

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/13/2010 05:22 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

**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	21
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	20
<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	24
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	19
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	25
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	133
<b>Total</b>	180	133

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2010 84.282A - 2: 84.282A

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

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

## 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 applicant clearly indicates that charter applications currently under review are for schools "in or very near independent school districts identified for school improvement due to failing AYP for two or more years" (p.15). The application provides a clear example of a charter planning to open in Fall 2010 that has 100% of the population identified as economically disadvantaged (p.16). The objectives are clearly stated within the section. Adequate technical support is provided to potential applicants to assist in accomplishing Objective1 (p.16). The applicant has provided specific performance targets to track the success of Objective 1. These include student achievement benchmarks (p. 17).

#### Weaknesses:

It is unclear how Objective 2 (P 19-21) will contribute in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve State student academic achievement standards. More specifically, in regards to performance targets bullet 3 (p 20), "100% of new charters authorized by the SBOE will have one or more representative attend charter orientation, during the charter's planning phase prior to serving students, to help charter staff understand compliance requirements and initiate successful instructional practices"(p 20), does not align to Objective 2, providing financial assistance for the start up and implementation of charter schools. No information was provided on the ways in which the applicant will disseminate best or promising practices of charter schools to each LEA in the State.

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:**

The applicant has demonstrated that the State's charter law affords high degree of flexibility to its charters. The applicant specifically indicates that charters are "not subject to TEC Chapters 21 and 22 which set out many of the requirements related to personnel policies, it is left to each charter holder board to manage routine finances. Additionally, school calendars and hours of operation, as well as student/teacher ratio and class size, which impact budgets and expenditures, are not mandated for these charters" (p 21).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide a description of how the State's law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agencies.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - (iii) Number of high-quality charters created****1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State.**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a reasonable estimate of 20 new charters to be authorized annually (p 24). The applicant has described clear internal procedures for notifying each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter is eligible to receive. The program office makes an effort to notify key State staff members of when a new charter is approved. This initial notification facilitates other program offices notification to charter schools regarding funding they may be eligible to receive (p. 24). Substantial efforts are made to ensure that each charter is receiving its commensurate share of Federal funding.

**Weaknesses:**

A description of how the program office ensures that charter schools receive notifications from other program offices would have strengthened the response.

**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:**

The management plan for the proposed project is sufficient to fulfill the objectives. The applicant has provided a clear time line, activities and milestones, as well as staff responsible for each (P 28-33). The applicant has provided descriptions of the steps to be taken to award subgrant funds to eligible applicants. The applicant clearly indicates the State is moving to a competitive grant process and has listed clear areas that will be evaluated when considering the quality of a CSP application (p 34).

**Weaknesses:**

Measurable outcomes were not provided in the plan. More detail to the peer review process and scoring procedures would have strengthened the response.

**Reader's Score: 24**

**Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly states the technical assistance that will be offered to the 15 independent school districts that act as charter authorizers. The applicant intends to hold an annual video conference or webinar for district staff to answer questions and explain statutory requirements (P 36-37).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant provided a lot of detail regarding the ways in which charter schools are held accountable throughout the state. However, the application is lacking detail regarding ways in which the authorizers are held accountable. The response could have been strengthened by linking the charter school accountability to the authorizer. Also, there is no mention of technical assistance to be offered to the SBOE after the charter is issued.

**Reader's Score: 19**

**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 clearly describes the RFP process to secure an evaluator. The RFP will identify several questions designed to elicit responses from the potential evaluator. These responses must include data and data collection instruments, analytical methods, and reports (p 41).

**Weaknesses:**

The response would be strengthened by providing a more concise detailed description of how the evaluation clearly aligns to the goals and objectives of the project.

**Reader's Score:** 25

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 06/13/2010 05:22 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/05/2010 04:53 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

**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	16
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	15
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	18
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	15
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	15
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	24
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	103
<b>Total</b>	180	103

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2010 84.282A - 2: 84.282A

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

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

## 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 Texas Education Agency has two objectives for their state charter school grant program: (1) expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to students across the state, and (2) provide financial assistance for the start up and implementation of charter schools" (page e0).

