

**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:** South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>(i) CSP contribution to student achievement</b>		
1. Student achievement	30	30
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	24
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	20
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	21
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	20
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	135
<b>Total</b>	180	135

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

## 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 defines high quality charter schools (p. 20) and details an ambitious plan to increase the number of high quality charter schools serving all of the state's students. In addition, the state specifies steps that will specifically serve at-risk, educationally disadvantaged students (p. 25-6), including technical assistance to applicants and grantees, priority points for applicants targeting at-risk students and significantly higher funding for grantees serving at-risk students (p. 27-8). The application provides a comprehensive list of strategies to communicate with the state about the charter school program (p. 23-4), including partnerships with the state's charter school associations.

#### Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 30

### 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 thoroughly documents the high degree of flexibility South Carolina charter schools are granted. According to the application, charter schools are granted freedom to hire/fire, develop pay scales, participate in state health & retirement systems, and determine budgeting, curriculum and operating procedures (p. 11, 29). South Carolina law grants charters exemptions from most provisions of law and regulations applicable to a public school or district, and allows a charter to pursue additional exemptions (p. 12). In addition, charter schools are allowed to switch authorizers (p. 29).

**Weaknesses:**

## Weaknesses:

The application is somewhat confusing when describing charters as "autonomous entities," (p. 12) but also stating that they are part of the authorizing district/LEA (p. 14). The priorities section of the application implies hiring/firing freedom for charters, but the selection criteria (ii) response clarifies that 75% of the staff must be certified (p. 29). This inconsistency is troublesome, leading the reader to wonder if there are other exceptions or policy clarifications missing from the narrative.

**Reader's Score: 24**

**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 application clearly identifies opportunities for growth, as well as recent experience, and sets an aggressive agenda for increasing the number of schools. The state does not have a charter school cap and has experienced an enrollment growth of 124% over the last two years. The application sets an ambitious goal of 40 new charter schools in five years, more than doubling the 2009-10 number (37 with 12 approved to open in 2010) (p. 4,31). The application provides a thorough explanation for past growth, including stability within the SEA's charter office (p. 31). South Carolina demonstrates their aggressive approach to addressing lessons learned from past experience in the explanation of the "charter pipeline" approach (p. 33).

The state demonstrates a commitment to quality by including a strong definition of a high quality charter school (p. 5,20), identifying the number of schools that have closed (17) and the percentage (75%) that have operated for longer than three years (p. 6). In addition, the application details plans for extensive leadership training. The state exhibits experience with supporting high-quality charter schools; charter schools make AYP at a slightly higher rate than the state's traditional public schools (p. 18). The state frankly acknowledges a quality concern, a high percentage of principals in first-year charter schools leaving after one year, and identifies plans to address the problem (p. 18). The state demonstrates a creative and unique approach to serving the charter community with the creation of a wiki site to discuss leadership training materials (p. 34). In addition, the state details a training timeline for charter applicants and new charters (p.35).

**Weaknesses:**

## Weaknesses:

The application does not present a clear picture of the demand for additional charter schools or the quantity and capacity of organizations ready to start schools. Although the training agenda is comprehensive, it appears prescriptive and time-consuming, particularly for new charter administrators facing many demands on their time.

The application inadequately addresses the SEA's plans to inform charter schools about available federal funds, stating that the SEA will develop funding guidelines and annually update them (pg. 38-9). The applicant could have identified charter schools' current experience with accessing federal funds and detail current SEA support for charters in this area.

(The application includes a requirement that grantees set aside \$10,000 for a particular training module. Perhaps this requirement would need to be approved by ED. (p. 36))

**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:

The application includes a "program action - logic model" and a detailed table connecting objectives to performance measures and milestones (p. 21-3) under Selection Criteria (i) that clearly details anticipated outcomes and outputs. The application adequately explains staffing structure, relationships with charter associations & training providers, and the role of the Charter School Advisory Committee (p. 40-2). The description of the sub-grant and monitoring process is adequate (p. 49-52).

**Weaknesses:**

## Weaknesses:

The Performance measures that anticipate 100% of charter schools meeting deadlines and training requirements are likely unrealistic (p. 22-3). The application's timeline of activities (p. 43-48) is comprehensive, but includes overly mundane and detailed tasks.

