

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/30/2015 01:03 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (U282A150028)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>State-Level Strategy</b>		
1. State-Level Strategy	15	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	13
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Policy Context for Charter Schools</b>		
1. Policy Context	5	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	4
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Past Performance</b>		
1. Past Performance	10	9
<b>Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students</b>		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	10
<b>Vision for Growth and Accountability</b>		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	9
<b>Dissemination of Information and Best Practices</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	8
<b>Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies</b>		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	14
<b>Management Plan and Theory of Action</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	10
<b>Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	68
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes</b>		
1. CPP 1	15	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	15
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process</b>		

1. CPP 2

	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Total</b>	120	105

# Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - SEA Panel - 10: 84.282A

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

Applicant: DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (U282A150028)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - State-Level Strategy

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the State-level strategy for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students throughout the State. In determining the quality of the State-level strategy, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which the SEA 's CSP activities, including the subgrant program, are integrated into the State s overall strategy for improving student academic achievement and attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) and closing achievement and attainment gaps, and complement or leverage other statewide education reform efforts;

2) The extent to which funding equity for charter schools (including equitable funding for charter school facilities) is incorporated into the SEA' s State-level strategy; and

3) The extent to which the State encourages local strategies for improving student academic achievement and attainment that involve charter schools, including but not limited to the following:

i. Collaboration, including the sharing of data and promising instructional and other practices, between charter schools and other public schools or providers of early learning and development programs or alternative education programs; and

ii. The creation of charter schools that would serve as viable options for students who currently attend, or would otherwise attend, the State 's lowest-performing schools.

### Strengths:

The applicant informs readers that 44% of the public student population are educated by charter schools and that charter schools are integrated into the state's overall strategy mostly through the implementation of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver by way of the OSSE State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and the District of Columbia Plan to Ensure Equitable Access To Excellent Teachers. The applicant states that the Fair Student Funding and School Based Budgeting Act sets aside funding for charter school facilities projects. Coupled with the Credit Enhancement Fund schools are additionally provided enhanced credit, lease guarantees etc. Lastly there are Public Facility Grant funds and an Incubator Initiative that supports schools in acquiring affordable, quality and turn - key space. Additionally, D.C provides an allowance of \$3,072 per student. Communities of practice and professional learning communities serve to support schools in sharing best practices and opportunities for collaboration. Monthly data discussions from the state office are also available and sponsored summits give leaders and teachers ongoing opportunities to learn from one another. The District of Columbia has implemented several performance initiatives and frameworks to ensure that all schools continue to move towards excellence – the applicant expresses that this work has been recognized on a national level. There is an incubator initiative underway that also enables schools to access temporary space, secure and finance facilities. The applicant clearly identifies and outlines methods for sharing best practices across schools and allocates funding to ensure that these practices continue to be a priority.

### Weaknesses:

The application would benefit from greater detail on the overarching strategy and how charter schools play a specific role in this effort.

Reader's Score: 13

#### Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools

1. The Secretary considers the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project. In determining the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The degree of flexibility afforded to charter schools under the State's charter school law, including:

i. The extent to which charter schools in the State are exempt from State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools; and

ii. The extent to which charter schools in the State have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over the charter school's budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum;

2) The quality of the SEA's processes for:

i. Annually informing each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and Federal programs in which the charter school may participate; and

ii. Annually ensuring that each charter school in the State receives, in a timely fashion, the school's commensurate share of Federal funds that are allocated by formula each year, particularly during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly; and

3) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that charter schools that are considered to be LEAs under State law and LEAs in which charter schools are located will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).

#### Strengths:

The applicant details that charter schools are autonomous and independent. The applicant expresses that there is an Enterprise grants management system in place to manage all federal and local grants with a portal that additionally announces all available funding opportunities. Charter schools are expected to comply with federal law and must in their application describe services that will be provided to special education students per section 504 and IDEA. The state additionally monitors the performance of each school's compliance in these areas through reviews and self-assessments.

#### Weaknesses:

Although the applicant has a system in place to announce funding opportunities, the application would benefit from greater detail around how the district will ensure that the schools located in the district will receive their commensurate share of funds, through follow up processes, self reporting structures, recording mechanisms or other .

Reader's Score: 4

#### Selection Criteria - Past Performance

1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State;

2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and

3) Whether, and the extent to which, the academic achievement and academic attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) of charter school students equal or exceed the academic achievement and academic attainment of similar students in other public schools in the State over the past five years.

**Strengths:**

The applicant demonstrates that charter school performance has exceeded state and local averages in math, language arts, graduation rates and college and post-secondary success rates over a 5 year period. Furthermore the applicant demonstrates that there has been an increase in high quality schools and a general decrease in poor performing schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The application would benefit from the inclusion of specific data that highlights a demonstrated reduction in the number of low performing schools consistently across a 5-year period .

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA 's plan to support educationally disadvantaged students. In determining the quality of the plan to support educationally disadvantaged students, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which the SEA' s charter school subgrant program would--

i. Assist students, particularly educationally disadvantaged students, in meeting and exceeding State academic content standards and State student achievement standards; and

ii. Reduce or eliminate achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students;

2) The quality of the SEA 's plan to ensure that charter schools attract, recruit, admit, enroll, serve, and retain educationally disadvantaged students equitably, meaningfully, and, with regard to educationally disadvantaged students who are students with disabilities or English learners, in a manner consistent with, as appropriate, the IDEA (regarding students with disabilities) and civil rights laws, in particular, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;

3) The extent to which the SEA will encourage innovations in charter schools, such as models, policies, supports, or structures, that are designed to improve the academic achievement of educationally disadvantaged students; and

4) The quality of the SEA 's plan for monitoring all charter schools to ensure compliance with Federal and State laws, particularly laws related to educational equity, nondiscrimination, and access to public schools for educationally disadvantaged students.

**Strengths:**

The applicant expresses that there are district wide regulations to ensure equitable enrollment are implemented and required of all charter schools via prohibited discriminatory practices. Funds are presently used to foster innovative models and further support disadvantaged students successfully, according to the applicant. The applicant states that funds will be used to purchase instructional resources, provide professional development, and implement systems and structures that will continue to foster innovations. Finally the applicant provides mechanisms for monitoring all charter schools to ensure compliance with Federal and State laws, particularly laws related to educational equity, nondiscrimination, and access to public schools for educationally disadvantaged students

**Weaknesses:**

The application would benefit from greater detail on how it plans to serve disadvantaged students successfully in meeting and exceeding State academic content standards and State student achievement standards as well as successfully closing the achievement gap .

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Vision for Growth and Accountability**

**1. The Secretary determines the quality of the statewide vision, including the role of the SEA, for charter school growth and accountability. In determining the quality of the statewide vision, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The quality of the SEA' s systems for collecting, analyzing, and publicly reporting data on charter school performance, including data on student academic achievement, attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates), retention, and discipline for all students and disaggregated by student subgroup;**

**2) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA' s plan (including key actions) to support the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period, including a reasonable estimate of the number of high-quality charter schools in the State at both the beginning and the end of the project period; and**

**3) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA' s plan (including key actions) to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools in the State (i.e., through revocation, non-renewal, or voluntary termination of a charter) during the project period.**

**Note: In the context of closing academically poor-performing charter schools, we remind applicants of the importance of ensuring adherence to applicable laws, policies, and procedures that govern the closure of a charter school, the disposition of its assets, and the transfer of its students and student records.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant states that as a means to include stakeholders the "Launch D.C" site has been launched – the site presently includes a state report card, which provides information on NAEP progress, assessment data, graduation rates, attendance, qualified teachers and areas for compliance. Equity reports provide opportunities to view comparative student sub group data. (pgs 23 &24). The applicant intends on supporting the creation of high quality schools through conducting a comprehensive charter review application process, providing effective oversight and giving meaningful support to schools. The applicant states that there is a publicly available portal (LearnDC) which provides public stakeholders access to school performance and data which additionally includes 'equity reports' that allow parents, community members and interested parties the ability to compare schools across the city. The applicant clearly demonstrates the progression of its work on establishing and supporting high quality schools as well as the accountability and school closure mechanisms in place.

**Weaknesses:**

The application would benefit from greater specificity and perhaps quantitative ambitious targets as part of the key actions established. Most actions stated by the applicant are already underway.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools to each LEA in the State as well as to charter schools, other public schools, and charter school developers (20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(2)(C) and 7221(c)(f)(6)). If an SEA proposes to use a portion of its grant funds for dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6)(B)), the SEA should incorporate these subgrants into the overall plan for dissemination. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which the SEA will serve as a leader in the State for identifying and disseminating information and research (which may include, but is not limited to, providing technical assistance) about best or promising practices in successful charter schools, including how the SEA will use measures of efficacy and data in identifying such practices and assessing the impact of its dissemination activities;

2) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices used by, and the benefits of, charter schools that effectively incorporate student body diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity and diversity with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;

3) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate; and

4) For an SEA that proposes to use a portion of its grant funds to award dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221a(f)(6)(B)), the quality of the subgrant award process and the likelihood that such dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and contribute to improved student academic achievement.