The TEA plans to prioritize the placement of new charter schools in independent school districts which have been identified for Title I school improvement due to failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more years and in areas meeting the federal definition of high-needs communities" (page 9).

In response to a statutory limitation on the number of charters that the State Board of Education can issue, the Commissioner of Education has allowed for multiple schools to be opened under one charter. This has resulted in successful operators being approved for opening new schools under a fast track approach (page 23).

There was a marked improvement of charter schools rated "exemplary" between 2008 and 2009.

The TEA has a fully-functional and comprehensive web site Best Practices Clearinghouse which includes all of the state and charter school best practices. The site has "new evidence standards that include rigorous scientific evidence, aligning with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standard for scientific-based research; quantitative evidence, requiring data from more than three years; qualitative evidence, requiring the support from educator observation and data from more than two years; and theory-based evidence, requiring support by expert theory and educator observation (page 11)"

### Weaknesses:

#### Weaknesses:

While the TEA sets specific academic achievement goals for charter schools in the state, there is no evidence cited as to how charter school students are currently performing compared with their peers across the state, so it is difficult to judge whether charter schools are currently assisting educationally disadvantaged students in Texas. Furthermore, it is noted that a new assessment program is being instituted and that a "historically transitioning to new accountability structures have initially resulted in lower results," so it would seem that the goals for the performance of charter school students should be linked to statewide performance on the new assessment, both across all demographics and for specific subgroups.

While "high performing" and "successful" are used to describe charter holders which are slated for opening more schools under their original charters, the criteria for being selected are not presented.

Disaggregated data for the students of charter school isn't presented, so it cannot be determined if charter schools are accomplishing the goal of assisting educationally disadvantaged students to achieve State academic content standards at a higher rate than in traditional schools. Academic gains for educationally disadvantaged students are not included in the measures of the objectives.

The dissemination of best practices from charter schools is limited to being part of a website including all best practices from across the state. There are no pro-active dissemination activities listed.

The TEA's efforts to inform teachers, parents and communities of the charter school grant program are limited to creating a "new section on the Division of Charter School Administration webpage devoted to grant information" and listing the grant opportunities in the Texas Register. These two efforts are limited in penetration and audience.

**Reader's Score: 16**

### **Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law**

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

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

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

#### **Strengths:**

##### **STRENGTHS:**

Charters approved by the Texas State Board of Education have autonomy over "personnel policies, such as minimum salary requirements, teacher employment contracts, education certification, and duties and benefits, and finances" (page 7).

Campus charters, which are authorized by independent school districts, are not subject to statutes concerning "personnel requirements, school calendars, hours of operation student/teacher ratio and class size" (page 8).

#### **Weaknesses:**

##### **WEAKNESSES:**

Campus charters do not necessarily have autonomy from their local school district authorizer since they "may have control of and/or provide significant input regarding the school's curriculum, calendar, budget, and daily operations" (page 8), rather than being required to have control.

Neither a listing of statutes which apply to various types of charters nor a listing of all statutory exemptions for charter schools were included.

**Reader's Score: 15**

### **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 Commissioner of Education and TEA are working to establish new high-quality charter schools despite the cap on SBOE approved charter schools being met through colleges and universities which are not included in the cap. There is an expectation that five new charters of this type will be granted by the SBOE. It is also expected that 10 underperforming charter schools will be "designated new schools" by the commissioner each year. This would be a minimum increase of 15 new high-quality charter schools. The TEA also anticipates 10 new campus charters. This would be a total of 125 schools in the next 5 years, raising the number of charter schools by 25% over the next 5 years (page 24). It seems like there is institutional capacity to accomplish this. The TEA has also indicated that there will be an increased effort to improve awareness of charter schools among independent school districts.

The TEA has a thorough administrative process for informing SBOE authorized charter schools of their eligibility for federal funds- both Title funding and grants

**Weaknesses:**

**WEAKNESSES:**

The cap could have a chilling effect on new charter applications.

There doesn't seem to be a plan in place to notify non-SBOE authorized charter schools about the availability of federal grants. While "independent school districts that authorize campus charters, and receive all funding for campus charters" and "will be required to provide plans for distributing federal funds to each campus charter as part of their CSP grant eligibility documents" there isn't any indication that there is a rigorous review of charter schools which receive federal funds (page 26).

