

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/19/2011 08:47 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting students in meeting standards		
1. Meeting standards	20	20
Flexibility Afforded by State Law		
1. Flexibility	20	17
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	17
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	8
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	16
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	7
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	8
	Sub Total	93
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Periodic Review and Evaluation		
1. Periodic Review and Eval	10	9
Number of High-Quality Charter Schools		
1. High-quality charters	8	6
Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals	5	5
High Degree of Autonomy		
1. High Degree of Autonomy	5	4
Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates		
1. Achievement & grad rates	12	8
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	3
Improving Productivity		

1. Improving Productivity

	5	3
Sub Total	50	38
Total	160	131

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - FY11 CSP SEA panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting students in meeting standards

1. (1) The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain how these objectives will be met, including steps that will be 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 FL application includes multiple efforts at targeting educationally disadvantaged students. The alignment with the state's winning R2T application and the work with the Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF) to replicate and expand successful charters, grow home-grown CMOs, and to utilize successful charters in its turnaround efforts all speak to this goal. The inclusion of sound goals and measurable objectives for them ensures metrics can be used to judge the success of the efforts.

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how the State's charter school law establishes an administrative relationship between charter schools 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 describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

Strengths:

FL's law is extremely thorough and strong on autonomy for charter schools. With the recent improvements in authorizing in the state, the LEA (authorizer) school relationships have dramatically improved. Charters are granted automatic exemption from almost ALL state and local laws (except those outlined in the state charter law).

Weaknesses:

FL's charters are still required to be certified and the schools ALL are part of their authorizing LEA.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Number of high-quality charters to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State (20 points).

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new high-quality charter schools that will be authorized and opened in the State during the project period.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe, in detail, its charter school subgrant application and peer review processes, how the peer review process will assess quality, and how the SEA will ensure that only high-quality charter school applicants (as defined by the applicant) are selected for funding. States that have received grants under this program previously are invited to provide data on the percentages of eligible applicants that were awarded sub-grants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of applicants funded.

Strengths:

FL has done an impressive job growing successful charters, especially because until recently almost no known nationally recognized high-quality CMOs operated in the state. The applicant includes a subgrant process that mirrors the federal CSP subgrant process and takes steps to implement many "quality controls" via its process. The inclusion of SEA employees across the SEA's offices ensures a variety of view points AND concerns are included in the initial RFP. The SEA makes great efforts to notify the public via its growing list-serv and website. The applicant also includes a bare minimum score for sub-grant applications, ensuring that always there is a consistent quality floor.

Weaknesses:

As noted previously, more should be done by the SEA to tap into networks outside the SEA's reach.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan (10 points). In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers (a) 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; and (b) 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 (20 U.S.C. 7221b (b) (2) (A) and (B) and 7221e(a)).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that have been identified in an audit or other monitoring review, as well as the steps taken to address such compliance issues or findings.

Strengths:

FL's DoE has done well to dramatically improve its charter office and its function. The new significant emphasis on quality authorizing has led to identifiable improvements in the charter sector (new model authorizer documents and activities). The recognition that it can and has learned from its CSP monitoring visits demonstrates a commitment to improvement too. The applicant includes a thorough time-line with assigned activities to staff, clearly identifying goals for completion and primary staff responsible for the work.

Weaknesses:

Certain staff members have significant responsibilities according to the time-line and work flow document. My concern would be is it realistic they can accomplish as much as they have set out for themselves? Additionally, as noted before, FL's charters have had difficulty to access federal stimulus funds these past several years. While good to see that the legislature enacted new statute around this area, the implementation seems to be lacking.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - 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 (20 points).**

Strengths:

FL Dept of Education is not a direct charter school authorizer, yet it has taken smart steps to oversee the authorizers in the state. The SEA has focused its attention on TA and MODEL documents which is requiring LEAs to use. The CSRFP helps the legislature get real time and informed feedback from a variety of stakeholders on this subject.

Weaknesses:

Ultimately FL's LEAs are somewhat independent from the SEA when authorizing. While an appeals process is in place, FL's LEA authorizers are never faced with the ultimate accountability of losing their status (due to a FL state constitution matter).

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Dissemination

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

General:

The SEA plans to fund 7 dissemination grantees. There is a promising VCS project, but it will REQUIRE a waiver and as such really is a hypothetical now. The proposal for an On-Line Learning Community is a thoughtful and broad project, BUT there is little discussion of FL trainings for folks and what will the SEA do to actually get people to use it? Throughout the dissemination section there is limited discussion of implementation, which is especially surprising since the SEA has read the US Dept's own evaluation of this program and recognizes implementation is a key.

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

- 1. (6a) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the quality of the dissemination activities (5 points).**

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such

Sub Question

subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

see overall comments.

Weaknesses:

see overall comments.

Reader's Score:

2. (6b) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204 (f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

see overall comments.

Weaknesses:

see overall comment.s

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **Quality of the project evaluation (10 points).** 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 the 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:

Demonstrating a commitment to quality and improvement, the applicant wants its external evaluator to focus on "big picture" items. This will ultimately help the SEA administer the program more effectively.

Weaknesses:

Is the SEA truly capable of fulfilling all the data goals without an external evaluator? Will the evaluators be able to help the SEA while the grant is on-going with any tangible steps for improvement, or will it all be backward looking?

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation

- 1. Periodic Review and Evaluation (up to 10 points). The State provides for periodic review and evaluation by the authorized public chartering agency of each charter school at least once every five years, unless required more frequently by State law, to determine whether the charter school is meeting the terms of the school's charter, and is meeting or exceeding the student academic achievement requirements and goals for charter schools as set forth under State law or the schools charter.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide information regarding whether the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years includes a public vote on whether to terminate, extend, or renew a school's charter and on whether a failure to affirmatively renew or extend a schools charter during the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years would result in the charter school being closed.

Strengths:

FL Dept of Education's overall goals for this CSP grant include "improving authorizing practices and capacity of LEAs." The SEA has dramatically improved not only the alignment across the state in authorizing, but its ability to enforce standards and quality authorizing. The state law requires 5 year reviews and throughout the application the authorizer discusses ways authorizers have annual reviews (either via reports, audits, or actually LEA oversight on an annual basis). The voting on renewal and other high-stakes decisions is done via a public vote and the authorizers have consistent and quality instruction on this via the state charter law.