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly outlines several processes in place to disseminate information on promising practices across its charter schools. The SEA organizes learning communities that allow school leaders to connect with one another, collaborate and learn best practices. In addition there are Cross Functional Support Teams, and OSSE LEA support institutes to promote sharing and build on charter school best practices. Charter schools are provided support through a Support Network and best practices are awarded through various funding sources. Lastly schools have an opportunity to be paired with higher performing schools to receive support through coaching and consultation. The applicant further states that an evaluator will be allocated to monitor the usage of the grant to ensure goals are being met at least three times throughout the school year. The evaluator will additionally support a quarterly reporting process on targets.

**Weaknesses:**

The application would benefit from greater specificity regarding disseminating research and best practices that focus on student diversity, discipline and school climate and culture.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Selection Criteria - Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan (including any use of grant administrative or other funds) to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to provide oversight to authorized public chartering agencies, the Secretary considers how well the SEA's plan will ensure that authorized public chartering agencies are --

1) Seeking and approving charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools;

2) Approving charter school petitions with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, including, but not limited to, school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies and diversity in student bodies with respect to educationally

disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;

3) Establishing measurable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools (including alternative charter schools, virtual charter schools, and charter schools that include pre-kindergarten, if such schools exist in the State) that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school as defined in this notice;

4) Monitoring their charter schools on at least an annual basis, including conducting an in-depth review of each charter school at least once every five years, to ensure that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter or performance contracts and complying with applicable State and Federal laws;

5) Using increases in student academic achievement as one of the most important factors in renewal decisions; basing renewal decisions on a comprehensive set of criteria, which are set forth in the charter or performance contract; and revoking, not renewing, or encouraging the voluntary termination of charters held by academically poor-performing charter schools;

6) Providing, on an annual basis, public reports on the performance of their portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school with respect to meeting the terms of, and expectations set forth in, the school's charter or performance contract;

7) Supporting charter school autonomy while holding charter schools accountable for results and meeting the terms of their charters or performance contracts; and

8) Ensuring the continued accountability of charter schools during any transition to new State assessments or accountability systems, including those based on college- and career-ready standards.

**Strengths:**

The applicant demonstrates that during the review process, charter school preparedness, qualifications and capacity are evaluated to determine school approval. Additionally there is a clear system in place to both monitor and report out on charter school performance at least on an annual basis. The framework that is implemented by the applicant is grounded in student achievement, and poor performing schools have either improved or closed. The applicant further demonstrates that charter schools are autonomous yet are provided support through shared communities of practices and held accountable by charter reviews, publicly available data and evaluations. The applicant lastly has in place an annual process to assess the performance and effectiveness of the authorizing board – this process as well as the present reporting mechanisms for charter schools is set to continue consistently, even in light of assessment transitions and PAARC data collection adjustments .

**Weaknesses:**

The application would benefit from additional information on the capability of the charter approval review board to assess the likelihood for success specifically for evidence based models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies. Additionally the application would benefit from illuminating the performance expectations or differences for alternate or early childhood schools.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Selection Criteria - Management Plan and Theory of Action**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and the project's theory of action. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project's theory of action, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The quality, including the cohesiveness and strength of reasoning, of the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) and the extent to which it addresses the role of the grant in promoting the State-level strategy for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students through CSP subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation; optional dissemination subgrants; optional revolving loan funds; and other strategies;

2) The extent to which the SEA' s project-specific performance measures, including any measures required by the Department, support the logic model; and

3) The adequacy of the management plan to --

i. Achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including the existence of clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks; and

ii. Address any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that are identified in an audit or other monitoring review.

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive management plan and theory of action for assessing the achievement of the objectives, including developing performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the logic model application requirement and performance measures section of this notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the logic model requirement when addressing this criterion.

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a clear theory of action and how funds will be used to support the establishment and expansion of high quality charter schools. The applicant provides a clear logic model that details specific performance measures and demonstrates an ability to achieve it's objectives. The applicant states that they will use the funds of the grant to add an emphasis on student body diversity, discipline, and school climate and share these practices across the school and fund the establishment of new high quality charter schools. Performance measures support the logic model and methodology established.

On page 44 the applicant clearly explains all parties that will play a role in the grant dissemination and monitoring process and through it's clear theory of action, robust monitoring plan, and compliance review processes, demonstrates competency in its ability to address any compliance issues and achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time. The applicant provides for a list of clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones in accomplishing stated tasks tied to a cohesive overarching strategy.

**Weaknesses:**

None found

**Reader's Score:** 10

**Selection Criteria - Project Design**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the SEA 's charter school subgrant program, including the extent to which the project design furthers the SEA' s overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and improving student academic achievement. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The quality of the SEA' s process for awarding subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, if applicable, for dissemination, including:

i. The subgrant application and peer review process, timelines for these processes, and how the SEA intends to ensure that subgrants will be awarded to eligible applicants demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; and

ii. A reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence, of

a) the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award during the project period and the average size of those subgrants, including an explanation of any assumptions upon which the estimates are based; and

b) if the SEA has previously received a CSP grant, the percentage of eligible applicants that were awarded subgrants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of the applicant pool;

2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees;

3) How the SEA will create a portfolio of subgrantees that focuses on areas of need within the State, such as increasing student body diversity or maintaining a high level of student body diversity, and how this focus aligns with the State-Level Strategy;

4) The steps the SEA will take to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA's charter school subgrant program; and

5) A description of any requested waivers of statutory or regulatory provisions over which the Secretary exercises administrative authority and the extent to which those waivers will, if granted, further the objectives of the project.

**Strengths:**

The applicant outlines a clear process for awarding funding through the grant and has in place a transparent review process. The applicant outlines approximations on how much funding will be provided and for how long the project periods will ensue. Parents and community members will be informed through several avenues stated in the application which include online strategies and newsletters, and that through an evaluative system CSP subgrantees will be monitored. A description of the requested waivers is present, and waivers clearly identify the impact that their obtainment will have on the furthering of the grant project. For example on page 57, one waiver requested seeks that the applicant be considered for receiving an additional CSP grant beyond the maximum period of 3 years – the applicant states that this waiver will support them in creating high quality charter schools over a 5 year period and in successfully meeting the objectives of the project.

**Weaknesses:**

The application would benefit from additional information how the SEA will create a portfolio of subgrantees that focus on areas of need within the state – and if the applicant has previously received an award.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

a) Frameworks and processes to evaluate the performance of charter schools on a regular basis that include--

1) Rigorous academic and operational performance expectations (including performance expectations related to financial management and equitable treatment of all students and applicants);

2) Performance objectives for each school aligned to those expectations;

3) Clear criteria for renewing the charter of a school based on an objective body of evidence, including evidence that the charter school has (a) met the performance objectives outlined in the charter or performance contract; (b) demonstrated organizational and fiscal viability; and (c) demonstrated

**fidelity to the terms of the charter or performance contract and applicable law;**

**4) Clear criteria for revoking the charter of a school if there is violation of law or public trust regarding student safety or public funds, or evidence of poor student academic achievement; and**

**5) Annual reporting by authorized public chartering agencies to each of their authorized charter schools that summarizes the individual school 's performance and compliance, based on this framework, and identifies any areas that need improvement.**

**b) Clear and specific standards and formalized processes that measure and benchmark the performance of the authorized public chartering agency or agencies, including the performance of its portfolio of charter schools, and provide for the annual dissemination of information on such performance;**

**c) Authorizing processes that establish clear criteria for evaluating charter applications and include a multi-tiered clearance or review of a charter school, including a final review immediately before the school opens for its first operational year; or**

**d) Authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has been successful (as determined by the authorized public chartering agency) in establishing and operating one or more high-quality charter schools.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant successfully meets this priority. The applicant uses a performance management framework that includes charter school academic and school climate results. Schools are scored on a scale of 1 – 100 based on student performance, attendance, re - enrollment, graduation rates and college acceptance. Additionally used are Finance and Accounting Reviews that measure charter school financial health and equity reports which provide information on the schools academic growth, attendance, and discipline outcomes comparatively and by subgroups. Lastly compliance reports that measure federal compliance on a school level are publicly available. The applicant provides clear criteria and guidelines for revoking a charter school over a 5 and then 10-year period. Criteria regarding whether or not a school is low, or high performing is apparent and clear. The applicant demonstrates that charter renewal analysis is grounded in an objective body of evidence that includes school performance data, fiscal audits and compliance outcomes – school input is additionally taken into consideration.

Charter contracts may be revoked if during the review process it is apparent that the school has violated the law, is economically non viable or has established a pattern of fiscal mismanagement or non-adherence to generally accepted accounting principals. The District of Columbia, through the public charter school board, is the only authorizer. The District of Columbia formally evaluates the performance of the public charter school board each year requiring it to submit to the DC Council a Performance Accountability Report. The PCSB establishes measures to achieve, including metrics related to the performance of its portfolio of charter schools. The public charter school board evaluates applications based on the demonstrated need for the school, progress in developing a plan for the school, organizational and fiscal viability, mission alignment, capacity and the inclusion of special populations as in integral part of the school plan. The applicant demonstrates that there is a multi-teared review process in place for new charter schools – which begins with an analysis of the charters potential success, a public hearing and a final review. Lastly the applicant provides sound information that an onsite review is conducted prior to a new charter school receiving approval to open.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Competitive Preference Pritority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a LEA, or an Appeals Process**

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that 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 LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

**Note:** In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

**Strengths:**

The D.C charter public school board is a non LEA entity that holds the authority to authorize charter schools.