The requirements of a "minimum total student enrollment of 300 and at least a 50% increase in the age 5-17 student enrollment from the enrollment submitted previously" seems like too high a threshold for adjusting distribution of federal dollars to match the students served (page 26).

There isn't evidence in the application to justify a projection of 10 new campus charters per year since local school districts have historically not been engaged in chartering and the position of the TEA is passive at encouraging local districts to authorize.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Selection Criteria - (iv) Quality of the management plan**

- 1. The quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly**

defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

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

**Strengths:**

STRENGTHS: The resumes of the director and assistant director of the Texas CSP and the grant manager from the Division of Discretionary Grants demonstrate that the personnel have the qualifications and experience necessary to manage the resources, tasks and interfaces required to fulfill the obligations of the grant proposal.

There is a clear list of activities, participants and timeline for the grant.

There is a list of areas that will be considered in evaluating the quality of a CSP application that include consideration of: target population; local needs and objective; the likelihood of continued, successful operation after the conclusion of the grant; appropriate use of funds; activities proposed in light of achieving objectives; and the use of appropriate methods for assessing and evaluating the effects of the grant (pages 34,35).

A minimum cut score will be set prior to evaluation to ensure all awardees are quality applicants.

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES

There are no performance indicators for the activities.

There isn't a clear connection between the grant objectives and the activities.

There seem to be too many FTEs for the number of new charters to be developed.

**Reader's Score:** 15

**Selection Criteria - (v) Authorizer accountability**

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

**Strengths:**

STRENGTHS: Texas has a strong and transparent accountability system in place which holds schools accountable for their students' achievement that incorporates both state standardized test results and high school graduation rates (page 38).

The TEA will conduct webinars and video conferences that reach out to independent school districts to inform them about different aspects of authorizing campus charter schools or converting to a district charter (page 37).

The TEA will survey campus charter administrators, analyze the results of the survey to identify staff development and technical assistance needs and then make plans to address the areas of greatest need (page 37).

The TEA interfaces with the SBOE regarding RFPs for the CSP and reports the results of the annual charter school report.

There are more efforts to inform colleges and junior colleges about charter schools and how they could sponsor them

**Weaknesses:**

## WEAKNESSES:

There are no specific goals for responses to the outreach efforts to the independent districts.

There doesn't seem to be any oversight of independent districts to ensure adequate support and autonomy for the campus charter schools.

Because there is a lack of data in the proposal it is difficult to determine whether "good authorizing" is occurring with regards to accountability.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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 TEA Division of Evaluation, Analysis, and Planning with the assistance and support of staff in the Division of Charter School Administration will manage the external evaluation of the Texas CSP grant. The evaluation will be put out for competitive bid to those groups and individuals with "extensive experience conducting education program evaluations" (page 41). Texas lists five overarching objectives to be included in the RFP for the evaluation of the CSP in Texas. They include: use of CSP grant funds; best practices in CSP grant fund usage; correlating student achievement to types, missions and ages of charter schools; comparing charter student achievement with non-charter student achievement in individual subgroups; comparing student outcomes in competitive and non-competitive grant recipients (pages 41,42). There are specific expectations for the responses to the bidding out of the evaluation.

The study will cover 126 charter schools and a subset of "control" traditional neighborhood schools, giving a picture of charter school achievement in the context of all Texas students' achievement.

The list of data to be used by the evaluator includes both hard data- student achievement scores and attendance and graduation rates- and soft data surveys and site visits.

There is a clear timeline for the development of data collection instruments and interim reports will be delivered annually.

These reports will be used by the TEA to reform and direct CSP activities.

There is an explicit focus on finding correlations between student achievement and activities, charter school emphases and time.

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES:

The performance targets mentioned under the objectives aren't specifically referenced.

There isn't any mention of parental satisfaction as a measure to be considered.

There isn't a control group of charter schools that aren't involved in the CSP.

