

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary Educati
Charter School Office (U282A110006)

Reader #1: *****

	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	15
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	10
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	17
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	4
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	9
Sub Total	110	82

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 4

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 5

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

	5	1
Sub Total	50	35
Total	160	117

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary
Education Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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:

Although caps limit effectiveness statewide, if all grant funds are expended in the lowest performing districts as indicated, the program will achieve the goals of the federal CSP to the grant project's full capacity.

The application is thorough, specific, and the state has a proven track record of implementing successful CSP projects.

Weaknesses:

The state has not removed its caps completely.

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:

Commonwealth schools have high degrees of autonomy to operate and manage all aspects of their schools.

Weaknesses:

In addition to the number of charter schools, the state also places a spending cap on allocation of funding to charters.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

Because the charter application is used as the sub grant application, the peer review process also informs SEA staff in charter selection. As the sole authorizer in the state, the vetting process for a charter creates a parallel between the determination of high quality charter and grant application, and it makes sense that 100% of approved charters will receive grant funds.

The application contains a detailed grant award process description.

Weaknesses:

Caps limit the number of charter schools that can be located in the most low performing districts.

Increases in charter school numbers have been stagnant even though multiple applications for charters are received.

Reader's Score: 10

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 chart provided in the application captures all activities described and identifies the responsible parties for completing the work.

The date for reporting estimates for new schools and expansions for existing schools is timed to ensure that funds reach schools within the required federal time frames.

The budget matches the management plan.

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:

The BESE has established a charter school subcommittee to review the new charter school statute, the charter granting process, and caps.

The BESE charter and grant process is transparent to the public.

The BESE conducts self assessments on its processes. Much of the evaluation plan proposed in the application will provide information to help the BESE improve processes.

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide information on what has been done to address recommendations of the charter school subcommittee.

Reader's Score: 17

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 small grant awards and limited time are not components of a robust dissemination program that will effectively yield improvement in other charter schools and non charter schools.

Reader's Score: 4

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The application states that grant proposals must have already identified partners.

Weaknesses:

Federal law requires that only high quality charter schools as defined by the state are eligible for dissemination grants, and may only receive one grant. The application claims to have 59 potentially eligible schools, but 38 of these schools have already received a grant leaving only 21 potentially eligible applicants. It suggests a waiver might be considered to allow schools to have a second grant. While this could be a potentially good idea, it suggests that there may not be 21 likely grant applicants proposing useful projects. Additionally, the state should be able to readily identify whether there are previous dissemination projects that were effective enough to be repeated.

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 cites feedback from a few previous recipients of dissemination activities provided by charter schools. (They do not provide data on whether the activities were replicated in their schools.)

Weaknesses:

Projects are for less than one year, leaving little time to develop effective strategies for dissemination that will result in the replication of best practices in recipient schools.

The application does not provide information on how it will evaluate effectiveness of projects.

The application cites a reason for seeking dissemination grant funds as being to help charters meet a condition of renewal to disseminate best practices.

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 evaluation is clearly explained and follows the technical assistance provided by ED.

Weaknesses:

Some of the analysis and reporting that will result in the evaluation plan (Objective one and two) are limited to data collection and contains little evaluation that will inform meaningful improvements.

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:

The application states that at the end of the first year of operation, all charter schools create an accountability plan to which they will be held accountable for the remainder of their charter term. This is based on a selection of the 31 indicators for quality.

The SEA conducts at least one site visit during the charter term to verify written reports.

It conducts a more rigorous site visit for renewal.

For renewal, charter schools submit a self assessment, and provide other information for the term of renewal.

Weaknesses:

none 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 application provides evidence of selecting charter applications that result in high quality charter schools. (The application reports that 89% of its current charters have this distinction).

Weaknesses:

Although the application states that it has lifted the cap on enrollments and funding in low performing districts, it has not removed the cap.

The application states that charters will only be approved in low performing districts.

The caps are as likely an indicator of the proposed number of new charter schools to be opened as a rigorous review process.

Reader's Score: 4

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 applicant meets (a).

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:

Commonwealth schools have a high degree of autonomy ensured by the state.

Weaknesses:

Horace Mann schools operate with autonomy once the charter is approved, but the conditions for approval limit charter decisions that provide complete control over staffing and other fiscal and programmatic design elements. The number of Horace Mann schools is currently small.