**Weaknesses:**

None found

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/30/2015 01:03 PM

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (U282A150028)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
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<b>Past Performance</b>		
1. Past Performance	10	7
<b>Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students</b>		
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1. Project Design	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	64
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes</b>		
1. CPP 1	15	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	15
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process</b>		

1. CPP 2

	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Total</b>	120	102

# Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - SEA Panel - 10: 84.282A

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

Applicant: DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (U282A150028)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - State-Level Strategy

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the State-level strategy for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students throughout the State. In determining the quality of the State-level strategy, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which the SEA 's CSP activities, including the subgrant program, are integrated into the State s overall strategy for improving student academic achievement and attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) and closing achievement and attainment gaps, and complement or leverage other statewide education reform efforts;

2) The extent to which funding equity for charter schools (including equitable funding for charter school facilities) is incorporated into the SEA' s State-level strategy; and

3) The extent to which the State encourages local strategies for improving student academic achievement and attainment that involve charter schools, including but not limited to the following:

i. Collaboration, including the sharing of data and promising instructional and other practices, between charter schools and other public schools or providers of early learning and development programs or alternative education programs; and

ii. The creation of charter schools that would serve as viable options for students who currently attend, or would otherwise attend, the State 's lowest-performing schools.

### Strengths:

Given that 44% of the students in DC attend charter schools (p.11), and that the PCSB is under the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), the applicant's charter activities are strongly aligned and integrated into the SEA school improvement activities. This is in part evidenced by the following:

All LEAs (inclusive of all charters) have been incorporated into the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) under IDEA, as well. as the District of Columbia Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers (p. 11).

All charters directly benefit from OSSE's education improvements such as free pre-kindergarten and universal access to early childhood education, the alignment of English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments to college and career ready standards (CCSS) and the DC lesson Plan Generator (p.12). These examples are indicative of the applicant's leveraging all state wide reforms for all public schools, including its charters.

The applicant has demonstrated a comprehensive and robust funding system that supports equity in charter facilities funding. This is evidenced by the following (pp. 14-16).

- \$3,072 per student facilities allowance
- OSSE's Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support (OPCSFS) administers direct loans (capped at \$2M) and credit enhancement programs
- A Credit Enhancement Fund-provides enhanced credit, lease guarantees and access to financial assistance
- Public Facilities Financing Grants
- Incubator Initiative for turnkey, temporary space
- Charter School Incubator Initiative II leases sites which are renovated and sublet to charters,

The variety of facility fund sources addresses the various diverse needs of the charters.

The applicant's local strategies for improving student academic achievement and attainment in charter schools, are focused on improving student achievement through collaboration in cross LEA and cross sector communities of practice. This is accomplished through OSSE's communities of practice model (p. 16).

One such community of practice is the Data Professional Learning Community which establishes mini grant priority areas, and initiates activities to disseminate best practices regarding data use. Another example of the applicant's sharing of data and promising instructional practices between charter schools and traditional public schools (TPS) is the DC Data Summit. Lastly, OSSE supports sharing data and promising practices via its CSP Dissemination grants and the State System of Support Best Practice Grants (p. 17).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address specific initiatives or efforts around improving high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates.

The applicant did not address how it's charter schools would serve as viable options for students who currently attend, or would otherwise attend, its lowest-performing schools.

**Reader's Score:** 14

**Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools**

**1. The Secretary considers the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project. In determining the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The degree of flexibility afforded to charter schools under the State's charter school law, including:**

**i. The extent to which charter schools in the State are exempt from State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools; and**

**ii. The extent to which charter schools in the State have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over the charter school's budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum;**

**2) The quality of the SEA's processes for:**

**i. Annually informing each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and Federal programs in which the charter school may participate; and**

**ii. Annually ensuring that each charter school in the State receives, in a timely fashion, the school's commensurate share of Federal funds that are allocated by formula each year, particularly during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school's enrollment expands significantly; and**

**3) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that charter schools that are considered to be LEAs under State law and LEAs in which charter schools are located will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has demonstrated a high degree of flexibility afforded to its charter schools under the State's charter school law. This is evidenced by charter school exemption from "Statutes, policies, rules and regulations" (p. 17) established for public schools, unless otherwise provided by the School Reform Act (p. 18). Charters in DC have complete autonomy

over their "budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement and curriculum" (p. 18). Charters are governed by independent boards that "set overall policy .... And make final decisions" on matters related to school operations (p. 18).

Of positive note, the Charter Schools Laws Across the Country Report, has named the applicant's charter law as the strongest charter law in the country, for the 6th year in a row (p. 17).

The applicant has a newly developed electronic grants management system Electronic Grants Management System - (EGMS) which manages all local and federal grants for all LEAS (inclusive of charters). This centralized location for grants tracks milestones, allows for grant claims submissions and announces all available funding opportunities -directly to the LEA. Additionally, OSSE announces funding opportunities and provides LEA support through the following strategies (pp. 18-19).

- The weekly "LEA Look Forward" newsletter
- The Federal Grants Tool Kit- with consolidated Federal Program Guidelines

In an effort to ensure that each charter school receives the school's commensurate share of Federal funds that are allocated by formula each year, the OSSE requires that each school submit a written projected enrollment in the spring prior to the start of the next school year (p. 19) so that the SEA may obligate funds to those schools.

Charter schools are considered LEAs under DC law and required to comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794). Per DC code 38-1802.10(a)(1)(A) charters are LEAS under Title I of ESEA (p. 19).

#### **Weaknesses:**

While charter schools in the District of Columbia are required to comply with federal rules and regulations with regard to students with disabilities, Title IX, Section 504 and civil rights, the applicant did not provide a plan for how it would ensure charter compliance.

**Reader's Score: 4**

#### **Selection Criteria - Past Performance**

**1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State;**

**2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and**

**3) Whether, and the extent to which, the academic achievement and academic attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) of charter school students equal or exceed the academic achievement and academic attainment of similar students in other public schools in the State over the past five years.**

#### **Strengths:**

The charts on pages 21-22 provide strong evidence of a demonstrated increase in student performance and in the increased percent of students attending high-quality charter schools in the District of Columbia for each of the past five years.

While there were 12 closures since 2010-2011, the applicant has very clearly evidenced the increase in high quality student seats (4,125) as well as the decrease in the number of student seats (3,701) in schools with low academic performance (pp. 21-22).

As noted earlier, per its Performance Management Framework (PMF) which scores schools on a scale of 1-100, there have been twelve Tier 3 school closures since 2010-2011 based on poor academic performance (p. 22). In spite of those closures, the applicant has increased the number of high quality student seats. The scoring scale and tiered framework make for clear and transparent expectations for high quality charters.

**Weaknesses:**

It would have made for a stronger proposal to provide actual charter school numbers that demonstrate the increase and decrease of charter schools as per these criteria. The number of student seats does not equate to the number of new schools.

While the applicant did provide solid academic results for the charter sector, it did not provide evidence that high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates of charter school students equal or exceed the academic achievement and academic attainment of similar students in other public schools in the District of Columbia over the past five years.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA 's plan to support educationally disadvantaged students. In determining the quality of the plan to support educationally disadvantaged students, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The extent to which the SEA' s charter school subgrant program would--**

**i. Assist students, particularly educationally disadvantaged students, in meeting and exceeding State academic content standards and State student achievement standards; and**

**ii. Reduce or eliminate achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students;**

**2) The quality of the SEA 's plan to ensure that charter schools attract, recruit, admit, enroll, serve, and retain educationally disadvantaged students equitably, meaningfully, and, with regard to educationally disadvantaged students who are students with disabilities or English learners, in a manner consistent with, as appropriate, the IDEA (regarding students with disabilities) and civil rights laws, in particular, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;**

**3) The extent to which the SEA will encourage innovations in charter schools, such as models, policies, supports, or structures, that are designed to improve the academic achievement of educationally disadvantaged students; and**

**4) The quality of the SEA 's plan for monitoring all charter schools to ensure compliance with Federal and State laws, particularly laws related to educational equity, nondiscrimination, and access to public schools for educationally disadvantaged students.**

**Strengths:**

As evidence of its efforts to assist charters in attracting, recruiting, admitting, enrolling, serving and retaining EDS in its

charter schools" OSSE has proposed "additional start-up funds" for these purposes (pp. 23-24).

In addition to the start-up funds, the applicant has proposed a training series and prioritized dissemination project funding for charters to support them in assisting EDS in meeting or exceeding state academic standards.