**Reader's Score:**     **24**

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**Status:**           Submitted

**Last Updated:**   06/05/2010 04:53 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/15/2010 10:08 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

**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	20
<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	23
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	23
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	18
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	136
<b>Total</b>	180	136

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2010 84.282A - 2: 84.282A

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

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

## 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 state is transitioning to a new accountability structure that will include end of course exams, which will help the applicant to monitor student achievement. (p. 14)

The majority of the application for the SBOE-approved charters are for schools that will open either in or close to school districts identified as in need of improvement. (p. 14)

There is a high demand for new charter schools, with over 40,000 students on waiting lists during the 2008-2009 school year. (p. 15), which is addressed by the applicant's first objective (increase the number of high-quality charter schools). (p. 15)

Student achievement objectives are included. (p. 17)

Charters that are performing poorly must create a campus intervention team or a plan for reconstitution. (p. 18)

New schools must attend charter school orientation provided by the TEA. (p. .19)

#### Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The student achievement objectives included under objective one do not allow for comparison to traditional public school achievement. If the traditional public schools are surpassing these objectives, then they would be inappropriate. (p. 17)

The applicant's accountability plan allows for three or more years of poor performance. The application states that a third consecutive year of unacceptable performance leads to the implementation of campus reconstitution, and additional years of unacceptable performance lead to other sanctions as determined by the Commissioner of Education. (p. 18)

Objective number is strictly a process objective. (p. 19) The application is meant to demonstrate the contribution the program will make in assisting educational disadvantaged and other students to achieve state academic standards and

student achievement standards, and this objective does not demonstrate how it will contribute.

The outreach and communication efforts are entirely passive, relying on people visiting the website of the applicant. (p. 20)

**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:**

Strengths

Charters are not generally subject to TEC Chapters 21 and 22, related to personnel policies, salary requirements, teacher contracts, and certification. (p. 21)

School calendars and hours of operation, student to teacher ratios, and class size requirements are not mandated for charters. (p. 21)

Charters are not required to use purchasing and contracting procedures required of traditional public schools, but are required to follow the federal guidelines when using federal funds. (p. 21)

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant states that charters are not generally subject to TEC Chapters 21 and 22. However, without a copy of the statutory language it is impossible to determine the extent to which they are exempt.

There is no indication that charter schools are exempt from district policies.

There is no description of the administrative relationship between charters and sponsors.

**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:**

Strengths

Procedures are in place to notify, via e-mail, key staff members throughout TEA when a new charter school is approved and entered in the agency database. (p. 24)

The applicant sends letters, via certified mail, with information about federal funding availability. Reminder emails are sent at three different times. (p. 25)

There is an appeals process in place if deadlines are missed. (p. 25)

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The projection for the number of new schools is low, considering the size of the state and the demand.

There are no plans to address the large number of LEAs that are not authorizing new schools.

The application does not include a definition of what constitutes high-quality.

**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:**

Strengths

Management plan is detailed and includes the necessary information. It demonstrates the capacity to achieve milestones.

The evaluation criteria used by the applicant to assess the quality of potential sub-grantees is detailed and rigorous, and includes a requirement that applicants provide information about potential students currently attending schools in need of improvement. (p. 34)

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant does not indicate what minimum score is required to fund a sub-grantee.

Using only two reviewers per application is not the best way to ensure reliability. Using only two reviewers decreases the applicant's ability to ensure only high-quality schools are funded.

**Reader's Score: 23**

**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 applicant collaborates and provides information to the SBOE relating to the charter application documents that will be submitted by charter developers and reviewed by the SBOE. (p. 36)

The applicant will hold an annual video conference or webinar for district staff to answer questions and explain statutory requirements. (p. 37)

The state has several accountability systems to allow authorizers to assess the performance of charter schools in their portfolio. (p. 38)

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The application includes no plans for ongoing training other than an annual webinar, and no way to assess if authorizer capacity has been improved.

The application contains different projections on the number of new charter schools to be opened.

The application does not include any plans to work with LEAs that are not currently authorizing charter schools, which is where the growth will need to come from.

**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:**

Strengths

The applicant has proposed a very rigorous process for selecting an evaluator, which includes competitive bidding, critical review, and oral presentations. (p. 41)

The evaluation proposed by the applicant is likely to yield highly valuable information that will assist the applicant in improving processes.