Weaknesses:

While leading in areas around model charter contracts, model authorizer practices, and other recent authorizer improvements these have just been put in place and are relatively new.

Reader's Score: 9

Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

- 1. Number of High-Quality Charter Schools (up to 8 points). The State has demonstrated progress in increasing the number of high-quality charter schools that are held accountable in the terms of the school's charter for meeting clear and measurable objectives for the educational progress of the students attending the schools, in the period prior to the period for which an SEA applies for a grant under this competition.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide the following information: (1) its definition of a "high-quality charter school"; (2) the number of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a

description of how the rate has changed over the past five years; and (3) the percentage of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the percentage has changed over the past five years.

Strengths:

FL has experienced significant growth in charters over its last two CSP grants. Additionally, it has shown a willingness to close low-performing charters too.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a definition of high-quality in vague terms and ultimately argues that all charters are of high-quality and they can't be renewed. It would have been helpful to see the corresponding letter grades ("A"....) for charters to see if although they are all high-quality they all receive high letter grades. These two-tiered classification systems negate the primary definition of high-quality and the applicant should look at ways to truly recognize its best charters.

Reader's Score: 6

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency (LEA), or an Appeals Process (5 points). The State:

(a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

(b) In the case of a State in which LEA's are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

PLEASE NOTE: Reviewers must assign a score of 0 or 5, but nothing in between.

Strengths:

FL has a clear appeals process via its state charter law.

Weaknesses:

N/A

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy (up to 5 points). The State ensures that each charter school has a high degree of autonomy over the charter school's budget and expenditures.

Strengths:

FL's charter law affords schools a significant amount of autonomy and control. All FL charters are required to have independent governing boards and schools are automatically waived from state and local policies, there isn't a requirement to identify and apply for waivers needed.

Weaknesses:

FL's charters are part of their LEA and recently have had difficulties accessing formulaic dollars via the SFSF and subsequent EdJobs monies. Additionally, FL's law still requires charter teachers to be certified.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates (up to 12 points). Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities (up to 3 points).

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for English learners (up to 3 points).

(d) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high-poverty schools (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

Note: For each population of students for which the applicant is seeking competitive priority points, the Secretary invites the applicant to discuss the steps it would take to meet the priority. For example, the applicant could describe any guidance or support it would provide to charter school developers to assist such developers in recruiting and providing high-quality services to students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that they are taking effective and active steps to recruit and enroll students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served by such schools; or how it would design its subgrant competition, which may include the use of preferences, to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served at rates equal to or greater than such students are being served in other schools in the area.

General:

FL has designed an impressive set of activities to individually target these criterion. The focus on creating high-quality charters in the state's PLA zones is a sound investment to targeting schools. The efforts to reserve funding in this CSP grant for the creation of rural charters ensures SOME rural charters will be created. The efforts to use dissemination grants to study and subsequently learn from "best in class" is a way to learn "domestically," but doesn't ensure large impact nor a speedy implementation. Further, the SEA really is relying almost entirely on the dissemination grant approach to satisfy these criterion, failing to fully exhaust its own internal options for addressing the points.

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to discuss how it would design its subgrant competition to meet this priority.

Strengths:

Efforts to improve diversity are noticed in the application, including via priority sub-grant points for state distribution of CSP grants. The SEA plans to participate in TA and other outreach efforts.

Weaknesses:

The SEA's outreach stays primarily within the confines of SEA activities and ONLINE portals. While helpful these certainly are not the only ways to reach diverse populations and certainly not always the most effective. More effort should be made to tap into existing diverse communities and networks. Although the SEA discusses this later on, including the growth of its ListServ, it still seems small for a state the size of FL.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

- 1. Improving Productivity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcomes per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in the Federal Register Notice), or other strategies.**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a series of activities around the OER which disseminate a data dashboard and interface for schools and teachers.

The work with FACSA to develop an OMS for authorizers is a sound investment and as authorizers scale, hopefully improve productivity. This also can help improve authorizer school relationships too.

Weaknesses:

While impressive sounding, the VCS project requires a US Dept of Education waiver to be considered. As such, it is still a hypothetical at this time.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting students in meeting standards		
1. Meeting standards	20	17
Flexibility Afforded by State Law		
1. Flexibility	20	18
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	9
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	20
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	8
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	8
Sub Total	110	100

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority

Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. Periodic Review and Eval 10 8

Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

1. High-quality charters 8 8

Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals 5 5

High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 4

Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 8

Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 4

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

4

Sub Total

50

41

Total

160

141

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - FY11 CSP SEA panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting students in meeting standards

1. (1) The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 points).

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

Strengths:

Charter schools in Florida show success in educating students to perform at higher levels than students at comparable traditional public schools. The application clearly describes the four objectives of the CSP application process which tie to helping students meet the academic standards of the state. The clear alignment between the state's Race to the Top application and CSP reflects thoughtful planning and consistency.

The application adequately explains the early efforts to reach diverse constituents that resulted in the list serve growing from 500 to 1,400 names. The creation of charter school support units and the proposed online community for sharing best practices reflect a commitment to continuous improvement and sharing best practices.

Weaknesses:

The application provides insufficient details as to steps, beyond increasing the reach of the list serve, which the State will take to ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of the CSP grants. In particular, the application does not mention efforts to reach families in languages other than English.

The application also lacks concrete objectives, timeline, and implementation strategy for the idea of developing an online learning community.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how the State's charter school law establishes an administrative relationship between charter schools 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 describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

Strengths:

Charter schools in Florida are governed by independent board of trustees and are afforded high degree of flexibility in nearly all decisions including budget, curriculum, and operations.

Weaknesses:

Charter schools do not have full flexibility over staffing because of state teaching certification requirements. In addition, charter schools are not independent LEAs and must receive their state and federal funding through the LEA, which may result in charter schools not always receiving their full allocation of funds.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Number of high-quality charters to be created**1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State (20 points).**

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new high-quality charter schools that will be authorized and opened in the State during the project period.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe, in detail, its charter school subgrant application and peer review processes, how the peer review process will assess quality, and how the SEA will ensure that only high-quality charter school applicants (as defined by the applicant) are selected for funding. States that have received grants under this program previously are invited to provide data on the percentages of eligible applicants that were awarded sub-grants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of applicants funded.

