

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

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice  
(U282A110015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Assisting students in meeting standards</b>		
1. Meeting standards	20	20
<b>Flexibility Afforded by State Law</b>		
1. Flexibility	20	15
<b>Number of high-quality charters to be created</b>		
1. Charters to be created	20	17
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management plan	10	9
<b>Authorizer Accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	18
<b>Dissemination</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	8
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>97</b>

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority

##### Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. Periodic Review and Eval 10 7

##### 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 3

##### Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 8

##### Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 4

##### Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

4

**Sub Total**

50

32

**Total**

160

129

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice (U282A110015)

## 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 emphasis on replicating already successful charters in NJ as well as the focus on serving educationally disadvantaged students via its application process demonstrates a strong state commitment to this goal. And, the state's goal to actively recruit high-quality operators with previous experience, i.e. Mastery to Camden, is another proof point for their commitment to this goal. The goal to utilize state owned facilities for charters is noteworthy. And, the inclusion of actual metrics to measure their activities demonstrates a thoughtful approach to accurately measure their activities.

#### 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:

Charters in NJ receive a good deal of autonomy. The applicant is clear in a number of areas around autonomy including budgeting, scheduling, and staffing.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant discusses the current waiver process in NJ and the goal to ultimately enable charters with a blanket waiver from regulations traditional public schools face. For instance, NJ Teachers must still be HQT. And, there are still according to the state law certain restrictions around charters setting pay for teachers dependent upon the current pay scale of the district they are located in for conversion charter schools.

**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:**

NJ has an ambitious goal for charter growth, hoping to open 45-60 new high-quality charters a year over the three year grant on top of the expansion and replication of existing successful models. The subgrant competition is designed well and includes a peer review process with an in-person interview. Combined with the answers from previous questions about recruitment of CMOs from other jurisdictions and the outreach to communities to inform them of the CSP opportunity, NJ has a strong plan for opening more high-quality charter operators.

**Weaknesses:**

NJ's growth goals seem a bit ambitious compared to the historical averages in the state.

**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 applicant has a thorough timeline for activities for carrying out the grant. The applicant included the plan for a redesigned charter school office at the NJDOE, demonstrating a commitment to charters and effective oversight.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant doesn't really discuss in the narrative its plan for informing charters in the state about federal funding; however, the applicant has thoroughly addressed this in other questions.

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Selection Criteria - Authorizer Accountability**

- 1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools (20 points).**

**Strengths:**

NJDOE has already taken steps to improve its charter authorizing. Beyond taking the actions to improve, the application clearly demonstrates a commitment to improvement in authorizing. The current work with NACSA is a proof point for this commitment. The applicant discussed its hopes for working with new authorizers to ensure quality authorizing is implemented too.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no ultimate accountability for NJDOE as an authorizer. Although it demonstrates a commitment to quality, a political change could alter that action. As the application highlights the current strong support from the Christie Administration, that could change with the next Administration.

**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:**

NJ wisely includes a method for sharing their dissemination grant beyond just immediate entities impacted by a dissemination grant, taking a step to broaden the grant's impacts. The dissemination grants were also tied to the earlier CSP grant goals for students and this will create a cycle of information informing the NJDOE: learning from their best charters about key issues and implementing those lessons in other charters or with new charters.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Sub Question**

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

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

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

The activities outlined here seem targeted and well thought out, especially the alignment to other grant priorities. The fact the SEA plans to study the activities and distribute its findings is a smart step to ensure lessons learned can be shared far and wide.

### Weaknesses:

The application does not talk about the review process here for selecting the dissemination subgrantees, although it has mentioned before it will use a peer-review process.

### 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:

It seems the focus on key areas for the grant will reinforce other activities the SEA is undertaking with its CSP grant.

### Weaknesses:

The applicant is vague on specific activities, although it has talked about goals and metrics in other questions.

### 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:**

Very thought out, especially in comparison to other states. The provided chart includes thoughtful points and specific dates for completion.

**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:**

NJ law is thorough on evaluation and the process for charter revocation. The ability for the Commissioner to place charters on probation and the annual monitoring ensures charters are yearly monitored, including site visits, before they "fail." The annual reporting, including financial reporting provides a wealth of information.