**Reader's Score: 21**

**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 relatively new statewide charter authorizer that is already authorizing 7 schools, as well as district authorizers. The state intends to provide technical assistance to districts to help them recognize high quality charter applications. The application clarifies that the state's charter law does not provide the SEA with authority to oversee authorizers (p. 52). The state acknowledges the importance of quality authorizing with the statement, "improving the quality of charter applications and charter authorizing will lead to quality achievement." (p. 53).

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses:

The response lacks a vision and detailed plan for encouraging authorizer accountability. The charter associate's task list (p. 54-55) lacks details on the technical assistance or professional development program the state will implement to support quality authorizing.

**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:**

Strengths:

The state intends to use the evaluator that evaluated SC's past CSP grants, 21st Century Grant Services (p. 55). The evaluation plan's goals are clearly stated (p. 55). The GPRA outcome measures are included in the plan. The evaluation plan adequately identifies the data to be collected and methods to collect the data (p. 58-9).

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses:

The evaluation description does not clearly link the evaluation methods to the outcomes to be measured. Overall, the

response lacks an explanation of how the evaluation will measure the success of the state's charter school program implementation.

**Reader's Score:** 20

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**Status:** Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

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

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

**Reader #5:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>(i) CSP contribution to student achievement</b>		
1. Student achievement	30	26
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	22
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	20
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	25
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	18
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	131
<b>Total</b>	180	131

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

## 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 good graphic explanation of program actions, definition of high quality, and description of objectives (19-23). Application includes clear elaboration of supporting activities and rationales for those activities as well as a link to costs (19-23).

#### Weaknesses:

The program actions graphic would be clearer and more comprehensive if there was a separate category/column specifying responsible individuals (19-23). Ill-defined and confusing terminology employed in portion of the graphic: e.g., good absolute rating, innovation (21, 23). The description of the activities that depict information provision portray ones that are rather weak and passive (23-24).

Reader's Score: 26

### 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:

Preference is given to schools that address the worst problems (27).

#### Weaknesses:

Description of procedures for getting a charter and for getting sub-grant funds became confused to the point it was difficult to tell which is which (30). There is no detail about the Charter School Advisory Committee such as who is on it, what are

the criteria for membership, what are its procedures, etc. (30).

**Reader's Score: 22**

**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:**

Application outlines strategies for helping successful sub-grantees build capacity (33). A number of assistance activities and resources are already in place; others are already under development (33-36).

**Weaknesses:**

There is a lack of important detail regarding nature and extent of support activities (33-35). No explanation of bid processes and criteria for sub-contractors (one has what appears to be a \$400K plus contract opportunity) (36). Training and technical assistance do not seem to appear in budget (37-38, Budget Narrative).

**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:**

The management plan is thorough and sufficiently detailed (43-48). Well-described sub-grant review process and rubrics (49-52, Appendices K & C).

**Weaknesses:**

There is not enough information provided about the selection criteria, membership and operations of the Charter School Advisory Committee (42). The program coordinator has no listed responsibilities OR is called something different in the management plan (43-48).

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:

District authorizers participate in sessions that explain roles, responsibilities, and important procedures (53). Law requires oversight reports (54).

##### Weaknesses:

Oversight strategies seem passive (53-54).

Reader's Score: 18

#### 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:

Description of CIP evaluation is satisfactory and provides adequate detail regarding standards being evaluated. Data collection protocols provide thorough list of data sources (Appendix M).

##### Weaknesses:

Evaluation plan description does not address important components such as method, approach, conceptual framework, instrumentation, and data analysis strategies. Does not include samples of classroom observation rubrics or interview protocols. Does not include evaluation standards for instructional quality or quality of educational program (Appendix M).

**Reader's Score:** 20

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**Status:** Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/08/2010 08:10 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

**Reader #4:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>(i) CSP contribution to student achievement</b>		
1. Student achievement	30	30
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	25
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	20
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	30
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	10
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	140
<b>Total</b>	180	140

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #4: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

## 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 States application proposes clear and measurable objectives for assisting educationally disadvantaged and other youth in achieving State academic content standards. Specifically, providing training and technical assistance to applicants from pre-planning through application and implementation. Using the definition "a financially viable, choice driven innovation that produces student achievement and stakeholder satisfaction through effective leadership", serves to guide the activities in the states application and is evident in the logic model (page 19) and chart on page 20.