Additionally, there is "At Risk" funding from initiatives under the ESEA waiver. These funds are intended to "target school improvement efforts to the needs of the school's particular economically disadvantaged populations" (p. 24).

District of Columbia code 38-1802.06 establishes DC public charter schools as "open enrollment institutions" (p. 25). This code requires a random selection process or lottery when student applications exceed capacity and as such, helps to ensure equity in student enrollment.

In addition, OSSE has issued guidance regarding charter admission practices. This guidance highlights the LEA's obligation to admit all students regardless of special needs, as well as outline prohibited discriminatory practices (p. 26).

Supported by the Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERAA 2007), the applicant has provided a high quality plan for monitoring all charter schools to ensure compliance with Federal and state laws. This is evidenced by the following strategies (pp. 25-26).

- DCPS and PCSB Monitoring on implementation progress
- Quarterly progress reviews of Priority and Focus schools to track implementation progress and provide support
- Twice per year in person meetings with DCPS and PCSB leadership
- Training and technical assistance to LEAs
- Convening of the LEA Support Institute for peer based problem solving

Additionally, the applicant utilizes the charter PMF, School Equity Reports and compliance reports that which speak specifically to academic growth, discipline, attendance outcomes by subgroups (pp. 3-4).

#### **Weaknesses:**

While, the applicant has noted its commitment to proposed additional start-up funds, a training series and prioritized dissemination project funding, it did not provide any specifics as to the funding sources for these activities (other than CSP grant funds). Nor, was there any specific criteria for schools to demonstrate how they would support EDS in meeting and exceeding DC academic content standards and student achievement standards and reduce or eliminate achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students.

While the DC policymakers have prioritized dedicating "additional start-up funds" for the purpose of attracting, recruiting, admitting, enrolling, serving and retaining EDS in its charter schools", the applicant did not provide specifics as to how this would happen. It could be inferred that the CSP sub grant application criteria and the new school application criteria speak to this - though, that was not specifically stated.

The applicant has insufficiently described how it will encourage innovations in charter schools, such as models, policies, supports, or structures, that are designed to improve the academic achievement of educationally disadvantaged students. The narrative lacked any detail other than a proposed intent to provide funds that would "improve educational outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students" (p. 24).

**Reader's Score:** 7

#### **Selection Criteria - Vision for Growth and Accountability**

1. The Secretary determines the quality of the statewide vision, including the role of the SEA, for charter school growth and accountability. In determining the quality of the statewide vision, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The quality of the SEA's systems for collecting, analyzing, and publicly reporting data on charter school performance, including data on student academic achievement, attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates), retention, and discipline for all students and disaggregated by student subgroup;

2) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period, including a reasonable estimate of the number of high-quality charter schools in the State at both the beginning and the end of the project period; and

3) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools in the State (i.e., through revocation, non-renewal, or voluntary termination of a charter) during the project period.

**Note:** In the context of closing academically poor-performing charter schools, we remind applicants of the importance of ensuring adherence to applicable laws, policies, and procedures that govern the closure of a charter school, the disposition of its assets, and the transfer of its students and student records.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has strong systems in place for collecting, analyzing, and publicly reporting data on educational data as evidenced by its state, LEA and School reporting systems (pp. 27-28). The following are just a few examples of these robust systems.

- LearnDC.org -the city's education report card

SEA, LEA and school level:

- Content level data
- Assessment data
- NAEP scores
- Graduation rates by cohorts and subgroup
- In seat attendance
- Instructional staff

Additionally, for all charters, PCSB collects discipline, and equity data as well as operational, compliance and financial data via the PMF.

OSSE collects:

- Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) data for all students and subgroups (p. 29)
- College readiness metrics
- Instructional staff data
- Healthy Schools Act data (p. 29)

With 112 schools currently in operation, the applicant has proposed an ambitious, yet attainable vision in its expectation to double the number of Tier 1 schools in the next five years (currently 44% or 23 of the 64 schools are Tier 1 p. 30). In support of this vision the applicant has instituted the following strategies:

- Conducting a comprehensive charter application review process
- Effective oversight with well - defined PMFs

Additionally, part of the increase in Tier 1 schools comes from a decrease in Tier 2 schools. Further growth plans also include implementing the PMF for early childhood and adult campuses.

The applicant has developed strong and efficacious oversight processes and protocols to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools (pp. 3-6, 31, 32). These have been described earlier and are noted as:

- PMF
- HS PMF
- FAR (Financing and Accounting Framework)
- School Equity Reports
- Compliance Reports
- Qualitative Site Review
- Self-Study Implementation Review
- 5 or 10 year charter review
- 15 year renewal analysis
- Implementation Corrective Action Plan
- Annual school outcomes review

These oversight systems facilitate aggressive and yet transparent closure of poor performing schools. Overall, the applicant has very comprehensively and thoroughly described strong systems of authorization and oversight which have a high probability of meeting its ambitious vision.

**Weaknesses:**

The distinction between are "112 public charter schools" and "64 tiered campuses" is unclear. It is unclear if all charters are tiered.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices**

The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools to each LEA in the State as well as to charter schools, other public schools, and charter school developers (20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(2)(C) and 7221(c)(f)(6)). If an SEA proposes to use a portion of its grant funds for dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6)(B)), the SEA should incorporate these subgrants into the overall plan for dissemination. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- 1) The extent to which the SEA will serve as a leader in the State for identifying and disseminating information and research (which may include, but is not limited to, providing technical assistance) about best or promising practices in successful charter schools, including how the SEA will use measures of efficacy and data in identifying such practices and assessing the impact of its dissemination activities;
- 2) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices used by, and the benefits of, charter schools that effectively incorporate student body diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity and diversity with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;
- 3) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate; and
- 4) For an SEA that proposes to use a portion of its grant funds to award dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221a(f)(6)(B)), the quality of the subgrant award process and the likelihood that such dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and contribute to improved student academic achievement.

**Strengths:**

The applicant notes that "the past success of OSSE's dissemination grants and the current results seen from the State System of Support (SSOS) has made OSSE a leader in the identification and dissemination of best practice." (p. 33) Based on 9 dissemination grant awards in the last CSP award cycle and the PCSB high quality charters, it appears as if the dissemination model is successful.

The LEA Support Model is intentional in the data driven support it provides.

Of positive note, the SEA proposes information dissemination through connections, collaborations and learning communities amongst its LEAs. This is evidenced through:

- City wide institutes
- Specific grant programs (p. 34)
- OSSE'S cross functional Support Teams
- OSSE LEA Support Institutes
- The Learning Support Network (p. 35)
- Data driven support

As evidence of how it would prioritize dissemination sub grant awards to applicants who focus on research on best or promising practices used by charter schools to effectively incorporate student body diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity and diversity with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, the applicant has targeted schools that "have beaten the odds" and Tier 2 schools with a PMF score of 50 or more, eligible for dissemination grants (p. 36).

The applicant will prioritize dissemination sub grant awards to applicants that focus on discipline and school climate (p. 50). Tracking discipline results is aligned to the PCSB School Equity Report, thus data is regularly available for tracking progress.

The applicant proposes reserving up to 10% of CSP funds to promote promising practices in successful charters. It will disseminate practices regarding improving student achievement, parent satisfaction, management and leadership, start-up challenges and fiscal viability (p. 36).

The applicant has described a thorough and comprehensive dissemination sub grant award process (pp. 49, 53-55). This is in part evidenced in OSSE's use of the PCSB rigorous charter application as the sub grant application. Once PCSB has given a school conditional approval of its application, OSSE is able to move forward with the Planning and Program sub grant award for that school. Based on the PCSB past track record there is a strong likelihood that such dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools in the District of Columbia and continue to contribute to improved student academic achievement.

Additionally, the applicant has described a strong sub grant monitoring policy (p. 45) which includes though is not limited to:

- Single audit results
- Individual complaints
- Unresolved findings
- Excess carryover
- Failure to liquidate
- Lack of alignment between expenditures and budgets

This strong monitoring process for the sub grant supports dissemination activities in that it monitors grantees fidelity to its plan activities. Sharing best practice about charter planning and first year implementation practices supports the development of new charters in tested planning and first year implementation strategies.

In addition, the SEA proposes to prioritize dissemination sub grant awards to applicants that focus on (p. 50).

- Successful Special education practices
- Effectively incorporating student body diversity,
- Discipline
- School climate
- Improving educational outcomes for EDS

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant proposes information dissemination through "specific grant programs" (p. 45), it remains unclear what specific grant programs lend themselves to information dissemination best practices.