**Weaknesses:**

Although a number of reports and data is provided to the SEA and its employees, there is limited discussion of what they do with that data to ensure quality charters operate in the state. Are they engaging currently with schools before they are up for renewal if they are not a success forcibly?

**Reader's Score: 7**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The state clearly has a large number of exemplary charter schools. As the sole authorizer, it is doing an effective job starting high-quality schools. The efforts to recruit outside CMOs that are nationally recognized as excellent further demonstrates the SEAs commitment to growing quality operators (same with their plan to replicate and expand existing high-quality operators). The applicant has successfully dramatically improved its authorizing practices over the last 48 months, leading to an even better process for starting successful charter schools. And, the work with failed applicants demonstrates a strong effort to see applicants succeed, but only if they are quality. The SEA plays an active role providing data to schools, enabling schools to respond to deficiencies.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide a clear definition for high-quality. There is not any information on the rate of change for high-quality charters over the previous years.

**Reader's Score: 6**

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

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

The state's only authorizer is NJDOE which clearly is committed to quality charter authorizing.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states it does have an appeals process, but the state charter law is silent on this. The applicant instead lists the alternative approach which is technically an ability for anyone, to sue an entity for an appeal. This is not an appeals process to another charter authorizing body, but to another governmental body hoping it can overturn the LEA.

**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:**

NJ's law provides certain types of charters with a fair amount of autonomy. Additionally, it requires independent governing boards to oversee the schools. The applicant lists a number of areas charters due have control over, including budgeting, curriculum, and payment of staffing.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant didnt mention some of the limitation of NJ's law, including limiting even what schools can name themselves if affiliated with a CMO. Teachers are still required to be credentialed in the state and fall under the HQT requirements of NCLB. Conversion charters are also faced with additional requirements and regulations, including certain limitations in payment for teachers. Furthermore, the current Administration has proposed legislation granting charters blanket waivers, indicating the Administration recognizes charters in the state lack certain autonomies and freedoms that the schools are granted in other states.

**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 applicant lacks any rural areas so it cant be granted any points under criterion (a). NJ is making impressive steps to ensure charters effectively serve special education students, including by authorizing specific purposed schools around this need. The inclusion of data around enrolled students shows the SEA is aware of the problem and focused on addressing the issue.

**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:**

As the only authorizer, NJDOE is in the position to ensure applicants in their approval stage think about diversity. The application states this is a priority of NJDOE. Additionally, the applicant provides examples of multiple open or opening charter schools demonstrating a commitment to diversity.

**Weaknesses:**

NJ does require transportation for students from sending districts and it would have benefited the applicant to mention this or to think about how that can be used in their efforts to ensure schools are diverse. Additionally, in the state charter law it explicitly mentions diversity as a goal for schools, it would have been helpful to have this statutory provision included: "The admission policy of the charter school shall, to the maximum extent practicable, seek the enrollment of a cross section of the community's school age population including racial and academic factors."

**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 applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to improving productivity. NJ has authorized two virtual charters and two blended charters, which are leading the way on efficient delivery of charter schooling nationally. Additionally, the applicant highlights how charters are able to control their own budgets and use those to more efficiently design their schools, including with staffing.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant didn't get a perfect score because in certain areas it failed to make the direct connection between the item or facts listed and an improvement in productivity. Additionally, while it is great to see data on charters expenditures, it is difficult to make that a positive because that also means charters in NJ receive less per pupil funding than traditional public schools.

**Reader's Score:** 4

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 04/15/2011 11:50 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/12/2011 11:19 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice  
(U282A110015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Assisting students in meeting standards</b>		
1. Meeting standards	20	18
<b>Flexibility Afforded by State Law</b>		
1. Flexibility	20	19
<b>Number of high-quality charters to be created</b>		
1. Charters to be created	20	17
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management plan	10	10
<b>Authorizer Accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	18
<b>Dissemination</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	7
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project evaluation	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>98</b>

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority

##### Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. Periodic Review and Eval 10 7

##### 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 5

##### Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 9

##### Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 5

##### Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

	5	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	50	37
<b>Total</b>	160	135

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice (U282A110015)

## 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:

Provides assurances that the charter school grant program will be designed to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students.