Strengths:

The state shows great success in growing the number of high-quality charter schools as evidenced by the 131 new charter schools created between 2008-11 as a result of CSP grants. The current proposal to create 250 new charter schools over 5 years is realistic given the state's record of executing upon an aggressive growth plan and the lack of a cap on charter schools. The application also provides assurance of a thorough assessment process within an accountability framework that ensures high quality. The subgrant process is well documented, including evidence of technical assistance, details about peer reviewers, and specific scoring rubric.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**1. Quality of the management plan (10 points). In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers (a) 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; and (b) 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 (20 U.S.C. 7221b (b) (2) (A) and (B) and 7221e(a)).**

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that have been identified in an audit or other monitoring review, as well as the steps taken to address such compliance issues or findings.

Strengths:

The application presents a thorough management work plan with clear objectives, timeline, roles and responsibilities, and metrics. The large and experienced staff (with exceptionally low turnover) charged with executing the management plan provides assurance that the team will have the appropriate expertise and context knowledge.

The application details specific procedures the state implemented to ensure that charter schools are aware of federal funds. It provides appropriate details as to the process to ensure that Title I funds reach traditional public schools and charter schools in the same manner.

Weaknesses:

The application was sparse in details regarding specific processes in place to ensure equitable dissemination of IDEA funds. (page e55-e57)

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - 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 (20 points).**

Strengths:

The state demonstrates experience in productively working with their LEA authorizers as exemplified by the creation of three standardized model forms that have been accepted by both the authorizers and charter school operators.

The state provides ample examples to illustrate its commitment to continuously improve upon its already strong processes and procedures to hold accountable their authorizing LEAs. The application effectively describes plans to partner with the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers to conduct a needs assessment and plans to conduct at least 4 technical assistance trainings focused on high quality authorizing.

The state is proactive in their strategies and describes plans to create a set of principles and standards for high quality authorizing in Florida. In addition, it is working on developing an online charter school monitoring system to aid authorizers because the state recognizes the importance of gaining efficiencies to address the limited bandwidth of authorizers in light of the growing charter schools sector.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Dissemination

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

General:

The application provides information which appropriately outlines the objectives of the dissemination grants and how the grants will drive improvement of student academic achievement. The process is supported by the use on a external

evaluator and utilizes a peer review process. However, the application was vague in the timeline for dissemination activities and the specific rubrics that would be tied to each of the objectives for the dissemination grants.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

1. (6a) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the quality of the dissemination activities (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

The application provides details about the objectives and processes for dissemination activities which are supported by the use on a external evaluator in addition to a peer review process. The application also provides adequate examples about the positive results of subgrants, such as the Local Instructional Improvement System, which was previously awarded.

Weaknesses:

However, the application was vague in timeline for dissemination activities and the specific rubrics that would be tied to each of the objectives for the dissemination grants. (pages e61-e65)

In addition, the state was not able to provide data to support its claim that past dissemination grants have resulted in growing the body of knowledge on charter school best practices. (page e66)

Reader's Score:

2. (6b) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204 (f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

The application provides information which appropriately outlines the objectives of the dissemination grants and how the grants will drive improvement of student academic achievement.

Weaknesses:

The state was not able to provide data to support its claim that past dissemination grants have resulted in improved student academic achievement. (page e66)

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. **Quality of the project evaluation (10 points).** 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 the 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 reasonably describes how the state will leverage its strong state wide longitudinal data system to support the project evaluation plan. The application provides adequate details on the data to be collected, the timeline, methods that will be used, how the data will be analyzed, as well as when the reports of results and outcomes will be available. The state also identified an external evaluator from the University of Florida College of Education to help support the internal team on the evaluation plan.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan was vague in the roles and responsibilities among the CSO and Florida Department of Education staff as it does not specify whom on the teams will be responsible for executing the specific activities in the plan. (page e72)

In addition, the application did not indicate any changes it plans to implement to ensure that the internal evaluation team is allocated the appropriate bandwidth to successfully execute upon the majority of the evaluation plan given that 16 of the 20 outcome measures will be analyzed internally. (page e68)

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. **Periodic Review and Evaluation (up to 10 points).** The State provides for periodic review and evaluation by the authorized public chartering agency of each charter school at least once every five years, unless required more frequently by State law, to determine whether the charter school is meeting the terms of the school's charter, and is meeting or exceeding the student academic achievement requirements and goals for charter schools as set forth under State law or the schools charter.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide information regarding whether the periodic review

that takes place at least once every five years includes a public vote on whether to terminate, extend, or renew a school's charter and on whether a failure to affirmatively renew or extend a schools charter during the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years would result in the charter school being closed.

Strengths:

Florida requires periodic review and evaluation of every charter school as part of the renewal process which occurs at least once every five years because charter schools are not eligible for contracts exceeding five years.

The application also provides details about the state requirement for annual review of charter schools through the charter school annual accountability report. The state statute has a sufficiently high standard for specific and measurable academic outcomes that takes into account student growth by capturing incoming baseline standard of student academic achievement.

The application also explains the requirement for a public meeting for any non-renewal vote.

Weaknesses:

The annual review process through the charter school annual accountability report does not specify review of non-academic data about the school's performance, such as financial stability, adherence to school charter, or strong governance. (page e0)

Likewise, it is unclear whether criteria such as family/parent satisfaction and evaluation of school governance are included in the formal contract renewal process. (page e1)

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

- 1. Number of High-Quality Charter Schools (up to 8 points). The State has demonstrated progress in increasing the number of high-quality charter schools that are held accountable in the terms of the school's charter for meeting clear and measurable objectives for the educational progress of the students attending the schools, in the period prior to the period for which an SEA applies for a grant under this competition.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide the following information: (1) its definition of a "high-quality charter school"; (2) the number of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the rate has changed over the past five years; and (3) the percentage of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the percentage has changed over the past five years.

Strengths:

The application provides concrete data demonstrating steady growth of charter schools in Florida over the past five years. Standards to define a high quality charter school is well established as a result of the Florida Legislature creating a statutory framework that codifies high quality standards for every charter school. The data showing a growth in the percentage of charter schools outperforming comparable traditional public schools is positive proof that quality of charter schools continue to grow as well. The application also provided evidence that the state closed 60 charter schools which did not meet academic-performance standards.