While the applicant proposes to prioritize dissemination sub grant awards to applicants who focus on research on best or promising practices used by charter schools that address educationally disadvantaged students it did not explain how it would determine or define best practice.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA 's plan (including any use of grant administrative or other funds) to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. In determining the quality of the SEA' s plan to provide oversight to authorized public chartering agencies, the Secretary considers how well the SEA' s plan will ensure that authorized public chartering agencies are --**

- 1) Seeking and approving charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools;**
- 2) Approving charter school petitions with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, including, but not limited to, school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies and diversity in student bodies with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;**
- 3) Establishing measureable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools (including alternative charter schools, virtual charter schools, and charter schools that include pre-kindergarten, if such schools exist in the State) that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school as defined in this notice;**
- 4) Monitoring their charter schools on at least an annual basis, including conducting an in-depth review of each charter school at least once every five years, to ensure that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter or performance contracts and complying with applicable State and Federal laws;**
- 5) Using increases in student academic achievement as one of the most important factors in renewal decisions; basing renewal decisions on a comprehensive set of criteria, which are set forth in the charter or performance contract; and revoking, not renewing, or encouraging the voluntary termination of charters held by academically poor-performing charter schools;**
- 6) Providing, on an annual basis, public reports on the performance of their portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school with respect to meeting the terms of, and expectations set forth in, the school 's charter or performance contract;**
- 7) Supporting charter school autonomy while holding charter schools accountable for results and meeting the terms of their charters or performance contracts; and**
- 8) Ensuring the continued accountability of charter schools during any transition to new State assessments or accountability systems, including those based on college- and career-ready standards.**

**Strengths:**

The following are evidence of how well the OSSE through the PCSB as the sole authorizing charter agency (p. 5) seeks and approves charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools (pp. 34-35).

- CSP sub grant dissemination funds, and RTTT and SOAR funds to support dissemination of best practices
- Learning communities, cross functional support team
- LEA support Institutes
- The Learning support Network
- The strong OSSE/PCSB collaboration

As one example of how these strategies support strong charter applications, OSSE uses the PCSB application for its CSP sub grant application (p. 54). This allows the OSSE to only approve sub grants that have already gone through the PCSB rigorous application process as a grantee must have PCSB conditional approval to receive an award. In other words, the sub grant awards are an incentive for quality charter applications.

The applicant has described a robust authorization process that approves only high quality charter school applications. This is largely evidenced by the application requirements (i.e. performance goals) and by the rigorous review process. The review process is based on the following five criteria (p. 8):

- Demonstrated need
- Sufficient plan development progress
- Alignment between the mission/philosophy and the educational organizational and fiscal components of the plan
- Inclusion of special populations
- Capacity and ability of the founding group

Additionally, PCSB employs a fairly detailed multi-tier approval process (p. 80). This review process covers:

- Staff evaluation
- A detailed interview with the applicant
- Public hearings
- Board vote for conditional approval
- Planning year (up to 18 months) facility attainment
- Board vote for final approval

Having won national awards for authorization (p. 10), the applicant has ably demonstrated strong, transparent, effective and measureable academic and operational performance expectations for all its charter schools that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school. This is demonstrated with the following measures:

- Performance Management Framework (PMF) -measures academic and school climate results (p. 3)
- The High School PMF - measures graduation rates, college acceptance and AP/IB credits.
- Finance and Accounting Review (FAR)-measures financial health, performance and strength (p. 4)
- School Equity Reports- measure growth, attendance, and discipline outcomes
- Compliance Reports (pp. 5-6)

The PCSB and OSSE ensure charter school accountability by working closely together on holding schools accountable. In addition to the PCSB five year review which ensures that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter contracts, charters are monitored annually by OSSE through the OSSE ESEA Flexibility waiver and accountability structure (p. 39) to ensure improved achievement and compliance with applicable State and Federal laws. PCSB and OSSE jointly monitor charter school compliance with special education law. A significant OSSE finding could result in a PCSB school closure. The authorizer (PCSB) annually publishes school Compliance Reports (p. 5).

In addition to having the authority to revoke a charter if (p. 6) it finds that the school has not met its goals and academic achievement expectations. As with its support system, the PCSB bases renewal decisions on school data as reported in the numerous measures and performance frameworks noted earlier. DC policy indicates that increases in student achievement is one of the most important renewal factors (p. 39). The PCSB may revoke a charter if the charter school:

- Materially violated the law
- Materially violated its charter

- Is economically non-viable
- Has an established pattern of fiscal mismanagement
- Or a pattern of non-adherence to GAAP

The applicant's clear and transparent expectations in each of the performance frameworks (PMF, HS PMF, FAR, Equity reports, etc.) and monitoring processes and timelines are strong evidence of how the PCSB holds all its charters accountable. At the same time the PCSB's support of innovation, exemplary practice and learning communities and use of dissemination grants are indicative of a charter's autonomy and increased flexibility.

The applicant included "transition to PARRC assessments" as one of the sessions in the 2014-2015 OSSE LEA Support Institute (p.35).

**Weaknesses:**

While there may have been a session on state assessment transition at the 2014-2015 LEA Institute, the applicant has insufficiently addressed how it will ensure the continued accountability of charter schools during the transition to the new PARRC assessments.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Selection Criteria - Management Plan and Theory of Action**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and the project 's theory of action. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project s theory of action, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The quality, including the cohesiveness and strength of reasoning, of the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) and the extent to which it addresses the role of the grant in promoting the State-level strategy for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students through CSP subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation; optional dissemination subgrants; optional revolving loan funds; and other strategies;

2) The extent to which the SEA' s project-specific performance measures, including any measures required by the Department, support the logic model; and

3) The adequacy of the management plan to --

i. Achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including the existence of clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks; and

ii. Address any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that are identified in an audit or other monitoring review.

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive management plan and theory of action for assessing the achievement of the objectives, including developing performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the logic model application requirement and performance measures section of this notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the logic model requirement when addressing this criterion.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided a complete and comprehensive logic model with ambitious outputs that align to the project goals and objectives. The strength of the logic model lies in its alignment to the existing performance expectations and

measures. As currently written the project has a strong likelihood of improving the educational outcomes for students through CSP sub grants for planning, program design, and initial implementation, dissemination, loan funds, and other proven strategies, and meeting its goals and objectives (pp. 46-48).

The applicant's project-specific performance measures as well as Department specific measures support the logic model. This is well evidenced in the logic model where the inputs, outputs and short term objectives are specifically provided for each project Goal (pp. 46-48).

As well, the inputs, outputs and outcomes are in strong alignment with the applicant's authorization, oversight and dissemination systems.

The proposed management plan has a strong likelihood of achieving the project objectives on time and within budget. This is evidenced by an experienced staff with strong charter knowledge and expertise, clearly defined roles and responsibilities between the applicant and PCSB, well defined timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (pp. 43-45, staff resumes).

This is in part evidenced by the proposed Director, Program Director, 1.5 Program Analysts job responsibilities and resumes which are in alignment to the program systems noted earlier.

Of positive note is the strong collaborative working relationship between the OSSE and PCSB.

In addition to proposing a strong management plan, the applicant noted several releases from previous IDEA non-compliance consent decrees (Blackman, Petties, Jones p. 13). Additionally, OSEP has removed two special conditions from the District's FFY 2014 grant award for the first time in the District's history. The applicant has demonstrated strong progress and significant improvement in this area.

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Project Design**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the SEA 's charter school subgrant program, including the extent to which the project design furthers the SEA' s overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and improving student academic achievement. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The quality of the SEA' s process for awarding subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, if applicable, for dissemination, including:**

**i. The subgrant application and peer review process, timelines for these processes, and how the SEA intends to ensure that subgrants will be awarded to eligible applicants demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; and**

**ii. A reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence, of**

**a) the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award during the project period and the average size of those subgrants, including an explanation of any assumptions upon which the estimates are based; and**

**b) if the SEA has previously received a CSP grant, the percentage of eligible applicants that were**

awarded subgrants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of the applicant pool;

2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees;

3) How the SEA will create a portfolio of subgrantees that focuses on areas of need within the State, such as increasing student body diversity or maintaining a high level of student body diversity, and how this focus aligns with the State-Level Strategy;

4) The steps the SEA will take to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA's charter school subgrant program; and

5) A description of any requested waivers of statutory or regulatory provisions over which the Secretary exercises administrative authority and the extent to which those waivers will, if granted, further the objectives of the project.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has proposed a strong and viable sub grant application and peer review process (pp. 53-55). Of positive note is that the OSSE will work in collaboration with PCSB to require only one application, the PCSB application for charter approval, and the three year sub-grant. Additionally, the PCSB application is conditional and final sub grant approval timelines are in alignment with the Planning and Program Design and the Initial Implementation phases of the sub grant (p. 54). This strong alignment to an already rigorous application process will ensure grant awards to developers demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools.

The applicant has proposed a reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence of how it determined the number and types of sub grants.

The applicant used past CSP sub grant award history to determine the number of sub grants for this project period. As such, the applicant proposes to award CSP sub-grants to 100% of its charter applicants that make it through the PCSB application process (p. 55). This equates to 4 new charters per year (p. 49).

The average size of the grant will be as follows (p. 49):

- Planning and Program Design phase: \$225,000
- Initial Implementation phase: \$ 265,000

Additionally, the applicant thoughtfully proposes a \$5,000 yearly increase to account for inflation.

The applicant has a well-developed process for monitoring CSP sub grantees. The sub grant process application is strongly aligned to the PCSB application process. Monitoring will be through at least one annual on-site monitoring visit and desk audits (p. 57). Additionally, the applicant will use PCSB reports (PMF, FAR, Equity etc.) as part of its sub grant oversight process (pp. 53-56).