Expansion subgrant process was clearly outlined and a strong emphasis will be placed on expanding to areas of greatest need.

High level of funding will be available to support expansion.

#### Weaknesses:

Additional details were needed regarding communication strategies to be used.

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:

Evidence indicates that a high degree of flexibility is afforded to charter schools in New Jersey.

A clear outline was given which demonstrated the types and levels of authority available to charter schools.

The application provides examples of fiscal flexibility and autonomy.

**Weaknesses:**

Did not provide evidence regarding the specific waivers that are provided to charter schools.

**Reader's Score: 19**

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

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

The creation of 45-60 schools during the duration of the grant seems reasonable and obtainable.

Details were included which outlined the areas that sub grant applicants must address. The details were adequate and addressed the requirements.

**Weaknesses:**

Additional details needed regarding the application process to be used to award sub-grants.

No clear evidence or details were given regarding the peer review process to be used.

**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:**

A Comprehensive timeline of activities to be conducted during the duration of the grant was provided.

Evidence that the management plan is designed to promote quality and achievement of the project objectives.

The chart of activities and timelines was well designed and provided assurances regarding staff and timelines.

**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 indicated an intent by the state to support legislation to add multiple authorizers. Evidence provided that the NJDOE has worked closely with NACSA to become a high quality authorizer. Steps have been taken with NACSA to develop best practices, technical assistance and charter documents. NJDOE provided evidences indicating a strong commitment to quality.

**Weaknesses:**

NJDOE is currently the only authorizer. No evidence provided that the legislature will pass the bill for multiple authorizer. It was difficult to determine from the information provided whether the changes would remain if the current administration were to leave.

**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:**

Additional details were needed to determine whether the dissemination application and award process was comprehensive. Examples were provided of strong strategies used to place resources on line for use by all schools in the state. NJDOE indicated that dissemination funding will be used to share successes in order to expand high quality work in the state.

**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**

#### Sub Question

**administering dissemination subgrants.**

#### **Strengths:**

No strengths noted

#### **Weaknesses:**

This section should include additional details outlining the direct connection between dissemination activities and how these activities will improve student achievement.

#### **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:**

Indications that the dissemination grants will be used to identify successful charter schools and to use the experiences of these schools in expanding high quality work throughout all charter schools.

#### **Weaknesses:**

A peer review process was not outlined.

#### **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:**

Sufficient details were provided to demonstrate a comprehensive evaluation process. The chart clearly outlined the activities, data sources to be used, methodology of the evaluation and the type of reports to be submitted at the conclusion of the evaluation.

Evidence also was provided regarding how the outcome of the evaluation would be used to inform future grant processes and procedures.

**Weaknesses:**

Additional details on how the results would be communicated to stakeholders were not present in the application document.

**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:**

Provides a comprehensive list of the areas to be assessed and evaluated.

Demonstrates that schools have been placed on probation as a result of mid-charter evaluations.

Good steps are included as part of the renewal evaluation process. The site visit and classroom observations are a strength.

Probation process is a significant and important component.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not specify what happens after the evaluations occur, only that the reviews were ongoing.

Comprehensive reviews are only conducted at the time of renewal. Evidence is needed that additional reviews may be conducted.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**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 applicant has done extensive work on improving the application process and has provided evidence on the requirements necessary for a new charter applicant.

Strong support and evidence of the NACSA model application process being used.

The state demonstrates its willingness to close and put on probation poor performing schools.

Evidence is provided regarding comprehensive strategies used in the review process.

**Weaknesses:**

Definition of high performing could not be found in the document.

Several criteria of high performing were given but not an exact definition.

**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 strength were noted.

**Weaknesses:**

NJDOE is the only authorizer.

An appeals process which requires that the appeal be made to the Supreme Court seems like an onerous process and extremely costly for school developers.

There was a lack of details regarding the 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:**

The application indicates that waivers from specific rules and regulations are allowed. Demonstrated commitment to allowing charter schools to be autonomous from the district in which they are located. Specific examples were provided regarding the ways in which New Jersey charter schools maintain their autonomy.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**General:**

Rural areas do not exist in New Jersey therefore expansion into rural areas are unrealistic.