The state application clearly proposes objectives around increasing number of high quality charter schools, increasing awareness and understanding of the charter model, improved student outcomes and charter school sustainability. The objects are designed around specific data and observations regarding the charter schools needs. The objectives are supported by clear and measurable performance measures and milestones (page 21 and 22). 40 new schools will open, at least 20 applications will be submitted for review, 60 percent of new charters will make AYP, and specific measurable expectation around SC School Report Card data. The state established clear and measurable goals for annual presentations made by the charter office and subsequent satisfaction and an increased understanding of the charter model by those in attendance. Additionally, SC will open at least two secondary charter schools targeting at risk students. The states application provides reasonable performance measures and milestones around efforts to improve sustainability through fiscal responsibility, governance and effective leadership. Specifically, appropriate expectations for new charter school leadership to attend training from the Office of School Leadership.

The application presents an opportunity for charter schools targeting achievement gaps to potentially receive a total of \$880,000.00 compared to the typical sub-grantee award of \$575,000.00.

#### Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 30

### 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 South Carolina experience large amounts of autonomy. The state law states: except as otherwise provided in this chapter, a charter school is exempt from all provisions of law and regulations applicable to a public school, a school board, or a district. This language allows a charter school the freedom to innovate or modify the schools organizational structure without undue restriction. Additionally, authorizers remain detached from the charter school's daily operation allowing autonomy around hiring/firing staff, creating and adjusting budgets and selecting the best educational program to meet the charter schools needs.

**Weaknesses:**

The state law provides for the traditional public school to convert to the charter model. However, the requirement of two-thirds of the staff and two-thirds of the parents vote to support the conversion seems overly burdensome.

**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:**

The state law provides no limits on the number of schools, student enrollment or geographic boundary. The state has experienced growth in both schools and student enrollment over the past five years. This trend supports the expectation that South Carolina will create an additional 40 schools over the five year grant period. The application proposes clear objectives for assisting new schools by creating a "charter pipeline". The application presents the creation of a two full two-year cohorts; for the five year grant period. The application presents a comprehensive list of topics that will assist school leadership build capacity, sustainability and in general school quality.

**Weaknesses:**

The application presents 4 strategies to inform each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive. However, the strategies lack specificity detailing how the state will ensure that each charter school in the State receives the schools commensurate share of Federal funds.

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:**

The SCDEs Charter School program is housed within the Office of Public School Choice and Innovation, which also houses other school choice programs. This is convincing evidence that charter initiatives are in the heart of school reform.

The application proposes a clear process and timeline regarding the sub-grant process. The application details technical assistance, eligibility criteria and content requirements. Additionally, the application provides details around the SCDE review for completeness and compliance with guidelines. CSP subgrants are competitive and follow the federally mandated peer review process with training provided to a panel of readers for each grant.

South Carolina's CSP grant proposal presents a comprehensive approach to disbursement and monitoring subgrantees. The state's CSP grant operates on a reimbursement basis and the state follows with an extensive monitoring process that includes one site visit in each year of the grant.

##### **Weaknesses:**

None noted

Reader's Score: 30

#### 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:**

Although SC charter law does not give SCDE authority to oversee authorizers, the state department has taken steps to identify and offer technical assistance and advice to authorizers.

##### **Weaknesses:**

Charter law in South Carolina does not give the SCDE authority to oversee individual authorizers. The application lacks detail around the specific technical assistance developed or in development.

The application is vague in its approach to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor and hold accountable charter schools.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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 a clear and measurable process for evaluating each objective listed. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis will be applied in areas of instructional observations, interviews of stakeholders, surveys and various data submitted to the state for school report cards. Additionally, South Carolina is discussing with Tennessee, Indiana, and Arkansas a Charter Collaborative to explore, improve, refine and share resources and strategies that foster high quality charter schools that meet the needs of all students.

**Weaknesses:**

The application lacks detail around the timeline and when various types of data will be collected.

**Reader's Score: 25**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 06/08/2010 08:10 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2010 09:24 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>(i) CSP contribution to student achievement</b>		
1. Student achievement	30	28
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	25
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	25
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	27
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	20
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	155
<b>Total</b>	180	155

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

## 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 good graphic is a strength as is the clear and explicit definition of quality. The ambitious growth plan will help targeted populations. The strong tie to SIG grants and more dollars for targeted schools are both strengths of the application.