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:

The application does not address rural students and therefore the total score is based on 9 points possible. Again, points were deducted for caps which negatively impact the number of high quality charters in the state.

The application describes a 'buddy' system for pairing high quality charter schools with new schools having the same mission.

The application describes providing financial incentives to sub grantees for creating projects/charters that serve ELL, Special Education and High Poverty students.

The state had demonstrated increased graduation rates for each of the other three targeted population groups in some charter schools, but has not provided information regarding the graduation rate in all charters. The application also states that incentives for improving graduation rates will be given to non secondary schools, but does not provide information on how it will evaluate the effectiveness of non secondary schools in making graduation rate improvements.

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:

Sub grant applicants will be required to submit a recruitment and retention plan that contains deliberate strategies to ensure school demographics match sending district demographics, and additional grant funds will be awarded to the charter school if this objective is achieved.

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 application prioritizes funding to CMOs in an effort to create economies of scale along with proven academic success which may be beneficial but does not address the prompt.

Weaknesses:

There are no activities described in the application nor is there mention of any incentive or priority for sub grant applications to develop efficiencies.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/10/2011 01:10 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary Educati
Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	8
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	14
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	7
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	110	96

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 0

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 5

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

1

Sub Total

50

33

Total

160

129

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary
Education Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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:

MA's track record of targeting charters to serve educationally disadvantaged students is nationally recognized. The new amendments to the state charter law in 2010 take this a step farther. The state is implementing priorities for schools targeting educationally disadvantaged students and IT IS replicating and expanding its best (nationally recognized) operators.

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:

A great deal of flexibility is afforded Commonwealth charters and to a lesser degree Horace Mann charters. Schools are their own LEA and have budgetary control. There is flexibility around teacher credentialing (HQT) and the schools all have independent governing boards.

Weaknesses:

B/c Horace Mann charters receive less autonomy and control the applicant doesn't receive a perfect score since not all charters have the same autonomies.

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:

MA clearly has an impressive track record for growing a high-quality charter sector. It is clear with its solid authorizing in place and significant work to ensure quality applicants are approved it will do a good job growing more high-quality charters. Additionally, the new law's focus on growing the proven providers directly opens more seats in already successful charters. The applicant wisely relies on its high-quality authorizing process to screen all schools for CSP grants and if you are authorized you receive CSP support.

Weaknesses:

While the state did lift its charter cap, it still has a cap. Knowing the significant demand in MA for quality charter options the new cap will still deny high-quality options to students.

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 applicant has a track record of success with its CSP grant and has included an impressive timeline and mgmt plan. The applicant does an impressive job getting information to schools about federal funding and keeping schools informed of regulations and rules.

Weaknesses:

More details were needed on the improvements put in place post the most recent US Dept of Education monitoring report.

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:

MA's authorizing is routinely held up for its exemplary work.

Weaknesses:

The authorizer is focused on maintaining its current best in class practices, but fails to discuss how it plans to ensure it develops new ideas or quality controls? More attention should be placed on "staying ahead of the curve" as a quality authorizer.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

MA routinely taps this funding, citing that over two thirds of the states CS have tapped this funding. This begs the question if what is being disseminated is always worthwhile? The ELT efforts in MA have clearly been a successful dissemination, but others are not as noteworthy.

The steps to require partnerships between grantees and traditional districts is smart. The efforts to tie dissemination actions to actual student improvement is a positive addition and stems from the US Dept of Education monitoring visit.

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

Sub Question

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 comments.

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:

Although the contractors aren't directly identified, MA lays out a clear set of goals and projects for the contractors. The work that has been done in the past has led to great success too.

Weaknesses:

N/A

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:

MA's authorizing is nationally recognized for its exemplary nature. The state has been and continues to be a leader in monitoring of CS before renewal. The requirement for schools to APPLY for renewal, requiring a proactive step by charters is an excellent step to ensuring proactive and deserving charters are granted renewal. Schools file annual reports, and are required to conduct annual audits. The common metric to measure charters ensures generalizability as well as a common goal for CS to work towards, taking subjectivity in the review out of the process.

Weaknesses:

While clearly a leader in quality authorizing, MA has slowly reduced the number of site visits the authorizer makes over the years. Additionally, the volume of information collected is impressive, but is it always necessary and is it all being used?

