter schools to be assessed within school, cohort and other charters.

Reader's Score: 28

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2010 10:41 AM