Evidence is given that the State committed to expanding charters into all areas of the state.

The application demonstrated that there is an understanding regarding the lack of school options available to special education students and understand that this issue needs to be addressed.

Specific examples were provided on charter school education special education students.

Strong focus on educating ELL students.

Outlined that applications must include how ELL populations will be educated.

Aware of problems and taking steps to improve the problems.

Good examples of how some charters in the state are demonstrating improvement in these areas.

**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:**

Details were provided regarding the process for creating recruitment materials in a variety of languages. This is a strong component of the application.

The state will make applications with a unique diversity themes or programs a priority.

Applications must include how they will promote diversity within the school in recruiting, curriculum and extra curricular activities.

Good examples were given of diverse schools.

Diversity is highlighted in statute.

##### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were 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:**

Details and examples were given about good partnerships that have been developed through strong partnerships particularly in enrichment areas.

Evidence of using technology to improve productivity as a key strategy.

The use of virtual schools and blended-learning is a strategy that was given as a strategy to improve productivity.

##### **Weaknesses:**

Did not make a direct connection between blended learning and increased productivity.

**Reader's Score:** 4

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 05/12/2011 11:19 PM



Status: Submitted

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

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice  
(U282A110015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Assisting students in meeting standards</b>		
1. Meeting standards	20	20
<b>Flexibility Afforded by State Law</b>		
1. Flexibility	20	18
<b>Number of high-quality charters to be created</b>		
1. Charters to be created	20	18
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management plan	10	10
<b>Authorizer Accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	18
<b>Dissemination</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	4
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	110	98

### 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 5

##### High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 5

##### Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

1. Achievement & grad rates 12 9

##### Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 5

##### Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

4

**Sub Total**

50

45

**Total**

160

143

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice (U282A110015)

## 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 state seeks a waiver for CSP funding to be awarded to high quality schools that are expanding grade spans. The application states it will seek recruit and approve charters from successful CMOs. The application proposes assistance for facilities. The application will disseminate the best practices of its most successful charter schools to non charter schools.

#### Weaknesses:

none noted

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

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

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

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

#### Strengths:

In describing its approach to flexibility, the application seeks additional flexibility to its own state laws in its waiver to allow CSP funding for grade span expansion of high quality charter schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The state has yet to obtain a blanket waiver from the regulations that could inhibit full flexibility.

**Reader's Score:** 18

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

a large number of charter applications are submitted each year, demonstrating that developers see the potential of approval as attainable. From those applications, the state conducts a rigorous review process selecting about 1/3 of those applications for approval.

**Weaknesses:**

The application sites several success stories but does not provide a comprehensive report of all charters in order to ascertain the state's ability to select charter petitions that are likely to lead to high quality schools.

**Reader's Score:** 18

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan****1. Quality of the management plan (10 points).** In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers (a) the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks; and (b) how the SEA will inform each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and ensure that each charter school in the State receives the school's commensurate share of Federal education funds that are allocated by formula each year, including during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly (20 U.S.C. 7221b (b) (2) (A) and (B) and 7221e(a)).

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

**Strengths:**

The plan contains specific dates, identifies responsible parties, and addresses the activities that need to be completed to carry out the objectives identified in the application for start up grants.

**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 SEA is the sole authorizer of charter schools. To ensure it is operating with best practices, it has formed a partnership with NACSA.

The state is proposing multiple authorizers.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no appeals process for decisions made by the state as the sole authorizer, except through the courts. This is a lengthy and expensive remedy for charter developers if denied by the SEA.

**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:**

The application states its goal to promote specific successes statewide, and will create an online resource bank.

**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.

**Strengths:**

In other sections of the application, a timeline for awarding grants is provided and information regarding the identification of selection criteria is provided.

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

There is little detail in the short description provided regarding specific goals and objectives of this program. or methods of assessment for selection

### 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 identifies successful charter schools with promising best practices that may be likely candidates for dissemination grants, and it describes targeted recipients.