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:

MA's rigorous and high-quality authorizing, all done by MA DoE, has led to an extremely high-quality charter sector. MA has routinely been recognized via external validators for having an extremely successful charter sector.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant does define high-quality, it seems odd that ALMOST all charters are deemed this classification. Yet, the state has another definition "proven provider," which seems more stringent.

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:

N/A

Weaknesses:

ALthough an excellent authorizer, MA DoE is the only authorizer and there isnt an appeals process.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

MA law provides CS a high-degree of autonomy for Commonwealth charters and to a lesser degree Horace Mann charter schools. Charters are all their own LEA, all have their own boards, all have control over their budgets, and have a varied degree of control over the types (credentialed vs not credentialed) teachers they can hire.

Weaknesses:

Horace Mann CS are not afforded as much autonomy as Commonwealth charters.

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 applicant did not discuss any efforts to meet criterion (a). The state amended its charter law focusing significant attention on these various categories of students, ensuring high-quality proven charter operators were targeting their services to these populations and goals. More information could have been provided on special education. The annual R and R plans are a significant step to ensuring diversity, combined with the 2010 amendments to its charter law, MA takes significant steps to ensure diversity in its schools and that those populations are well served.

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:

MA is a leader in promoting diversity in its charters and furthermore, ensuring those populations are well served in the charter schools.

Weaknesses:

N/A

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 2010 amendments to the state charter law focus on replicating and expanding proven charters. Additionally, the BESE is focused on forming home-grown charter management organizations that can build economies of scale and improve efficiency.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's law prohibits virtual schooling and as such it can't engage in this clear opportunity for efficiency in schooling. The applicant fails to mention any real areas for efficiency or specifics on how it hopes to accomplish this goal.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/10/2011 01:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/11/2011 02:34 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary Educati
Charter School Office (U282A110006)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting students in meeting standards		
1. Meeting standards	20	18
Flexibility Afforded by State Law		
1. Flexibility	20	15
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	17
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	10
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	17
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	6
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	110	93

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 7

Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals 5 0

High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 2

Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 7

Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 5

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

2

Sub Total

50

33

Total

160

126

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary
Education Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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 application provides complete data to demonstrate that charter schools in Massachusetts enroll higher percentage of minority and low income students and that charter schools have effectively assisted educationally disadvantaged students to meet academic standards.

The application identifies the Harvard Study, Student Achievement in Massachusetts' Charter Schools, to support the conclusion that charter schools are particularly effective in serving minority and low income students.

Weaknesses:

The application is ambiguous as to whether or not the best practices guide of charter school dissemination projects are effectively reaching their intended audiences. It does not provide any information on training, meetings, or programs to support the implementation of the best practices referenced in the publications.

Reader's Score: 18

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 Massachusetts all have independent governing boards with flexibility to design and to operate their schools. Commonwealth charter schools have full flexibility in managing all aspects of the school including staffing, length of school day, and budget.

Weaknesses:

Horace Mann charter schools must negotiate with the local school districts in order to be exempted from local rules including collective bargaining. They are not automatically afforded flexibility in core aspects in managing the school including staffing and length of school day.

Reader's Score: 15

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 provides evidence that it has been effective in incrementally growing the number of charter schools as well as the number of students served by charter schools every year since 2000.

The state's commitment to ensuring that all new charter schools are high-quality charter schools is supported by the thorough subgrant application process that is aligned with the original charter application process, thus justifying that 100% of new charter schools will be recipients of USED CSP grants. The review process ensures ample opportunity for public comments through written feedback and/or public hearings.

Weaknesses:

The existence of caps on charter schools in Massachusetts is a part of the reason why charter schools have not grown at the necessary rate to be able to meet the demand.

The role of the reviewers in the subgrant process is solely advisory, thus giving the Commission the sole authority to make the final determination as to which applicants are invited to submit final applications as well as which applicants qualify for proven provider status. This decision structure runs a risk of applicants potentially being unfairly denied based on the evaluation of one individual.

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:

The application presents a management plan with a well thought out timeline, clear roles and responsibilities, and appropriate milestones.

The application provides details about planned trainings to ensure all charter schools are aware of availability of federal funds and are especially knowledgeable to be in compliance with the rules of Title I and IDEA. The qualifications of the individuals charged with overseeing the project are aligned well with the work proposed.