The evaluation will include a variety of student achievement data, including comparisons of charter schools students to traditional public school students, and schools funded through a non-competitive process versus schools funded through a competitive process. (p. 42)

The evaluation will include all schools funded through the grant. (p. 44)

The evaluation plan includes a timeline for creating data collection instruments, and includes timelines for interim reports. (p. 44)

The evaluation plan indicates the applicant will critically review the interim reports. (p. 45)

**Weaknesses:**

None Noted.

**Reader's Score: 30**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 06/15/2010 10:08 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/16/2010 11:16 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

**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	10
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	18
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	15
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	10
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	10
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	18
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	81
<b>Total</b>	180	81

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2010 84.282A - 2: 84.282A

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

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

## 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

Texas has 215 active charters with 464 schools serving 119,642. Recent legislation passed increasing type of authorizers to include junior colleges.

#### Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Insufficient data is provided to meaningfully evaluate this criteria. For example, application states that for schools benefitting from the prior CSP grant program has risen, and 88% of students assessed through TAKS met the state standard for reading/english language arts in 2009. Application doesn't provide data on scores for students in schools that did not benefit from prior grants or comparative data for comparable traditional public schools to indicate if this performance is good or not. No data provided on outcomes achieved from prior CSP program grant. No data provided on total number of applications received each year or how many accepted to show that only high quality charters are being authorized. Targets not very high, e.g. only a 2% improvement over current performance (88% to 90%) in reading/English standard.

Reader's Score: 10

### 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

Charters authorized by SBOE retain autonomy over budgets, expenditures, employment, certification, benefits, hours of operations, class size, purchasing and contracting decisions.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

No description is provided of "laws located in other sections of states statutes that are made explicit to charter schools" so unable to assess if these impinge on flexibility or not. No discussion of restrictions on charters authorized by entities other than SBOE. As most charter growth must come from these other authorizers, it should be discussed.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**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

As SBOE is limited in the number of charters to be issued, it has developed a new strategy of allowing additional campuses to be opened under existing charters. LEA's, Universities and Junior and Senior Colleges may also authorize charter schools. 50 new charters to be authorized each year, 5 by SBOE, 10 new campus charters from existing charters and 10 by isd's.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

SBOE expansion is effectively limited to replication of existing charters thereby limiting applications from new sponsoring entities that may have new innovative proposals. Application states that "Only the highest performing.... eligible to apply..." but no definition of highest performing is supplied or criteria given to show how this is to be measured and existing charters to be evaluated. 10 new charters per year (total 50) from isd's is overly optimistic given that in the 14 year period of Texas's charter law only 72 charters have been authorized (average of 5 per year.) Funds in first year of grant to be used for continuation grants and will not lead to new charters.

Reader's Score: 15

#### Selection Criteria - (iv) Quality of the management plan

1. The quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

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

**Strengths:**

Strengths

Plan lists dates, activities and responsible staff.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

Management plan has no measurable quantitative targets, outputs or outcomes provided. For example, letters are to be sent to isd's in July with information about authorizing with a video conference to be held in September. No goals set as to how many isd's to participate or for new charters to be authorized by isd's as a result of these activities. Very few specifics throughout.

Reader's Score: 10

#### 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

TEA will hold an annual video conference or webinar for school district staff to discuss the CSP grant application process and to discuss the chartering process.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

Response is very general in nature and focuses on school support and not on supporting and holding authorizers

accountable. E.g. how many total application received? How many rejected? Is there a suggested rubric for authorizers and training on it? Inconsistent with earlier sections, e.g. open 20 charters per year (p44) yet in criteria iii, 25 charters per year are delineated (p24.)

**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:**

Strengths

Outside independent evaluator to be hired through competitive bidding. Milestones and measures to be developed by evaluator.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

Evaluation should focus on the effectiveness of the sub-grant program in meeting program objectives, however the stated evaluation objectives are vague. Application does not provide information on what data is to be collected, how it will be analyzed and what will be done with the evaluation results.