### Weaknesses:

The application does not provide information that demonstrates an understanding of the criteria necessary for effective dissemination that will lead to improved practices among targeted recipients.

### 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 plan is time specific and thorough, and will examine all activities proposed in this application.

**Weaknesses:**

none noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The SEA, the sole authorizer, describes a system of review that is comprehensive and includes annual reviews conducted by its expanded charter schools staff, with participation by the county superintendent. In addition, the state will review monthly financial reports. It will include annual reports in its renewal review, which should result in transparent renewal decisions.

**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 definition of high quality has been amended to reflect current research that student performance improves in relationship to the length of time spent in the charter school. It therefore is seeking a waiver for the CSP to financially support expansion in high quality schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The application uses general terms ("remarkable") to capture the performance of all of its charter schools rather than provide comprehensive information on the state's charter school overall performance.

**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:**

The application 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:**

The state's law provides for a high degree of autonomy, and pending legislation for a blanket waiver will further ensure it. Currently, charters may request waivers for portions of law and regulation that do apply to charters.

The application states that the SEA is working on reductions in reporting requirements which will relieve charters of unnecessary administrative burdens and focus oversight on academic outcomes.

**Weaknesses:**

none noted

Reader's Score: 5

### Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### General:

Because this is a competitive priority section, and the state does not have a rural population, 3 points were automatically deducted for (a).

The application recognizes that it currently is not serving the same ratio of special education students and offers hypotheses for study.

The application's focus on ELL extends to support for families as a strategy.

The state has a demonstrated track record of locating high quality charter schools in areas of high poverty and proposes to prioritize this during the grant project period.

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 proposes to authorize and study the impact of cultural programs that support the diverse populations in charter schools and to authorize charter schools with unique diversity themes.

The application expands on the concept of diversity by emphasizing its priority to serve diverse populations throughout the state.

**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:**

Within the list of activities, the state proposes to create data dashboards, which can be of use to charter schools and the state.

The application describes likely effective partnerships that will expand its own as well as charters' ability to achieve economies of scale.

The application describes how charters are doing more with less funding, which may create models for replication as public education funding is reduced.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not link data dashboards to specific uses by the state or charters.

Note: The fact that charter schools are doing more with less funding is a poor commentary on the state's charter school funding model.

**Reader's Score:** 4

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/12/2011 10:37 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice  
(U282A110015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Assisting students in meeting standards</b>		
1. Meeting standards	20	17
<b>Flexibility Afforded by State Law</b>		
1. Flexibility	20	15
<b>Number of high-quality charters to be created</b>		
1. Charters to be created	20	13
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management plan	10	7
<b>Authorizer Accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	17
<b>Dissemination</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	3
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project evaluation	10	7
<b>Sub Total</b>	110	79

### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority

##### Periodic Review and Evaluation

1. Periodic Review and Eval 10 7

##### Number of High-Quality Charter Schools

1. High-quality charters 8 5

##### 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 5

##### Promoting Diversity

1. Promoting Diversity 5 3

##### Improving Productivity

1. Improving Productivity

5

5

**Sub Total**

50

28

**Total**

160

107

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice (U282A110015)

## 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 specific strategies to recruit charter school operators serving the targeted population. This has begun to show promise with a Philadelphia-based organization successfully recruited. The applicant also provides prioritization to groups serving the targeted population.

#### Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant does not list the attributes of the organizations that will be recruited yet.

Reader's Score: 17

### Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

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

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

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

#### Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant allows for charter schools to waive most of the requirements for district schools. There is a blanket law before the state assembly.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant currently does not have a blanket law passed. Individual waivers are often time consuming and a burden to secure.

**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:**

Strengths

The applicant aims to create 15-20 new schools per year. The applicant lists some characteristics of quality schools.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant will only fund 10 schools per year. This is quite a drop off from the current 29 and fairly small relative to the size of the state and the number of dense cities that create urban centers with high failure rates. The peer review process has a limited description. There is no prior data on this program.

**Reader's Score:** 13

**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 applicant provides a thorough list of specific objectives and timelines.