The application also shows success in responding appropriately to the recommendations from the USED monitoring review.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The application describes a high level of accountability built into the only authorized public chartering agency in the state. The US Department of Education's recognition of the state as one of the nation's highest quality charter school authorizers is referenced to provide evidence of the success of the chartering agency.

The application identifies several new policies it has successfully instituted in recent years to achieve greater efficiencies.

Weaknesses:

The application lacked adequate details as to how it plans to effectively meet the expected significant increase in the number of charter schools it will need to approve and monitor across the next few years. (page e43)

The application also fails to mention specific professional development programs for staff for continuous development.

Reader's Score: 17

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 demonstrates significant improvement in ensuring that dissemination projects designed to document and share the success of charter schools are developed in a manner that would have strong impact by requiring an established partnership with a public district or a school prior to receiving dissemination funds. However, the application does not make a direct connection as to how the dissemination activities will lead to improving student academic achievement.

Reader's Score: 6

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 state demonstrates significant progress in improving its dissemination plan, particularly in clarifying the rubric to be utilized. The new requirement for a charter school to first establish a partnership with a public district or school ensures that the dissemination funds will be fully utilized to share best practices.

The state also demonstrates thoughtful planning by putting in place guidelines that would avoid funding of duplicate activities.

The application provided appropriate details regarding the timeline and peer review process.

Weaknesses:

The application does not provide details as to the frequency and nature of the technical assistance trainings it plans to conduct to help increase awareness of the grants.

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The application provides good examples of past dissemination grant projects which focused on sharing best practices (such models for expanded learning time) that would lead to improving academic achievement.

Weaknesses:

The application did not make any direct connection between the dissemination activities and their impact on improving student academic achievement.

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 presents an evaluation plan that includes well organized project objectives, benchmarks, data to be collected, the methods that will be used, and how the data will be analyzed. The plan identifies several potential evaluators and also describes plans for continuing work with RMC Research and the Clarus Group.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

The application provides details about a clear review and evaluation process that holds charter schools accountable to high quality. The Charter School Performance Criteria includes 31 measurable metrics. The ESE also requires each school to submit an accountability plan prior to the start of the second year of operations.

The state ensures that charter schools, at minimum, submit an annual report and that the ESE conducts a site visit to each school during its second year as well as the 5th year.

The application provides thorough guidelines on the actions that will take place during the two to four-days high stakes Renewal Inspection which demonstrates the state's commitment to ensure that only high quality charters are renewed.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 application specifies that the state uses 31 criteria in its Common School Performance Criteria to define high-quality charter schools.

The state also increased its cap on charter schools recently, allowing for the number of seats made available in the state's lowest performing districts to double from 9% to 18% over the next six years.

The application also provides evidence that the state continues to make efforts to intervene with schools that are at risk of not meeting the standards which define high quality charter schools.

Weaknesses:

The cap on charter schools that existed until the recent change yielded only 5 new charter schools added in the last few years, thus making it inconsistent with the notion of progress in increasing the number of high quality charters. The

revised cap to allow for more seats is still a modest change that will take 6 years to double, resulting in only limited growth each year.

The application does not provide specific data on the actual number and percentage of high quality charters and how that has changed across the last 5 years.

Reader's Score: 7

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The DOE is the only authorized chartering agency and there is not an appeals process in place.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

Both the Commonwealth and Horace Mann charters are independent LEAs which are governed by an independent board of trustees. Commonwealth charter schools essentially operate fully autonomously in regards to all aspects of the school including budget, staffing, operations, and curriculum.

Weaknesses:

The application provides details about how Horace Mann charter schools lack significant autonomy as evidenced by the fact that they must have their charter applications approved by the local school committee and, in some cases, local teachers' union. (page e9)

In addition Horace Mann charter schools must negotiate with their school committees as well as collective bargaining units in order to be exempt from certain provisions in local collective bargaining agreements such as work hours and hiring policies. (page e9)

Reader's Score: 2

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 application describes in detail the requirement that all Massachusetts charter schools develop and implement a recruitment and retention plan with strategies to attract, enroll, and retain a student population comparable to the sending districts as well as addressing priorities to serve students with disabilities, English learners, and students from high poverty districts.