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide evidence of the state closing any charter schools as a result of non-academic reasons. It also does not provide examples of technical assistance or training to help low-performing charter schools improve. (page e4)

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency (LEA), or an Appeals Process (5 points). The State:

(a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

(b) In the case of a State in which LEA's are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

PLEASE NOTE: Reviewers must assign a score of 0 or 5, but nothing in between.

Strengths:

Select state universities may serve as authorized public chartering agencies. In addition, an appeals process exists with the Florida State Board of Education.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy (up to 5 points). The State ensures that each charter school has a high degree of autonomy over the charter school's budget and expenditures.

Strengths:

The application provides sufficient detail demonstrating the autonomy which charter schools are granted with independent charter school boards governing each school's budget, operations, and staffing decisions. The application also explains that charter schools are exempt from most of the policies and procedures of their LEA.

Weaknesses:

Staffing autonomy is not complete as a result of the teacher certification requirement for charter schools. In addition, funding for charter schools continue to flow through their LEA, thus limiting their direct access to state and federal funds.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates (up to 12 points). Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities (up to 3 points).

c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for English learners (up to 3 points).

(d) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high-poverty schools (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

Note: For each population of students for which the applicant is seeking competitive priority points, the Secretary invites the applicant to discuss the steps it would take to meet the priority. For example, the applicant could describe any guidance or support it would provide to charter school developers to assist such developers in recruiting and providing high-quality services to students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that they are taking effective and active steps to recruit and enroll students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served by such schools; or how it would design its subgrant competition, which may include the use of preferences, to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served at rates equal to or greater than such students are being served in other schools in the area.

General:

The partnership with the Charter School Growth Fund provides strong evidence of the state's commitment to build capacity of charter school management organizations and operators. The application described a well planned dissemination grant process focused on serving high poverty schools, rural areas, ELL students, and special education students. The particular example of the dissemination grant which focuses on demonstrated success in helping students attain early college credit through dual enrollment or advanced placement with a higher education institution is a feasible connection to directly improving college enrollment rates.

However, besides the partnership with the Charter School Growth Fund, the state relies primarily on the dissemination grants to drive academic growth for at-risk populations of students. The application lacks details as to how the dissemination of grants with such priority preferences will specifically accelerate learning and improve high school graduation rates for the targeted population of students. In addition, only 10 charter schools are set aside specifically to serve students in rural areas.

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to discuss how it would design its subgrant competition to meet this priority.

Strengths:

The application provides assurance that the state considers promoting diversity a priority by explaining the application requirement which asks applicants to describe the steps they will take to achieve racial and ethnic balance that is reflective of their communities. A data table comparing demographics of charter school students with traditional public school students provides evidence of the success of such a requirement. In addition, the application explains the technical assistance provided to charter schools to ensure their marketing and recruitment campaigns target diverse constituents.

Weaknesses:

The application lacks specific details as to how the plans to coordinate with the Department's Voluntary Public School Choice Grant infrastructure will directly promote diversity.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

- 1. Improving Productivity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcomes per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in the Federal Register Notice), or other strategies.**

Strengths:

The application provides information about the Villages Charter School (VCS) dissemination grant project that resulted in the development of an open educational resource that includes a data warehouse and data dashboard for teachers. It also describes intentions to work with the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers to develop an online charter school monitoring system to automate compliance responsibilities.

Weaknesses:

The continuation of the VCS dissemination grant is dependent upon a waiver not yet granted from United States Department of Education to allow a second dissemination grant for the charter school. In addition the application is sparse in details on the specific timeline for the partnership to create an online charter school monitoring system with the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/11/2011 02:33 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/13/2011 05:58 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting students in meeting standards		
1. Meeting standards	20	20
Flexibility Afforded by State Law		
1. Flexibility	20	19
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	10
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	19
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	9
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	110	107

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority

Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. Periodic Review and Eval 10 9

Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

1. High-quality charters 8 8

Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals 5 5

High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 5

Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 9

Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 5

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

4

Sub Total

50

45

Total

160

152

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - FY11 CSP SEA panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting students in meeting standards

1. (1) The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain how these objectives will be met, including steps that will be 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 administrative activities are extensive: training, technical assistance, development of documents useful to authorizers and charters, incentives and priorities, and effective measures.

The local assistance activities are designed to reach the targeted population with quality programs: additional funding, recruiting CMO's with track records of success, broad outreach to communities, partnerships, etc.

This is a model application that provides creative and comprehensive thinking, research based programs, alignment and integration across all aspects of the education community and components.

Weaknesses:

none noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how the State's charter school law establishes an administrative relationship between charter schools 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 describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

Strengths:

Florida has aligned its statute, principles, SEA practices, and funding to ensure that charter schools have almost complete flexibility, autonomy and accountability.

Weaknesses:

Florida charter schools lack of complete flexibility over teacher selection.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Number of high-quality charters to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State (20 points).

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new high-quality charter schools that will be authorized and opened in the State during the project period.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe, in detail, its charter school subgrant application and peer review processes, how the peer review process will assess quality, and how the SEA will ensure that only high-quality charter school applicants (as defined by the applicant) are selected for funding. States that have received grants under this program previously are invited to provide data on the percentages of eligible applicants that were awarded sub-grants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of applicants funded.

Strengths:

High Quality: The state has clear definitions of high quality, provides technical assistance and training to charter developers and authorizers, monitors for quality, and operates fiscal and programmatic systems that support quality.

Quantity: The growth of charters proposed matches the state's track record for rapid expansion.

The extremely detailed subgrant process ensures quality through a structured and high quality RFP, training and technical assistance provided prior to the submission of applications, published criteria and priority point information, selection of peer reviewers, and award of grants. It is unfortunate that the state has not requested adequate funding for every high quality application, given its thorough measurement of quality.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan (10 points). In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers (a) 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; and (b) 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 (20 U.S.C. 7221b (b) (2) (A) and (B) and 7221e(a)).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that have been identified in an audit or other monitoring review, as well as the steps taken to address such compliance issues or findings.

Strengths:

The management plan will be implemented by a seasoned and successful project director and long term office staff who have advanced Florida's CSP to its high quality reputation. The management plan in this application should serve as a model for every CSP application. It is thorough and well designed, and, provides existing and new staff with an excellent guide to managing the CSP.

Of note is the SEA's commitment to support the efficient and effective use of federal funds by providing business plan development and fiscal training to charter schools

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - 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 (20 points).**

Strengths:

Charter schools evaluate their authorizers!