**Weaknesses:**

## Weaknesses

The applicant does not provide targeted quantitative measurements for each objective. The applicant fails to describe any changes from an evaluation of past practices related to the charter school federal grant program.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**Selection Criteria - Authorizer Accountability**

- 1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools (20 points).**

**Strengths:**

## Strengths

The applicant has partnered with a respective organization to improve practices and has outlined concrete goals. For this question, being the only authorizer is an advantage because the training is under the control of the applicant. To advance best practices, the applicant is seeking independent authorizers.

**Weaknesses:**

## Weaknesses

The applicant does not list measureable results that are being targeted

**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:**

## Strengths

The applicant lists a few aims of the dissemination grant. The applicant elsewhere describes the waiver to allow high quality schools to share more than one best practice.

## Weaknesses

It provides few concrete examples of how these practices should be disseminated, or how their effectiveness will be measured. There is no analysis of the likelihood of success of this program. There is no discussion of the peer review process. There is no discussion of past practices.

Reader's Score: 3

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:**

Strengths

The applicant lists a few aims of the dissemination grant. The applicant elsewhere describes the waiver to allow high quality schools to share more than one best practice.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

It provides few concrete examples of how these practices should be disseminated. There is no discussion of the peer review process.

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

None identified

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

It provides few concrete examples of how their effectiveness will be measured. There is no analysis of the likelihood of success of this program. There is no discussion of past 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:**

Strengths

The applicant lists the Evaluator (page 51). There is a thorough set of outcomes that will be measured. The establishment of a baseline year will be useful.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant does not provide a clear understanding of the types of analyses that will be conducted.

Reader's Score: 7

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Periodic Review and Evaluation**

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

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

**Strengths:**

Strengths

The applicant has an annual review process. The applicant is developing a new evaluative tool.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant has a summative review for each charter's term but does not state how frequent that is (ie. less than 5 years?). The state does not currently have a high quality evaluative tool.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**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 points to select examples of success (pg4). The applicant is beginning to weed out poor performers. The applicant is developing a quality measurement. The applicant shows small gains statewide. The applicant is developing a definition of quality.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant fails to show systemwide quality and does not show comparative data at the school level.

**Reader's Score:** 5

**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

No strengths identified

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

There is no effective appeals process with only the SEA as the authorizer.

**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

The applicant shows autonomy for financing and personnel.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

State laws on reporting systems continue to hamper the state. Waiver requests are challenging.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**General:**

Strengths

Pilot projects showing positive change, including school for autistic children. Targeted dissemination for ELL. Prioritization and recruitment for high poverty.

Weaknesses

No rural areas. Applicant is still requesting information rather than guiding strategy to improve conditions.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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

Sample of success in approving schools. Requirements for promotion in multiple languages.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

The applicant has limited strategies to promote diversity such as the strategies employed for high poverty schools.

**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

Schools can have strategic partners to share costs. Autonomy for calendaring. Approval for technology based schools.

**Weaknesses:**

Weaknesses

None identified

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 05/12/2011 10:37 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/11/2011 02:38 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice  
(U282A110015)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Assisting students in meeting standards</b>		
1. Meeting standards	20	20
<b>Flexibility Afforded by State Law</b>		
1. Flexibility	20	18
<b>Number of high-quality charters to be created</b>		
1. Charters to be created	20	17
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management plan	10	9
<b>Authorizer Accountability</b>		
1. Authorizer Accountability	20	17
<b>Dissemination</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	7
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project evaluation	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>98</b>

### 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 5

##### Authorizer Other Than LEA or Appeals Process

1. Alt. Authorizer, Appeals 5 0

##### High Degree of Autonomy

1. High Degree of Autonomy 5 5

##### 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	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	50	34
<b>Total</b>	160	132

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: New Jersey Department of Education -- Office of Charter Schools School Effectiveness & Choice (U282A110015)

## 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 superior academic performance data of students in New Jersey charter schools compared to traditional district schools provides assurance that charter schools in the state are providing an excellent education to all students. The applications provides thorough information on well aligned objectives and activities designed to assisting students to meet academic standards.