The application also presents several relevant examples of applicant groups which were recently awarded charters based on their mission and vision to serve target student populations.

However, the application does not make any mention of a competitive priority to serve students from rural areas. It also does not elaborate on how the strategies described will directly accelerate the learning and improve graduate rates for ELL and special education students.

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:

The requirement that ESE provides charter schools with race/ethnicity data showing the range of student subgroup enrollment in the sending district(s) schools enables charter schools to effectively create the required recruitment and retention plans with specific strategies to recruit, matriculate, and retain a student population reflective of the sending district schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 application explains the recent Massachusetts statute created to prioritize charter applicants qualified as "proven providers" because their experience in operating charter schools well have the potential to significantly increase efficiency and effectiveness in the launch of a new charter school.

Weaknesses:

The application does not make direct connections as to the specific efficiency gains that would result from working with a proven provider.

The application also does not mention any innovative use of technology, staffing, scheduling, or resources.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/11/2011 02:34 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/12/2011 07:25 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary Educati
Charter School Office (U282A110006)

Reader #4: *****

	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	15
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	17
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	10
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	18
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	9
Sub Total	110	96

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 7

Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals 5 0

High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 3

Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 9

Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 4

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

4

Sub Total

50

35

Total

160

131

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #4: *****

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary
Education Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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 application demonstrates that the state statute addresses the issue that charter schools should be opened in poor performing districts and targeted areas are identified for expansion.

Strong objectives for the grant were outlined.

Excellent communication and marketing strategy is presented in the application.

Weaknesses:

Further explanation needed regarding concrete strategies for recruiting school groups to open charters in poor performing/targeted areas.

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:

Strong evidence of the flexibility afforded to Commonwealth charter schools.

The inclusion of a rigorous accountability plan is essential.

The application presents the freedoms provided to charter schools.

Weaknesses:

The lack of flexibility afforded to Horace Mann charter schools is restrictive and prohibits the schools from having true autonomy.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

A reasonable expansion plan is provided in the application.
The increase in the state's spending cap will assist in the creation and replication of high quality charter schools.
Removal of statewide cap on charter schools will assist in the development and expansion of high quality charter schools

Weaknesses:

The application provided evidence that some districts are still resistant to charter schools.
No evidence was provided regarding how expansion of Commonwealth charter schools rather than Horace Mann charter schools will be encouraged.

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:

The application outlines a strong management plan.
Adequate staff will support charter schools in the state as well as the facilitation of the CSP grant.
The table provides a clear picture of timelines and tasks.
The management plan ensures that effective training and development will be provided to existing and new school groups.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

The application provides evidence of the high quality of authorizing provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

High standards were outlined and evidence was provided regarding the CSO's ability to meet those standards.

The application demonstrates successful activities and technical assistance that has been provided to charter schools and the ability of the CSO to continue this high quality of professional development.

Weaknesses:

The state does not currently allow for multiple authorizers.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

Massachusetts has demonstrated the ability to use grant funds to share information with schools within the state.

A strong dissemination grant process exists.

Good examples of dissemination projects were provided.

Reader's Score: 10

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

Evidence and examples of high quality dissemination projects were provided.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

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:

Examples were provided regarding the direct correlation between dissemination activities and improved student achievement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 application provided an extensive outline of the evaluation activities and timelines to be included throughout the grant.

An extensive list of the project objectives and type of data to be collected was included as well as the methodology to be used.

Several high quality evaluation groups were listed as possible options to use to conduct the evaluation process.

Described how the data collected will be used to inform future decisions.

Weaknesses:

The application indicated that an evaluator could not be identified at this time however several evaluators were identified as under consideration for this work. Is it appropriate to list the groups before the decision could be made?

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:

Application indicated that a review is conducted in a comprehensive high quality process.

The site visit at year two is an excellent strategy.

Weaknesses:

The application indicates that a review must be conducted every 5 years-this does not seem soon enough in the process to determine whether the charter school is experiencing any problems and/or successes.

The application also indicates that a site visit is conducted every 2 years and "maybe" in year 3. It may be helpful to have a more definitive process with a timeline outlined for each school.

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:

Replication is included in state statute.

A rigorous application process exists and is based on the 31 criteria used to define high quality. Renewal is based on meeting the high quality definition and meeting the 31 criteria.