The application clearly describes steps to promote authorizer accountability and to improve the way in which authorizers carry out the charter oversight function. The SEA will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and use that information to enhance its training plan. Recognizing that authorizers as well as charters are asked to do more with less, these efforts will continue to support and emphasize the role of high quality authorizing.

Weaknesses:

The application does not address what actions Florida will take toward authorizers, beyond its appeals process, who poorly perform or refuse to perform their authorizing duties.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Dissemination

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

General:

The application describes a well conceived dissemination grants program. Instead of leaving the content of projects up to the applicants, the SEA has identified seven dissemination topics, all tied to its RTTT goals or to advancing the goals of the federal CSP.

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

Sub Question

1. (6a) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the quality of the dissemination activities (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

The application describes the review process, the criteria, and the anticipated outcomes. It states its plan to seek a waiver to continue activities started in a previous cycle.

Weaknesses:

The description of the seven proposed projects may be too narrowly defined. Unless the state has already identified specific projects that address these dissemination priorities, there may not be schools prepared to carry out the projects as described. If schools have been identified that can do the work described in the application, the application should have provided this information.

Reader's Score:

2. (6b) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204 (f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

Because the dissemination grants will be aligned to other efforts and integrated with them, there is a high likelihood that they will have more than the usual impact of the CSP dissemination subgrants.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Quality of the project evaluation (10 points). 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 the 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 SEA has been prudent in examining its need for an external evaluator given the rigor, detail, and measures it has put in place for each aspect of the program, and instead outlines an internal review process for much of the work normally contracted out for evaluation. The application demonstrates leadership and an efficient use of the SEA's administrative resources by creating a narrow focus for the external evaluation.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. **Periodic Review and Evaluation (up to 10 points).** The State provides for periodic review and evaluation by the authorized public chartering agency of each charter school at least once every five years, unless required more frequently by State law, to determine whether the charter school is meeting the terms of the school's charter, and is meeting or exceeding the student academic achievement requirements and goals for charter schools as set forth under State law or the schools charter.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide information regarding whether the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years includes a public vote on whether to terminate, extend, or renew a school's charter and on whether a failure to affirmatively renew or extend a schools charter during the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years would result in the charter school being closed.

Strengths:

State statute requires a review at least once every 5 years, and requires that all charter schools and sponsors use a model contract developed by the state. Further statute requires an annual review of progress for each charter. The review is based on a model contract that contains specific, measurable objectives as well as other identified measures, assuring a high degree of transparency and clear communication on the standards to which the charter is being held.

Weaknesses:

The application defines a timeline for review and notice if renewal will not be recommended. The timeline for this notification is only 90 days before expiration of the charter and the uncertainty that such a short timeframe brings could impact student and teacher retention while the renewal decision is under appeal.

Reader's Score: 9

Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

1. **Number of High-Quality Charter Schools (up to 8 points).** The State has demonstrated progress in increasing the number of high-quality charter schools that are held accountable in the terms of the school's charter for meeting clear and measurable objectives for the educational progress of the students attending the schools, in the period prior to the period for which an SEA applies for a grant under this competition.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide the following information: (1) its definition of a "high-quality charter school"; (2) the number of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the rate has changed over the past five years; and (3) the percentage of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the percentage has changed over the past five years.

Strengths:

The state shows steady growth toward increasing both the number and quality of charters, and the application clearly explains the factors that contribute to both.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. **One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency (LEA), or an Appeals Process (5 points).** The State:

(a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

(b) In the case of a State in which LEA's are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

PLEASE NOTE: Reviewers must assign a score of 0 or 5, but nothing in between.

Strengths:

The state meets both (a) and (b)

Weaknesses:

none noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - High Degree of Autonomy

1. **High Degree of Autonomy (up to 5 points).** The State ensures that each charter school has a high degree of autonomy over the charter school's budget and expenditures.

Strengths:

The state provides for almost complete autonomy from its education code. Statute specifically guarantees autonomy over budgets and expenditures.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates**1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates (up to 12 points). Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:**

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities (up to 3 points).

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for English learners (up to 3 points).

(d) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high-poverty schools (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

Note: For each population of students for which the applicant is seeking competitive priority points, the Secretary invites the applicant to discuss the steps it would take to meet the priority. For example, the applicant could describe any guidance or support it would provide to charter school developers to assist such developers in recruiting and providing high-quality services to students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that they are taking effective and active steps to recruit and enroll students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served by such schools; or how it would design its subgrant competition, which may include the use of preferences, to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served at rates equal to or greater than such students are being served in other schools in the area.

General:

The SEA links its CSP efforts in this priority to its RTTT initiative, focusing its resources on these populations. Through performance points AND additional funding, it will ensure that CSP funds get to the feeder zones or neighborhoods of the state's persistently lowest achieving schools. (However, the targets are low....only 25 schools are targeted to reap these benefits.)

The department has partnered with the Charter Schools Growth Fund to further ensure that replicable, successful charter school models propose to schools in these areas. Concrete goals of the proposed Dissemination grants also will focus on sharing and implementing proven instructional strategies and raising graduation rates for each of the identified target populations.

Reader's Score: 9

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

- 1. Promoting Diversity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to discuss how it would design its subgrant competition to meet this priority.

Strengths:

Charter contracts must contain information on how diversity will be attained. The application provides a chart that shows strong diversity in charter school demographics that are very similar to the districts where schools are located. Finally the department provides technical assistance in effective student recruitment strategies.

Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

- 1. Improving Productivity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcomes per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in the Federal Register Notice), or other strategies.**

Strengths:

The SEA will use CSP funds to incentivize teacher evaluation systems and develop technology projects to assist in this effort.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the funds will be used to incentivize teacher evaluation programs to meet this priority preference, but the brief discussion of it demonstrates the state's interest in aligning its RTTT agenda to the CSP.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/13/2011 05:58 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/05/2011 09:41 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Reader #6: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting students in meeting standards		
1. Meeting standards	20	19
Flexibility Afforded by State Law		
1. Flexibility	20	19
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	12
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	8
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	19
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	8
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	9
Sub Total	110	94
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Periodic Review and Evaluation		
1. Periodic Review and Eval	10	10
Number of High-Quality Charter Schools		
1. High-quality charters	8	6
Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals	5	5
High Degree of Autonomy		
1. High Degree of Autonomy	5	5
Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates		
1. Achievement & grad rates	12	11
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	4
Improving Productivity		

1. Improving Productivity

5

3

Sub Total

50

44

Total

160

138

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - FY11 CSP SEA panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #6: *****

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting students in meeting standards

1. (1) The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain how these objectives will be met, including steps that will be 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:

Data provided includes overall performance as well as that of subgroups. The most recent Student Achievement Report showed that economically disadvantaged, African-American, Hispanic, and students with disabilities enrolled in the State's charter schools outperformed their traditional public school peers in reading and math at every grade level (elementary, middle, and high). Data is also provided that shows that a higher than state percentage of Hispanics are served in charter schools. Criteria for eligibility for additional funds for subgrants that target at risk students include being within the feeder zone of one or more of the State's Persistently Lowest Achieving schools, utilizing a Weighted lottery that gives preference to students that transfer from one of those schools, successfully enrolling and retaining at least 60% of students who either transfer from these schools or live within these zones, and demonstrate capacity to improve student achievement by partnership or record. Trainings will be conducted in areas with high concentrations of these schools.

Weaknesses:

Data is not provided related to socio-economic status of students attending state charter schools.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how the State's charter school law establishes an administrative relationship between charter schools 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 describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

Strengths:

The National Alliance of Public Charter Schools recently ranked Florida charter school law as the second strongest in the nation. Charter schools are exempt from the state education code except for statutes that deal specifically with charter schools; pertain to student assessment and school grading; pertain to services to students with disabilities; pertain to civil rights; and student health, safety, and welfare. Class size requirements are evaluated using school wide averages. Charter schools are explicitly exempt from the policies and procedures of the LEA.

Weaknesses:

No descriptions are provided related to waivers that have been granted by the State.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Number of high-quality charters to be created**1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State (20 points).**

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new high-quality charter schools that will be authorized and opened in the State during the project period.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe, in detail, its charter school subgrant application and peer review processes, how the peer review process will assess quality, and how the SEA will ensure that only high-quality charter school applicants (as defined by the applicant) are selected for funding. States that have received grants under this program previously are invited to provide data on the percentages of eligible applicants that were awarded sub-grants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of applicants funded.

Strengths:

The peer review process is well explained and includes training and score averaging. The RFP for subgrants includes governance, curriculum, instruction, assessment, accountability, business, finance, accounting, school leadership, management, special populations, and strategic plan.

Weaknesses:

The estimated creation of 250 charter schools within the next 5 years is unrealistic based on the history of the past 5 years. According to the chart on page 3, 124 were created during that time. Even if the 60 that were closed are added back in, that only totals 185, and these schools were closed for poor academic performance. Only 10% of the new schools are proposed to be within the feeder patterns of the persistently lowest achieving schools. It would strengthen the application to focus on developing fewer schools that are of higher quality. It is confusing that the State received 101 subgrant applications in 2010, when only 124 schools were started in 5 years, unless continuation subgrants were included. The application would also be strengthened by providing information related to the quality of applicants that have been funded through previous CSP grants.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**1. Quality of the management plan (10 points). In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers (a) 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; and (b) 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 (20 U.S.C. 7221b (b) (2) (A) and (B) and 7221e(a)).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that have been identified in an audit or other monitoring review, as well as the steps taken to address such compliance issues or findings.

Strengths:

The Project Director will remain the same. The management plan includes objectives, activities to support these objectives, lead staff, timelines, artifacts, and process performance measures. State statute requires that charter school students shall be provided federal funds for the same level of service provided students in traditional schools. It also requires that they be included in LEA requests for federal stimulus funds in the same manner as district operated schools.

Weaknesses:

The two WestEd monitoring visits are mentioned, and the statement is made that the staff provided over 6,000 pages of documentation for the most recent one, but no specifics are provided in the application related to how concerns from the first visit were addressed.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - 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 (20 points).**

Strengths:

The State recently added to the annual report a process for charter schools to evaluate the performance of the authorizer. Objective 2 of the grant specifically addresses improving the authorizing practices and capacity of LEAs. Three standardized model forms have been created (charter school application, charter school application evaluation instrument, and contract). The State plans to partner with the Association of Charter School Authorizers to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment focusing on their capacity to effectively monitor academic achievement and provide required services and supports. A comprehensive training plan will be developed based on this needs assessment. An online charter school monitoring system will also be developed.

Weaknesses:

The authorizing practices of the 2 State Universities are not addressed.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Dissemination

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

General:

The current dissemination subgrant process is targeted and designed to meet state priorities. The application would be strengthened by providing specifics related to previous dissemination projects that have been funded in the state.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

1. (6a) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the quality of the dissemination activities (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

A peer review process will be used as explained in the CSP subgrant process.

Weaknesses:

Qualifications for charter schools that can apply for dissemination projects are not provided.

Reader's Score:

2. (6b) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204 (f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

The proposed dissemination projects are specifically targeted and are based on improving student academic achievement as well as State priorities.

Weaknesses:

A strong case is not made for the extension of the current Villages Charter School grant. The statement is made that the State has had great experience with previous dissemination grants, but no description is provided to support this.

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Quality of the project evaluation (10 points). 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 the 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 plan for evaluation includes both internal (focusing on the activities and outcome measures) and external (focusing on broader questions) and is based on the experience of evaluating the current CSP grant and improving the process. The internal evaluation will include monthly reports as well as an annual report. All artifacts created by the internal evaluations will be provided to the external evaluators. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and analyzed. Quarterly meetings will be held to analyze progress and determine needed corrections.

Weaknesses:

It is unnecessary to include a 35 page curriculum vita for an evaluator whose name is not mentioned in the evaluation plan.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. **Periodic Review and Evaluation (up to 10 points).** The State provides for periodic review and evaluation by the authorized public chartering agency of each charter school at least once every five years, unless required more frequently by State law, to determine whether the charter school is meeting the terms of the school's charter, and is meeting or exceeding the student academic achievement requirements and goals for charter schools as set forth under State law or the schools charter.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide information regarding whether the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years includes a public vote on whether to terminate, extend, or renew a school's charter and on whether a failure to affirmatively renew or extend a schools charter during the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years would result in the charter school being closed.