The application describes thorough procedures to ensure charters are aware of federal funds through technical assistance and training programs and families are aware of charter school opportunities through the Community and Family Relations Office. The letters of support from higher education institutions, education reform organizations, and businesses further demonstrates the high level of engagement charter schools have with the community. The application also specifies the procedures already in place to disseminate charter schools best practices through regular roundtable meetings and an annual conference.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

### Selection Criteria - Flexibility Afforded by State Law

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

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

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to describe the degree of autonomy charter schools in the State exercise over such matters as the charter school's budgets, expenditures, daily operation, schedules, curricula, and personnel in accordance with the State's charter school law.

**Strengths:**

The board of trustees of charter schools have autonomy over matters including budgets, operations, and hiring of all staff. A charter school is treated as a LEA for purposes of applying for and receiving federal funds.

**Weaknesses:**

Charter school teachers must be credentialed. Charter schools also cannot be affiliated with a charter management organization by name (e.g. a KIPP school cannot have KIPP in the name of the school) which is contradictory to the notion of full autonomy which includes the ability to establish a name identity connected with the school.

The introduction of a new bill, recently presented to the state legislature, that would grant a "blanket waiver" to charter schools from all public school regulations reinforces the fact there is still a need for such a waiver in order for charter schools to achieve a high level of autonomy.

**Reader's Score: 18**

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

**Note: The Secretary considers the SEA's reasonable estimate of the number of new high-quality charter schools that will be authorized and opened in the State during the project period. The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe, in detail, its charter school subgrant application and peer review processes, how the peer review process will assess quality, and how the SEA will ensure that only high-quality charter school applicants (as defined by the applicant) are selected for funding. States that have received grants under this program previously are invited to provide data on the percentages of eligible applicants that were awarded sub-grants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of applicants funded.**

**Strengths:**

The recent approval of the record high number of 29 new charter schools across two application cycles and the steady upward trend in New Jersey charter school growth since 1998 supports New Jersey's commitment to and success in growing high quality charters. The proposal to open 45-60 new charter schools per year is realistic given the state's success in growth.

The application outlines a competitive sub-grant process with sufficient details on the panel review process.

**Weaknesses:**

The application is vague on the details of the rubrics which the panel reviewer will use to rate the sub-grant applications and how the rubrics represent standards of high-quality charter schools.

**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 management plan describes well thought out project activities, clear roles and responsibilities, and reasonable deadlines. The growth of the Office of Charter Schools from 5 staff to 14 staff is evidence of the state's commitment to dedicate resources for the management its of charter school programs.

**Weaknesses:**

The application lacks details on how specifically Montclair State University will assist in the monitoring of the grant program. (page e46)

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Authorizer Accountability**

- 1. The SEA's plan to monitor and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies through such activities as providing technical assistance or establishing a professional development program, which may include providing authorized public chartering agency staff with training and assistance on planning and systems development, so as to improve the capacity of those agencies to authorize, monitor, and hold accountable charter schools (20 points).**

**Strengths:**

The application provides thorough information about NJDOE's partnership with NACSA to identify areas for improvement and to develop a strategic plan to guide NJDOE to implement best practices. The detailed plan includes development of specific strategies, such as creating a performance based charter agreement, which would improve the capacity of employees charged with authorizing, monitoring, and holding accountable charter schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not mention any ongoing professional development that would be made available to the staff of the authorized public chartering agency.

**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:**

NJDOE's dissemination program is well aligned with the overall goals and objectives of the charter school programs. The focus on sharing lessons learned from successful charter schools reflects a commitment to scale high quality programs. The application does not provide sufficient details as to the timeline, process for dissemination nor the required professional development to help schools to implement the best practices to actually improve student academic achievement.

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.

#### Strengths:

The practice of making available online all resources generated by the dissemination program demonstrates NJDOE's commitment to providing best practice information to the general public.

#### Weaknesses:

The application does not provide any detail on appropriate professional training that is likely required to help other districts and charters to implement the best practices that are shared.

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 focus on replication of successful charter schools with a proven record of serving educationally disadvantaged students is evidence that NJDOE is committed to promoting the conversion of specific proven strategies into successful schools that can serve more students statewide.