Evidence is provided regarding the state's willingness to close schools and a probation process exists.

Weaknesses:

Growth seems slower than what may be needed in the state.

The cap on charter schools has prohibited the growth of schools in Massachusetts.

Reader's Score: 7

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:

No strengths notes

Weaknesses:

State is the only authorizer and no appeal process exists.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

Evidence is provided regarding the autonomy provided to Commonwealth charters in all aspects of the school's operation.

Strong support regarding the independent nature of the Commonwealth charter schools.

All funds flow directly from BESE to the school for the Commonwealth charters.

Weaknesses:

Collective bargaining allowed in Horace Mann schools may be restrictive to having a high degree of autonomy. Horace Mann schools do not appear to have the same level of high autonomy provided to Commonwealth charter schools.

Approval by the local teacher's union may be problematic in opening charter schools.

The application describes the negotiations that must occur with local districts regarding budget decisions. This may limit autonomy of the school to make budgetary decisions.

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:

The application did not address any improvement of high school graduation in rural areas.

The application did adequately address the strategies to be used in helping to improve the graduation rate of students with disabilities.

Strong evidence was provided to describe how the high school graduation rate will improve for English Language Learners.

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:

The application includes details regarding the recruitment and retention plans required as part of the charter application process so that a diverse population is attracted.

Weaknesses:

The application did not provide adequate information regarding how ELL and Special Education students will be recruited and retained.

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 strong evidence of how productivity will be effective and efficient through the use of networks and proven providers.

Weaknesses:

The application did not provide evidence of the use or type of technology that will be included to address productivity. Additional details are needed regarding the implementation of virtual schools.

No examples were provided regarding how the new school applications will address this priority.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/12/2011 07:25 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/06/2011 11:58 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary Educati
Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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	17
Number of high-quality charters to be created		
1. Charters to be created	20	8
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management plan	10	10
Authorizer Accountability		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	16
Dissemination		
1. Dissemination	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	110	88

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 4

Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals 5 0

High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 4

Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 10

Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 3

Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

	5	3
Sub Total	50	34
Total	160	122

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #5: *****

Applicant: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education -- Elementary & Secondary
Education Charter School Office (U282A110006)

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

Applicant lists quality attributes to measure the success of schools. The applicant prioritizes schools for low income students. The applicant has a defined outreach plan and is closely working with the state charter support organization.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant has set a less than ambitious number of new schools to be opened in 3 years.

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 Commonwealth Schools provide substantial freedoms.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant does not have a blanket law. The Horace Mann schools have limited freedoms

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:

Strengths

The cap was lifted. The school evaluation is thorough.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The growth in schools is limited to 1% per year.

Reader's Score: 8

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 reflects prior comments. The applicant provides a thorough list of specific objectives and timelines.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None

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:

Strengths

The applicant has decentralized some decision making such as renewals and improved some regulations such as temporary debt to improve efficiencies.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant can only hold itself accountable and that leads to conflicts of interest. There is more room for improvement

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:

Strengths

The applicant lists data driven requirements of the dissemination grant. Prior experience was used to define this application. The applicant has a peer review process.

Weaknesses

None

Reader's Score: 10

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

Sub Question

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 data driven requirements of the dissemination grant. The applicant has a peer review process.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

None identified

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 success of prior experience was used to define this application.

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 blind assignment study is helpful. The post study on dissemination is helpful. The evaluation plan is thorough.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses identified

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:

Strengths

The applicant has a review process every five years and visits schools more frequently. The applicant has shown the ability to close schools. The applicant has a thorough review process.

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 has raised their cap. The applicant has quality descriptors in their evaluations.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant has a cap that grows very slowly 1% per year.

Reader's Score: 4

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

None

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No Appeal.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Commonwealth charter schools have high degree of flexibility through waivers.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No blanket waiver. Horace Mann schools have limited freedom.

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:

Strengths

The applicant encourages schools to create plans that recruit similar school populations to the districts. The school district must provide student information to aid in recruiting. The school must promote in multiple languages.

Weaknesses

There is less focus on rural schools

Reader's Score: 10

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 requires the school to prepare strategies.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant leaves the strategies up to the school.

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:

Strengths

Focus on proven providers

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Does not allow virtual schools.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/06/2011 11:58 AM