Additionally, the newly created EGMS federal grant data system will house all sub-grantee applications and data (p. 55). This new grant monitoring system will facilitate transparency and grant tracking for both the charter school and the applicant.

The applicant will inform teachers, parents, and communities of the charter school sub grant program via the following (p. 53).

- The weekly LEA newsletter
- State System of Support website
- Ongoing outreach activities

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated a strong process for awarding sub grants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, dissemination.

The applicant has requested two waivers. The first is to extend the Section 5202(c)(1) three year project period to five years. The rationale for this request is that historically there have been up to four new charters per year (a total of 20 within a five year grant period ). The applicant is making the request to extend the grant period to achieve the number of

proposed new charters (p. 57). The applicant notes that the waiver will not change the thirty-six month sub grantee grant period.

The second request is a waiver from Section 5202(d)(2) so that charters may receive the Dissemination grant more than once during the CSP grant period.

**Weaknesses:**

Other than noting that the primary consideration for charter applications are schools that will improve academic performance and seek to serve at-risk students and those with disabilities via the use of CSP grant funds, the applicant has minimally addressed a plan with criteria or definitions to determine these priorities (p. 53).

Nor, did the applicant specify how it would create a portfolio of sub grantees that focuses on other specific areas of need, such as at-risk students and students with disabilities, within the District of Columbia.

The applicant did not specifically describe the rationale or impact of charters receiving a Dissemination grant more than once during the grant period.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

**Competitive Preference Priority 1: High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

**a) Frameworks and processes to evaluate the performance of charter schools on a regular basis that include--**

**1) Rigorous academic and operational performance expectations (including performance expectations related to financial management and equitable treatment of all students and applicants);**

**2) Performance objectives for each school aligned to those expectations;**

**3) Clear criteria for renewing the charter of a school based on an objective body of evidence, including evidence that the charter school has (a) met the performance objectives outlined in the charter or performance contract; (b) demonstrated organizational and fiscal viability; and (c) demonstrated fidelity to the terms of the charter or performance contract and applicable law;**

**4) Clear criteria for revoking the charter of a school if there is violation of law or public trust regarding student safety or public funds, or evidence of poor student academic achievement; and**

**5) Annual reporting by authorized public chartering agencies to each of their authorized charter schools that summarizes the individual school 's performance and compliance, based on this framework, and identifies any areas that need improvement.**

**b) Clear and specific standards and formalized processes that measure and benchmark the performance of the authorized public chartering agency or agencies, including the performance of its portfolio of charter schools, and provide for the annual dissemination of information on such performance;**

**c) Authorizing processes that establish clear criteria for evaluating charter applications and include a**

**multi-tiered clearance or review of a charter school, including a final review immediately before the school opens for its first operational year; or**

**d) Authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has been successful (as determined by the authorized public chartering agency) in establishing and operating one or more high-quality charter schools.**

**Strengths:**

The PSCB has developed three nationally recognized frameworks to evaluate the academic, fiscal and equity performance of every school in its portfolio. These frameworks align expectations to the performance objectives and are annually reported annually and publicly available on the applicant's website.

The applicant has described the clear and specific standards and processes to measure the performance and viability of its charter schools. This is evidenced as follows.

- Performance Management Framework (PMF) -measures academic and school climate results (p. 3)
- The High School PMF - measures graduation rates, college acceptance and AP/IB credits.
- Finance and Accounting Review (FAR)-measures financial health, performance and strength
- School Equity Reports- measure growth, attendance, and discipline outcomes
- Compliance Reports (pp. 5-6)

The applicant has provided clear criteria for renewing and revoking the charter of a school. This is in part evidenced with the alignment between the expectations in the framework to the performance measures. As such, both renewal and revocation criteria are clear, transparent and based on an objective body of evidence.

After 15 years in operation charters must submit a renewal application for another 15 year term. Only schools in Tier 1 may apply for renewal. Thus, the PSCB conduct site visits every five years in part, to ensure compliance to the expectations in the performance frameworks, but also to determine progress towards renewal. When conducting a charter review, the PSCB is authorized in code ( 38-1802.12.(a)(3) to revoke a charter if the findings indicate that a school has not met its goals or academic expectations, or materially violated the law or charter (p. 1).

The District of Columbia formally evaluates the performance of the PCSB on an annual basis (p. 21). The PCSB is also required to submit to the District of Columbia and post its annual PAR (Performance Accountability Report). The PAR reports specific achievement results, measures related to the performance of the Boards charters and 17 other measures and targets noted on page 22.

The applicant has described a comprehensive and differentiated authorizing processes that includes a differentiated review process for charter applications to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has the capacity to open and sustain a high quality charter. The applicants multi-level application process includes, published application criteria (demonstrated need, progress in plan development, alignment of mission/philosophy and educational, organizational and fiscal components, inclusion of special populations and capacity and ability of the founding team).

The application review process includes:

- Staff evaluation of the application
- Applicant interview
- A public hearing
- Staff evaluation report
- Board vote for Conditional approval
- Contract negotiations
- On site reviews prior to school openings
- Charters meeting pre-opening requirements

Additionally, there are three separate processes and timelines for approving new schools.

1. New applicants with no track record - Spring application with a focus on academic, operational and fiscal plans and strength of founding group
2. Experienced operators outside of D.C. reviewed in the Fall, with a focus on prior track record and strength of

plans

3. Existing DC charter operators reviewed in December, with a focus on expansion

The completeness and thoroughness of this application process demonstrates the applicant's thorough knowledge and understanding of what is necessary for a complete vetting of charter applications. There is a strong likelihood of opening only high quality charter schools (pp. 8-9). Of positive note, the applicant received the NACSA Award for Excellence in Improving practice in Authorizing in 2008 (p. 10).

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a LEA, or an Appeals Process**

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that 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 LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

**Note:** In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

**Strengths:**

While the DC Council has the authority to establish additional charters the Public Charter School Board PCSB is the only authorized public chartering agency in the District of Columbia for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school, per the DC School Reform Act (DC code 38-1802.14(a)(1)). PCSB is not an LEA (pp. 9-10).

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/31/2015 08:32 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2015 12:15 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (U282A150028)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>State-Level Strategy</b>		
1. State-Level Strategy	15	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	13
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Policy Context for Charter Schools</b>		
1. Policy Context	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Past Performance</b>		
1. Past Performance	10	8
<b>Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students</b>		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	10
<b>Vision for Growth and Accountability</b>		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	10
<b>Dissemination of Information and Best Practices</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	9
<b>Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies</b>		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	14
<b>Management Plan and Theory of Action</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	9
<b>Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	10
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	70
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes</b>		
1. CPP 1	15	15
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	15
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process</b>		

1. CPP 2

	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	5
<b>Total</b>	120	108

# Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - SEA Panel - 10: 84.282A

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

Applicant: DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (U282A150028)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - State-Level Strategy

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the State-level strategy for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students throughout the State. In determining the quality of the State-level strategy, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which the SEA 's CSP activities, including the subgrant program, are integrated into the State s overall strategy for improving student academic achievement and attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) and closing achievement and attainment gaps, and complement or leverage other statewide education reform efforts;

2) The extent to which funding equity for charter schools (including equitable funding for charter school facilities) is incorporated into the SEA' s State-level strategy; and

3) The extent to which the State encourages local strategies for improving student academic achievement and attainment that involve charter schools, including but not limited to the following:

i. Collaboration, including the sharing of data and promising instructional and other practices, between charter schools and other public schools or providers of early learning and development programs or alternative education programs; and

ii. The creation of charter schools that would serve as viable options for students who currently attend, or would otherwise attend, the State 's lowest-performing schools.

### Strengths:

The applicant provides data that 44% of students in their area are served in charter schools. The District of Columbia also has determined charter schools to be LEAs and holds them to the same accountability standards as the traditional public schools. The proposed activities are shown to be integrated into DC's overall strategy to close achievement gaps and improve student achievement.

Incentives have been created to focus on continuous and sustainable improvement through accountability and classification systems. Support is provided and federal funds are targeted to programs and interventions to schools demonstrating both success and need for improvement.

The applicant asserts charter schools have played a key role in demonstrating improvement in education and compliance with federal requirements. Additionally, the SEA has aligned ELA state assessment to college and career-ready standards with other subject areas scheduled for completion. This alignment allowed schools to design instruction and supports using assessment results aligned to the CCSS.

The applicant identifies more than 76% of students as educationally disadvantaged and DC policy makers have prioritized support for these students directly to the schools as part of the Fair Student Funding and School Baaed Budgeting Act of 2013. Additional funds are added to support economically disadvantaged students resulting in \$2079 extra for DC's most economically disadvantaged students in charter and traditional public schools. Facilities funding for public charter schools is financed through a student allowance of \$3072 per student as well as direct loan and credit enhancement programs to support an incubator imitative for charter schools.

The effort to support new public charter schools has also allowed for temporary space to be provided so that schools are

able to open and focus on operations and curriculum issues, rather than facility issues. (p. 15) Additionally, DC has developed created public-private partnerships to support charter schools to launch successfully.