**Reader's Score: 18**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 06/16/2010 11:16 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/09/2010 09:05 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

**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	18
<b>(ii) Flexibility afforded by state law</b>		
1. Flexibility	30	18
<b>(iii) Number of high-quality charters created</b>		
1. Number of schools	30	19
<b>(iv) Quality of the management plan</b>		
1. Management plan	30	16
<b>(v) Authorizer accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer accountability	30	15
<b>(vii) Quality of the evaluation</b>		
1. Evaluation	30	30
<b>Sub Total</b>	180	116
<b>Total</b>	180	116

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - 2010 84.282A - 2: 84.282A

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

Applicant: Texas Education Agency -- Accreditation, Division of Charter School Administration  
(U282A100016)

## 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 SEA disseminates best practices of charter schools through their Best Practices clearinghouse which includes a website outlining practices with evidence standards and scientific methods. (p 11, paragraph 2)

Schools receiving CSP funds have done well within first three years of operation with 87% of students scoring meeting the state standard in ELA for 2008 and 88% for 2009. (p 14, paragraph 2)

#### Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES

There is no comparison between schools that have received CSP funds and those who have not received CSP funds. (p 14, paragraph 2)

Reader's Score: 18

### Selection Criteria - (ii) Flexibility afforded by state law

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

STRENGTHS

Charter schools are not subject to the requirements of state law relating to school calendar, curriculum, hours of operation, student/teacher ratio, class size, minimum salary requirements, teacher employment contracts, purchasing and contract rules and educator certification.(p 8, paragraph 2, and p 21, paragraphs 2 and 3).

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES

The application states that charter schools are "not generally subject to TEC Ch 21 and 22." This statement is vague and does not explain in what circumstances the charter schools are subject to TEC Ch 21 and 22. (p 7, paragraph 3)

The application states that "in the future, districts will also be asked to document how the areas of autonomy afforded to each campus charter go above and beyond areas of autonomy offered to their traditional schools." This statement suggests that the SBOE is not currently taking steps to ensure that charter schools have significant autonomy from their local LEA when compared to traditional schools. (p 22, paragraph 2)

**Reader's Score: 18**

**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

Unlimited campuses can be created from existing charter, which can help to increase the number of high quality charters. (p 23, paragraph 2)

Given the cap limitation and evaluation of existing campuses, it is reasonable to have 20 new CSP grants annually. (p 24, paragraph 2)

The SBOE provides ample notification of federal funds through its postings in the Texas Register to the charters they authorize. The SBOE also provides notification and directions by certified mail to first-year charter schools that the SBOE authorizes. (p 25, paragraph 3)

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES

There is a cap of 215 charters in the state, which could discourage the development of new charter schools. (p e0)

The criteria for a high performing charter school that expand its campus are not defined specifically. (p 23, paragraph 2)

The plan for independent LEA to notify charters of their eligibility of federal funds is vague, when compared to the measures the SBOE takes in notifying the SBOE authorized charter schools. (p 26, paragraph 2)

**Reader's Score: 19**

**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

Specific staff are assigned to each task listed in management plan. (p 28)

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES

There is little detail about the peer review process. (p 35, paragraph 2)

The management plan contains no measurable targets, only lists tasks. (p 28)

**Reader's Score: 16**

## 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

TEA holds an annual video conference or webinar to explain charter campus requirements which assists LEA in their authorizing responsibilities. Specific staff are assigned to each task listed in management plan. (p 37, paragraph 1)

### Weaknesses:

WEAKNESSES

The process of charter accreditation status is not described in detail. It is not clear how this accreditation or the state ratings system holds individual LEA accountable when "specific requirements for campus charters vary from authorizer to authorizer." Specific staff are assigned to each task listed in management plan. (p 39, paragraph 3)

Reader's Score: 15

## 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

There are specific student achievement outcomes outlined along a specific timeline aligned with the grant objectives that take into consideration, the effects of changing to a new accountability structure. (p 17, paragraph 3)

The questions asked of the actions and performance of CSP grantees are specific such as how they utilize funds, does the use change over time, and how can best practices be identified. (p 41, paragraph 3)

Documents and data required for analysis are specifically outlined such as copies of grant application, processes grantees use to monitor progress, and actual expenditure of grants. (p 42, paragraph 2)

There is specific date for when the report will be released: December 2015.  
(p 45, paragraph 1)

**Weaknesses:**

WEAKNESSES

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 30**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 06/09/2010 09:05 PM