#### Weaknesses:

The current achievement gap in existing schools is a concern that somewhat undermines the credibility of some of the claims in the proposal (e.g., the ability to support growth of high quality schools).

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:

For the charter developers that are able to successfully obtain a charter, flexibility is the default of the charter school law and this is a strength. Law creates space for multiple types of conversion charter schools. All charter schools are exempt from most state rules and regulations.

#### Weaknesses:

The requirement that conversion schools must obtain approval by 2/3 of staff to convert is a limit to flexibility and therefore a weakness in terms of flexibility.

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:**

The state has proposed a very ambitious growth plan. Growth is not limited by charter caps and the state has proposed a very strong support system including credible external consultants.

**Weaknesses:**

A weakness is the relatively limited growth to date and the fact that the growth projections do not appear to build in allowance for some planning schools dropping out prior to the full application phase.

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 state has proposed a strong management plan with clear leadership from top positions. There are multiple layers of support in the state agency including multiple professional charged with supporting charter school growth. The plan to engage external stakeholders and consultants is also a strength.

**Weaknesses:**

The narrative lacks detail about the authority of the charter review committee and their role once schools are granted.

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:

Satisfaction surveys are appealing if they are able to infuse a degree of accountability for authorizers. Another strength is the state offering TA and support to authorizers.

### Weaknesses:

A notable weakness is the lack of authorizer accountability given the role of authorizers in the state hierarchy (i.e., responsible for creating new schools). The proposed annual reports could be onerous and not get at key accountability measures such as success of charter schools approved.

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:

Applicant proposes a high quality evaluation plan supported by details regarding data sources and objectives. Working with other states is part of the proposal and potentially a strength in terms of the evaluation approach. Credible Evaluator identified that will be responsible for evaluating multiple aspects of the program with TA embedded in the evaluation work is another strength.

### Weaknesses:

0

Reader's Score: 30

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 06/23/2010 09:24 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/28/2010 10:44 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>(i) CSP contribution to student achievement</b>		
1. Student achievement	30	27
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	22
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	24
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	28
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	24
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	22
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	147
<b>Total</b>	180	147

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: South Carolina Department of Education (U282A100018)

## 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:

Logic model and presentation of relevant information on disadvantaged students. Definition of high quality charter school included. Strong relevance to objectives and needs of disadvantaged students (also defined). Listing of awareness events to appeal to wide charter stakeholder base.

#### Weaknesses:

Clarity around cultivation and activated audience at awareness events needs to be infused. How to attract and retain community interest?

Reader's Score: 27

### 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:

Legal citations establish the relationship between charter schools and authorizer. Flexibility for conversion and start-up schools. Governance and operational issues are highlighted as flexibility.

#### Weaknesses:

Section could benefit from existing flexibilities or autonomies that current charter schools have and how that is reflected in their success (or lack of).

Reader's Score: 22

**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:**

Aggressive plan for increasing number of charter schools. Workshops to assist in development of charters. Inclusion of historical data to identify a trend.

**Weaknesses:**

Plan could be further strengthened by stair-stepping the number of charter schools toward the overall total of 40. Presumably momentum will build. This would allow high emphasis in early years of grant to be on high quality (as defined in this application) to establish precedent. Federal funding guidelines should be augmented not to be developed. Need more emphasis on how federal funding will be ensured. What if it isn't? What is recourse of school?

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:**

Identification of personnel, roles and responsibilities. Listing of partner associations. Extensive management plan. Strong review and awarding plan.

**Weaknesses:**

Could benefit from linking previous year in management plan to create a standardized yet formative management plan. This would allow for corrections, lessons learned and best practices to be a part of overall continuity.

Reader's Score: 28

## 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:

TA to be expanded through affiliation with NACSA. Legislation moving through to solidify annual reporting processes.

### Weaknesses:

TA is vital, yet how to achieve strong attendance? What incentive mechanism are to be applied? More development in this area would strengthen this plan. Could a comprehensive needs survey (self-monitoring) be applied?

Reader's Score: 24

## 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:

External evaluator is listed. Methods include site visits with subsets of leadership and governance boards; observations and self-assessment strategies; four annual and a final evaluation. Evaluations are to be aligned with project objectives.

### Weaknesses:

Addition of quantitative methods to be employed would strengthen this component.

Reader's Score: 22

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 06/28/2010 10:44 AM