Collaboration between charter schools and public schools occurs through cross-sector communities of practice using PLCs and sharing of the data and promising practices as they work to improve student achievement. Monthly data discussion meetings also occur along with mini-grant competitions, data summits, and other project to encourage collaboration and dissemination of best practices across the state. (p. 18) These strategies are solid ways of connecting educators and creating forums where learning and excellence can be shared.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not include high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates as required in funding criteria.

Information was not shared detailing the State's encouragement of local strategies for improving student academic achievement and attainment and the role of charter schools as viable options for students who currently attend, or would otherwise attend, the States lowest performing schools as required.

**Reader's Score:** 13

**Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools**

**1. The Secretary considers the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project. In determining the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The degree of flexibility afforded to charter schools under the State' s charter school law, including:**

**i. The extent to which charter schools in the State are exempt from State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools; and**

**ii. The extent to which charter schools in the State have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over the charter school s budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum;**

**2) The quality of the SEA' s processes for:**

**i. Annually informing each charter school in the State about Federal funds the charter school is eligible to receive and Federal programs in which the charter school may participate; and**

**ii. Annually ensuring that each charter school in the State receives, in a timely fashion, the school s commensurate share of Federal funds that are allocated by formula each year, particularly during the first year of operation of the school and during a year in which the school 's enrollment expands significantly; and**

**3) The quality of the SEA 's plan to ensure that charter schools that are considered to be LEAs under State law and LEAs in which charter schools are located will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e) (1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has submitted a proposal which shows flexibility for charter schools, including waivers that have been granted. The schools have full autonomy over the program, unless they are showing poor performance and become a Tier 3 school. They provide a strong communication procedure to allow charter schools equitable funding and require charter schools to submit enrollment projections so that they may be included in the budget forecasting.

The applicant asserts that DC has the strongest charter school law in the country as cited by ed reform. (p. 17) They give examples of autonomy allowed through DC law giving exclusive control over charter schools expenditures, administration, personnel, and instructional methods to the charter school. They are also exempt from "District of Columbia Statutes, policies, rules, and regulations established for the District of Columbia public schools by the Superintendent, Board of Education, Mayor, and the District of Columbia Council unless otherwise provided by the School Reform Act." This law shows a commitment to allow Charter Schools maximum flexibility to create and deliver a program that is not hampered by laws and regulations.

Charter schools are considered and shown to be LEAs under state law and are expected to comply with IDEA, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX and Section 504 in the DC application.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses seen.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Past Performance**

**1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State;**

**2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and**

**3) Whether, and the extent to which, the academic achievement and academic attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) of charter school students equal or exceed the academic achievement and academic attainment of similar students in other public schools in the State over the past five years.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides data on page 21 of the improvement and increase in number and percentage of students attending high performing charter schools. They also share there has been a reduction of students attending poor performing charter schools. The data provided shows clear improvement and is based on academic performance indicators including attendance and reenrollment.

The state has developed a measurement scale and a tier system to indicate performance of the charter school. A Tier 1 Status school must score 65 or higher (out of 100) on the performance management framework. Schools in Tier 1 consistently are encouraged to expand, replicate, and make efforts to serve more students. This rating system allows parents a clear view of the successful program of a charter as they make choices to enroll or remain in the traditional public school.

The number of seats at Tier I charter schools increased by 43% from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015, providing an increase of 4125 high-quality seats in schools. The applicant details further expansion occurring next year.

The applicant shows the reduction of seats in Tier 3 poor performing schools of 63%. This data shows the commitment of the applicant to provide high quality charter schools, and to address the issues of low-performing charter schools.

The applicant identifies 12 charter schools that were closed over the last four years, eliminating 3701 low-quality seats for children. Closing charter schools is not an easy task to take on and the data showing these schools closed demonstrates a commitment to high-quality schools for educationally disadvantaged students.

The applicant states that DC results showed substantial improvements over the last five years with 23% increase in math scores, 14% increase in reading scores, and a 16% increase in science scores. Through the DC Assessment System exams, the students in 10th grade revealed the highest growth in six years.

The charter school sector shows higher proficiency rates than the traditional school system and has shown steady growth over the past six years. The applicant provides data tables showing achievement for the past five years and believes funding from the Charter School Programs has supported these successes. (p. 23)

#### Weaknesses

The applicant does not provide a five year review of school closures on page 22. The application would be strengthened by including data from the years 2010 and 2011 and the number of school closures as required in the criteria. Information was shared about the number of seats which

#### **Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide a five year review of school closures on page 22. The application would be strengthened by including data from the years 2010 and 2011 and the number of school closures as required in the criteria. Information was shared about the number of seats which does not give a clear picture of how many schools have been closed.

**Reader's Score: 8**

#### **Selection Criteria - Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA 's plan to support educationally disadvantaged students. In determining the quality of the plan to support educationally disadvantaged students, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The extent to which the SEA' s charter school subgrant program would--**

**i. Assist students, particularly educationally disadvantaged students, in meeting and exceeding State academic content standards and State student achievement standards; and**

**ii. Reduce or eliminate achievement gaps for educationally disadvantaged students;**

**2) The quality of the SEA 's plan to ensure that charter schools attract, recruit, admit, enroll, serve, and retain educationally disadvantaged students equitably, meaningfully, and, with regard to educationally disadvantaged students who are students with disabilities or English learners, in a manner consistent with, as appropriate, the IDEA (regarding students with disabilities) and civil rights laws, in particular, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;**

**3) The extent to which the SEA will encourage innovations in charter schools, such as models, policies, supports, or structures, that are designed to improve the academic achievement of educationally disadvantaged students; and**

**4) The quality of the SEA 's plan for monitoring all charter schools to ensure compliance with Federal**

**and State laws, particularly laws related to educational equity, nondiscrimination, and access to public schools for educationally disadvantaged students.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant is proposing to support educationally disadvantaged students by providing additional start-up funds to new charter schools working with these students. They also plan to provide a training series to help new charters access and become aware of supports available to them.

They plan to disseminate funds to projects that focus on improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged students by raising achievement and attainment for specific subgroups and reducing achievement gaps between subgroups. This strategy is in line with the goals of the charter school programs and DCs approach to provided additions resources to serve this population.

These strategies are powerful incentives for schools to identify and serve educationally disadvantaged students and as schools see the resources and support available, barriers to taking on the work will dissipate.

The applicant identifies the state agency for the District of Columbia as responsible for monitoring all LEAs to ensure compliance with local and federal laws and regulations. They also cite that as per the ESEA Waiver, OSSE will implementation progress for each identified school. Quarterly progress reviews of Priority and Focus schools will occur to monitor and evaluate school implementation progress as well as identify and support improvement needs.

The applicant states that OSSE will bring together public and charter school leadership for an in-person meeting to discuss areas of strength and challenge. Along with agency leaders they will determine necessary corrective actions to address underperformance. Technical support and assistance will also be available to schools in need of support. Peer-based problem solving is a strategy identified to allow for best practice sharing and technical assistance around school performance data.

These strategies are strong and bringing together leaders of schools to examine their data and successes and challenges will provide appropriate pressure and incentive to be focused on the needed work on school improvement. The inclusion of technical support provides the belief that school leaders cannot do this alone.

The law establishing DCs public charter schools as open-enrollment institutions is a strong statement toward equal access for all. The specific provision prohibit enrollment exclusion on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, language, intellectual or athletic ability, etc. is essential. Lottery processes are provided for situations where over enrollment occurs and limited seats are available. The applicant specifically cites steps to encourage and ensure IDEA compliance through their continuum of services available to serve all students regardless of special needs. The

**Weaknesses:**

No mention was made of the SEA encouraging innovation in charter schools designed to improve the academic achievement of educationally disadvantaged students as required in criteria three.

No strategies were shared on the applicant's plan to attract and retain educationally disadvantaged students. On page 24, the applicant states that the CSP subgrant is proposing to provide additional start-up funds to new charter schools seeking to attract, recruit, admit enroll, serve and retain educationally disadvantaged students; but there is no mention of strategies or a plan to do so.

The lack of mention of parents and community members in efforts to attract, enroll, and retain students is a missing in this application. Efforts to connect with parents and community are essential in this effort.

No strategies were shared to explain how the funds made available to subgrantees would encourage innovation in charter schools. A statement was made that these resources have contributed to the success of DC public charter schools, but there is no link connecting how innovation is encouraged that is designed to improve the academic achievement of educationally disadvantaged students.

The application is weak in providing details explaining how they will assist students, particularly educationally disadvantaged students, in meeting and exceeding State academic content standards and State student achievement standards. Information is shared that be done.