#### Weaknesses:

The application does not provide sufficient details as to how the dissemination activities will improve 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 thorough evaluation plan is well summarized in the overview chart which details the appropriate types of data that will be collected, appropriate methods and timeline, and how the data will be analyzed. The qualifications of the external evaluators provides assurance that the project will be well structured and managed.

**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:**

In addition to the comprehensive evaluation of each charter school at the end of each charter term, the NJDOE also conducts a formal summative evaluation at the end of each year by requiring each charter school to prepare and submit an Annual Report.

New Jersey is thorough in monitoring the fiscal health of each charter school and reviews monthly financial reports charter schools prepare for its independent governing boards.

The goals of implementing a School Accountability Team and field-based monitoring and technical support vehicles located in every county demonstrates a commitment by New Jersey Department of Education to focus efforts on period review and evaluation of each charter school.

**Weaknesses:**

Staff for the School Accountability Team is still to be hired and much work will need to be done to develop the accountability framework the organization aspires to have in place.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Competitive Preference Priority - Number of High-Quality Charter Schools**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The application illustrates a rigorous process for approving charter schools. The availability of denial interviews to provide feedback to rejected applicants indicates a commitment on the part of NJDOE to help support applicants to improve to meet the high standards established.

The application is specific about the 4 metrics which are used to evaluate existing charter schools.

The plans to implement performance based contracts, developed with help from NACSA, is also encouraging of the steps the NJDOE will take to infuse best practices into their work to promote growth of high quality charter schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not provide clear data on the actual number and percentage of high quality charter schools now and how that rate has changed across the past 5 years.

The application does not specify how it would measure parent satisfaction, one of the 4 metrics used to evaluate quality. (page e4)

The newly adopted definition of "high quality" does not factor in the performance of the majority of charter schools student because it only measures "how many of the state's charter schools outperform their host districts among key subgroups on the state's math assessments in the highest grade served by the charter school." (page e8)

**Reader's Score:** 5

**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:**

NJDOE is the only authorized public chartering agency in the state. There is not an appeals process in place specifically for denied charter applicants. Appealing a decision to the state Superior Court is a right not unique to the charter process and is both time consuming and costly to a charter applicant that it is not actually a viable option.

**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:**

Charter schools are each governed by a Board of Trustees with authority to manage the school autonomously over all aspects including budget, staffing, operations, curriculum, and length of school day. The board of trustees of each school has full responsibility for the oversight and governance of the school.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Achievement and HS Graduation Rates**

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

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

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

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

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

**Note: For each population of students for which the applicant is seeking competitive priority points, the Secretary invites the applicant to discuss the steps it would take to meet the priority. For example, the applicant could describe any guidance or support it would provide to charter school developers to assist**

such developers in recruiting and providing high-quality services to students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that they are taking effective and active steps to recruit and enroll students who are members of the particular student population(s); how it would monitor charter schools in the State to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served by such schools; or how it would design its subgrant competition, which may include the use of preferences, to ensure that students who are members of the particular student population(s) are being served at rates equal to or greater than such students are being served in other schools in the area.

**General:**

The application clearly recognizes that the state does not serve a rural population. The application provides strong examples of individual schools (such as Forest Hill Charter and North Star Academy) which have documented success in accelerating learning and improving high school graduation rates for students with disabilities, ELL students, and high poverty populations. However, the application has sparse information on overarching strategies it plans to employ to accelerate learning for students with disabilities who would matriculate in a charter school with a majority of students who do not have disabilities.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The approval of several unique diversity theme and language immersion charter schools support New Jersey's commitment to racial and ethnic diversity. In addition, printing recruitment materials in multiple languages provides assurance that charter schools are recruiting a broad cross section of students and infusing cultural diversity from the first interaction a family has with a charter school.

**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:**

Camden's LEAP Academy University Charter School's partnership with Rutgers University is a strong example of strategic partnerships which resulted in providing students with academic opportunities directly tied to improving the goal of preparing students for a college education.

The approval of virtual charter schools is an innovative use of technology and provides efficiencies in not having to operate physical school buildings.

**Weaknesses:**

The application was vague in articulating the direct efficiency gains from certain partnerships (such as with museums) described as well as usage of technology (beyond their role in virtual charter schools).

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

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