Strengths:

By state statute, authorizers must review and evaluate each charter school annually. Charter school contracts must include specific and measurable academic outcomes that include the incoming baseline achievement levels as well as the methods of measurement. Charter schools that meet the terms of their contracts as well as standards of fiscal

management and participation in the state's academic accountability system are eligible for contract renewal. All meetings in which an authorizer takes official action must be public meetings. The school must be notified in writing at least 90 days prior to the expiration of a contract of the proposed action to renew or non-renew. Upon this receipt the school can request an informal hearing. Any charter contract can be terminated at any point if the authorizer can show insufficient progress in attaining the student achievement objectives and the unlikelihood that these can be achieved before the expiration of the charter.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

- 1. Number of High-Quality Charter Schools (up to 8 points). The State has demonstrated progress in increasing the number of high-quality charter schools that are held accountable in the terms of the school's charter for meeting clear and measurable objectives for the educational progress of the students attending the schools, in the period prior to the period for which an SEA applies for a grant under this competition.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide the following information: (1) its definition of a "high-quality charter school"; (2) the number of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the rate has changed over the past five years; and (3) the percentage of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the percentage has changed over the past five years.

Strengths:

The State has codified high-quality standards for charter schools that include student achievement, parent flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities, financial efficiency, informing parents of their child's progress, and an emphasis on low-performing students and reading. The State has closed over 60 charter schools in the past 5 years for academic performance related issues. The percentage of charter schools receiving annual grades of "A" or "B" from the state has increased from 53% to 71% in the past 8 years. This is based on student proficiency and learning gains in math, reading, science, and writing. The grades for high schools have recently been revised to include participation in accelerated learning options, graduation rates, industry certifications, and college readiness.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides the overall increase in numbers of schools (chart on page 3), and the State definition of "High Quality" (pages 4-5), but it does not provide the number of charter schools in the state that meet the full definition and how that has increased.

Reader's Score: 6

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

- 1. One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency (LEA), or an Appeals Process (5 points). The State:**

(a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

(b) In the case of a State in which LEA's are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

PLEASE NOTE: Reviewers must assign a score of 0 or 5, but nothing in between.

Strengths:

The State has multiple authorizers (LEAs and select state universities) as well as an appeals process through the Charter Schools Appeal Commission. Over the past 5 years approximately 20% of the appeals for application denials have been granted.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - High Degree of Autonomy

- 1. High Degree of Autonomy (up to 5 points). The State ensures that each charter school has a high degree of autonomy over the charter school's budget and expenditures.**

Strengths:

State statutes and regulations guarantee charter schools a high degree of autonomy over budgets and expenditures. Charter school statute explicitly states that the school is exempt from the policies and procedures of the LEA.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

- 1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates (up to 12 points). Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:**

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities (up to 3 points).

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for English learners (up to 3 points).

(d) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high-poverty schools (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

Note: For each population of students for which the applicant is seeking competitive priority points, the Secretary invites the applicant to discuss the steps it would take to meet the priority. For example, the applicant could describe any guidance or support it would provide to charter school developers to assist such developers in recruiting and providing high-quality services to students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that they are taking effective and active steps to recruit and enroll students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served by such schools; or how it would

design its subgrant competition, which may include the use of preferences, to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served at rates equal to or greater than such students are being served in other schools in the area.

General:

The Student Achievement Report for 2009-2010 showed that economically disadvantaged, African-American, Hispanic students, as well as students with disabilities enrolled in the State's charter schools outperformed their traditional public school peers in reading, math, and science at every grade level (elementary, middle, and high). Subgrant applications that operate in the feeder zones or neighborhoods of the State's persistently lowest achieving schools will receive preference points and additional funding. It is not clear how outreach to rural and low income school districts related to charter schools and the grant will result in increased enrollment in high quality charter schools unless the schools are located in those districts. Dissemination grants will focus on instructional practices that have proven effective with at risk students. One of the dissemination grants will focus on an eligible charter school that has demonstrated high levels of success in improving graduation rates particularly for at risk populations.

Reader's Score: 11

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

- 1. Promoting Diversity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to discuss how it would design its subgrant competition to meet this priority.

Strengths:

The State provides families with public school choice options, with an emphasis on families from underserved communities. Data from the 2009-2010 charter school demographics show a racial/ethnic/gender balance that is similar to that of traditional schools (except 6% lower White and 7% higher Hispanic).

Weaknesses:

Nothing is provided related to programming that promotes diversity, just enrollment.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

- 1. Improving Productivity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcomes per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in the Federal Register Notice), or other strategies.**

Strengths:

Grant funds will be used to incentivize charter schools that adopt teacher evaluation systems that are primarily based on student achievement. An online charter school monitoring system is being developed that will assist authorizers in monitoring duties and free up time for them to focus on academic achievement results.

Weaknesses:

It is not clear why the prior dissemination grant that developed an open educational resource has not already been made available. The executive summary referred to as being in the appendices is not there.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/05/2011 09:41 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/12/2011 10:35 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Reader #5: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting students in meeting standards		
1. Meeting standards	20	17
Flexibility Afforded by State Law		
1. Flexibility	20	16
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	18
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	7
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	20
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	9
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	7
	Sub Total	94
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Periodic Review and Evaluation		
1. Periodic Review and Eval	10	10
Number of High-Quality Charter Schools		
1. High-quality charters	8	8
Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals	5	5
High Degree of Autonomy		
1. High Degree of Autonomy	5	3
Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates		
1. Achievement & grad rates	12	7
Promoting Diversity		
1. Promoting Diversity	5	2
Improving Productivity		

1. Improving Productivity

5

4

Sub Total

50

39

Total

160

133

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - FY11 CSP SEA panel - 1: 84.282A

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: The Florida Department of Education (U282A110004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting students in meeting standards

1. (1) The contribution the charter schools grant program will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide a description of the objectives for the SEA's charter school grant program and to explain how these objectives will be met, including steps that will be 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 PLA/CSGF strategy should be helpful. The partnership with FACSA and the model contracts help authorizing. The applicant has an aggressive growth forecast. It has a clear outreach strategy.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The proportion of schools in the PLA strategy is low compared to the overall growth. There is no strategy to increase the supply of school operators to meet the aggressive goals.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA to charter schools under the State's charter school law (20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how the State's charter school law establishes an administrative relationship between charter schools 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 describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant provides operational autonomy to the schools.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The financial autonomy is limited and not addressed.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Number of high-quality charters to be created

1. The number of high-quality charter schools to be created in the State (20 points).

Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new high-quality charter schools that will be authorized and opened in the State during the project period.

The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe, in detail, its charter school subgrant application and peer review processes, how the peer review process will assess quality, and how the SEA will ensure that only high-quality charter school applicants (as defined by the applicant) are selected for funding. States that have received grants under this program previously are invited to provide data on the percentages of eligible applicants that were awarded sub-grants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of applicants funded.

Strengths:

Strengths

The growth rate is ambitious.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

More thought should be given to the development of a supply of operators and a more equal representation for the PLA schools. 10% is far less than the ~50% Title I population in the state.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan (10 points). In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers (a) 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; and (b) 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 (20 U.S.C. 7221b (b) (2) (A) and (B) and 7221e(a)).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that have been identified in an audit or other monitoring review, as well as the steps taken to address such compliance issues or findings.

Strengths:

Strengths

The management plan is thorough and descriptive with distinct outputs.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant does not list the remediations from the inspection. The management plan does not list overall quantitative results for the objectives.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - 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 (20 points).

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant has an oversight committee. The applicant has created standardized agreements for the authorizers. It is working with FACSA.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Dissemination

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

General:

Strengths

The applicant lists clear objectives for the dissemination grant. The applicant has a peer review process. The dissemination grants will be evaluated.

Weaknesses

The dissemination grants may be over-regulated and too prescribed, not allowing for flexibility and innovation beyond the imagination of the applicant.

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

1. (6a) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the quality of the dissemination activities (5 points).

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

Sub Question

will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant lists clear objectives for the dissemination grant. The applicant has a peer review process.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The dissemination grants may be over-regulated and too prescribed, not allowing for flexibility and innovation beyond the imagination of the applicant.

Reader's Score:

2. (6b) In the case of SEAs that propose to use grant funds to support dissemination activities under section 5204 (f)(6)(B) of the ESEA, the likelihood that those activities will improve student academic achievement (5 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the steps to be taken by the SEA to award these funds to eligible applicants, including a description of the peer review process the SEA will use to review applications for dissemination, the timelines for awarding such funds, and how the SEA will assess the quality of the applications. Applicants that have previously awarded dissemination subgrants under this program are encouraged to describe the outcomes of such subgrants and to identify any improvements to the applicant's processes for awarding and administering dissemination subgrants.

Strengths:

Strengths

The dissemination grants will be evaluated.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None

Reader's Score:

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. Quality of the project evaluation (10 points). 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 the 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 hybrid evaluation is more cost effective and provides more ownership. The evaluator is identified.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The evaluation plan requires a more thorough description of activities, analyses, and results.

Reader's Score: 7

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. Periodic Review and Evaluation (up to 10 points). The State provides for periodic review and evaluation by the authorized public chartering agency of each charter school at least once every five years, unless required more frequently by State law, to determine whether the charter school is meeting the terms of the school's charter, and is meeting or exceeding the student academic achievement requirements and goals for charter schools as set forth under State law or the schools charter.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide information regarding whether the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years includes a public vote on whether to terminate, extend, or renew a school's charter and on whether a failure to affirmatively renew or extend a schools charter during the periodic review that takes place at least once every five years would result in the charter school being closed.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant has a model contract for authorizers. It states each school must be evaluated each year. It also has a review process for every five years. The applicant has shown the ability to close schools.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None.

Reader's Score: 10

Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

1. **Number of High-Quality Charter Schools (up to 8 points).** The State has demonstrated progress in increasing the number of high-quality charter schools that are held accountable in the terms of the school's charter for meeting clear and measurable objectives for the educational progress of the students attending the schools, in the period prior to the period for which an SEA applies for a grant under this competition.

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to provide the following information: (1) its definition of a "high-quality charter school"; (2) the number of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the rate has changed over the past five years; and (3) the percentage of "high-quality charter schools" in the State and a description of how the percentage has changed over the past five years.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant does not have a cap and has aggressive growth. The schools are outperforming their peers.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None

Reader's Score: 8

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. **One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a Local Educational Agency (LEA), or an Appeals Process (5 points).** The State:

(a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

(b) In the case of a State in which LEA's are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

PLEASE NOTE: Reviewers must assign a score of 0 or 5, but nothing in between.

Strengths:

Strengths

There is an appeal process

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy (up to 5 points). The State ensures that each charter school has a high degree of autonomy over the charter school's budget and expenditures.

Strengths:

Strengths

There is a blanket waiver.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Funding is weak and there are teacher certification requirements.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates (up to 12 points). Projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities (up to 3 points).

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) and college enrollment rates for English learners (up to 3 points).

(d) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high-poverty schools (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) (up to 3 points).

Note: For each population of students for which the applicant is seeking competitive priority points, the Secretary invites the applicant to discuss the steps it would take to meet the priority. For example, the applicant could describe any guidance or support it would provide to charter school developers to assist such developers in recruiting and providing high-quality services to students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that they are taking effective and active steps to recruit and enroll students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served by such schools; or how it would design its subgrant competition, which may include the use of preferences, to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served at rates equal to or greater than such students are being served in other schools in the area.

General:

Strengths

The applicant has a PLA strategy. It is working with the CSGF. It is targeting dissemination grants.

Weaknesses

The proportion of schools in their PLA strategy is very small compared to the forecast growth. It does not list specific rural

strategies or ELL strategies. The dissemination grants are pre-determined and over regulated.

Reader's Score: 7

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

- 1. Promoting Diversity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.**

Note: The Secretary invites the applicant to discuss how it would design its subgrant competition to meet this priority.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant has preferential points, and has an effective outreach project.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant avoids the discussion about the lack of economic diversity.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Productivity

- 1. Improving Productivity (up to 5 points). Projects that are designed to significantly increase efficiency in the use of time, staff, money, or other resources while improving student learning or other educational outcomes (i.e., outcomes per unit of resource). Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of open educational resources (as defined in the Federal Register Notice), or other strategies.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant is creating a teacher effectiveness program. The applicant is promoting technology solutions through a dissemination grant.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

It is unclear how the teacher effectiveness program will result in more qualified teachers. There is no historical discussion about the effectiveness of the technology dissemination strategy. The executive summary of the dissemination grant was not in the appendix.

Reader's Score: 4

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