The applicant needs to provide more detail on how they will act to make sure compliance occurs and what their plan is for monitoring all charter schools. Information is shared that OSSE has taken significant steps to encourage and ensure compliance, has provided guidance on charter admissions practices, but specific detail is missing about what OSSE will do to ensure compliance.(p. 26)

**Reader's Score: 10**

### **Selection Criteria - Vision for Growth and Accountability**

**1. The Secretary determines the quality of the statewide vision, including the role of the SEA, for charter school growth and accountability. In determining the quality of the statewide vision, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The quality of the SEA' s systems for collecting, analyzing, and publicly reporting data on charter school performance, including data on student academic achievement, attainment (including high school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates), retention, and discipline for all students and disaggregated by student subgroup;**

**2) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA' s plan (including key actions) to support the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period, including a reasonable estimate of the number of high-quality charter schools in the State at both the beginning and the end of the project period; and**

**3) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA' s plan (including key actions) to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools in the State (i.e., through revocation, non-renewal, or voluntary termination of a charter) during the project period.**

**Note: In the context of closing academically poor-performing charter schools, we remind applicants of the importance of ensuring adherence to applicable laws, policies, and procedures that govern the closure of a charter school, the disposition of its assets, and the transfer of its students and student records.**

#### **Strengths:**

The District of Columbia created and launched LearnDC.org, a website that serves as the city's education report card, reporting on critical factors that parents need as they decide where they want their student to go to school. The state OSSE accountability system has provided an opportunity to engage many stakeholders including community, elected officials, parents, and individuals. This system provides transparency to the broad community, giving information on academic assessment data, NAEP scores, graduation rates, and attendance rates. Detail is given on the LEA report card which also has added discipline and special education data.

A powerful aspect of this website is that data is updated regularly to allow current information on performance, school classification and other information. All of these components provide parents a clear picture of the schools and support informed school choice.

The applicant identifies that in 1996, charter schools served 190 students and today over 36,565 students are enrolled in 112 public charter schools operated by 61 nonprofits and 94 separate facilities. The results have been positive as this year 64 campuses were rated Tier I high-quality schools. They cite their Performance Management Framework as a strength in the increase as the community can easily see results on a common scale.

The applicant identifies three key actions to support creation of high-quality schools: effective oversight, meaningful support to school, and comprehensive charter review application processes. Their application process involves in-person questioning and evaluation of the charter plan, use of a framework to objectively measure the performance, school visitations to observed implementation and school quality, and a facilitated self-study.

Support is provided by giving clear feedback and increased oversight to low-performing schools and rewarding high-performing schools with increased autonomy. The provision of autonomy for strong performance is a powerful incentive and a logical one. Annual board-to-board meetings are held to examine progress and identify strengths and weaknesses with plans to improve developed.

The applicant shared their commitment to aggressively close charter schools that are academically poor-performing with systems in place to ensure those schools will be identified and closed over the next five years. Each school is issued a Correction Action Plan.

The applicant demonstrates a commitment and pursuit of excellence in its performance management processes, the clear framework identifying expectations around academic performance, support and technical assistance as needed, and a clear process to close a school, once all efforts to turnaround performance are exhausted.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses seen.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools to each LEA in the State as well as to charter schools, other public schools, and charter school developers (20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(2)(C) and 7221(c)(f)(6)). If an SEA proposes to use a portion of its grant funds for dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6)(B)), the SEA should incorporate these subgrants into the overall plan for dissemination. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The extent to which the SEA will serve as a leader in the State for identifying and disseminating information and research (which may include, but is not limited to, providing technical assistance) about best or promising practices in successful charter schools, including how the SEA will use measures of efficacy and data in identifying such practices and assessing the impact of its dissemination activities;**

**2) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices used by, and the benefits of, charter schools that effectively incorporate student body diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity and diversity with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;**

**3) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate; and**

**4) For an SEA that proposes to use a portion of its grant funds to award dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221a(f)(6)(B)), the quality of the subgrant award process and the likelihood that such dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and contribute to improved student academic achievement.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant cites past success of OSSE's dissemination of grants and the current results seen from the State System of Support as reasons they are viewed as a leader in the identification and dissemination of best practices. They have participated in multiple funding initiatives and applied lessons learned from each in building strong models.

The SEA has organized and supported collaboration among LESA and school leaders by providing opportunities for school leaders to connect with one another in organized learning communities, citywide institutes, and specific grant programs.

OSSE has examined their delivery of services to support aligning efforts across the agency and serving LEAs in a more coordinated manner. Through the LEA Support Team that they have established they are using a cross-functional team approach to better serve LEAs and monitor progress and determine interventions that are needed.

The OSSE is involving others in solving and identifying issues with schools. Through trainings and consultation with LEA representatives, efforts to share best practices and promising practices are targeted to the sites that are in the most need. This method is a "doing with" model rather than a "doing to" model which increases the likelihood that learning will be internalized and implemented.

The applicant has developed a process to reward best practices and foster dissemination through a grant process modeled after the Charter Schools Programs. Charters were eligible to apply for this grant under a variety of categories. A particular strength in this practice is the priority given to applicants who proposed to pair with a low performing schools in "Focus" or "Priority" status under the ESEA Waiver. This collaboration is a powerful way to team schools and support low performing schools through peer partnerships and peer modeling.

The applicant awarded nine dissemination grants to charter schools based on the criteria for a total of \$1.741, 175. Using grant dollars to support innovation through school developed projects is a strong model for building ownership in innovation at the site.

**Weaknesses:**

The application would be strengthened if the applicant defined what they mean by "best practice." They give examples of previous grant sample activities on p. 37, but there is not clear explanation of what is meant by best practices and what evidence they use to support the labeling of strategies as best practice.

**Reader's Score:**      9

**Selection Criteria - Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA 's plan (including any use of grant administrative or other funds) to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. In determining the quality of the SEA' s plan to provide oversight to authorized public chartering agencies, the Secretary considers how well the SEA' s plan will ensure that authorized public chartering agencies are --**

**1) Seeking and approving charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools;**

**2) Approving charter school petitions with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, including, but not limited to, school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies and diversity in student bodies with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;**

**3) Establishing measureable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools**

(including alternative charter schools, virtual charter schools, and charter schools that include pre-kindergarten, if such schools exist in the State) that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school as defined in this notice;

4) Monitoring their charter schools on at least an annual basis, including conducting an in-depth review of each charter school at least once every five years, to ensure that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter or performance contracts and complying with applicable State and Federal laws;

5) Using increases in student academic achievement as one of the most important factors in renewal decisions; basing renewal decisions on a comprehensive set of criteria, which are set forth in the charter or performance contract; and revoking, not renewing, or encouraging the voluntary termination of charters held by academically poor-performing charter schools;

6) Providing, on an annual basis, public reports on the performance of their portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school with respect to meeting the terms of, and expectations set forth in, the school's charter or performance contract;

7) Supporting charter school autonomy while holding charter schools accountable for results and meeting the terms of their charters or performance contracts; and

8) Ensuring the continued accountability of charter schools during any transition to new State assessments or accountability systems, including those based on college- and career-ready standards.

**Strengths:**

The applicant states that the PCSB is currently the only eligible charter authorizer in DC as established in DC law. The process of seeking and approving charter school petitions is a clearly lined out process involving board appointed by the DC mayor, the DC Council and the Deputy Mayor of Education. OSSE staff are non-voting participants through the new school application process.

The process is open, transparent, and the deciders are able to debate the merits of applications and come to agreements about which schools should be approved. The process used in evaluating the application looks carefully on the past experience of the school and the likelihood that the applicant will become a high-quality school. PCSB policy clearly states an increase in student academic achievement is one of the most important factors in the renewal decision of the charter school.

There are multiple ways that schools results are shared with the public and the parties mentioned previously create and make public city-wide Equity Reports sharing school academic, attendance and discipline outcomes by student subgroup. These are compared with citywide subgroup performance to give a comprehensive view for comparison.

Regularly scheduled monitoring processes are designed to evaluate charter schools' performance in five year increments. However, if a school is not performing to expectations, monitoring occurs immediately and plans are developed to correct the deficit or make arrangements to close the school. It is clear from this proposal that there is high accountability for DC charter schools and that processes exist to monitor and support the charter schools.

The applicant states PCBS and OSSE are working collaboratively to hold schools accountable in the transition to a new assessment system.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no mention made of how DC has identified developers' capacity to create high-quality schools. Information is shared about the process for approval on page 38 and how applications are evaluated. Nowhere in the narrative is there information about attracting petitions from developers that have a high degree of success with charter schools.

No information is shared about the measureable academic and operational expectations for all charter schools. Reference is made on page 38 that PCSB and OSSE established measureable academic expectations for schools in creating a joint-accountability structure, but the measureable goals are not shared. Including the expectations would strengthen this application.

### Selection Criteria - Management Plan and Theory of Action

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and the project's theory of action. In determining the quality of the management plan and the project's theory of action, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The quality, including the cohesiveness and strength of reasoning, of the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) and the extent to which it addresses the role of the grant in promoting the State-level strategy for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students through CSP subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation; optional dissemination subgrants; optional revolving loan funds; and other strategies;

2) The extent to which the SEA's project-specific performance measures, including any measures required by the Department, support the logic model; and

3) The adequacy of the management plan to --

i. Achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including the existence of clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks; and

ii. Address any compliance issues or findings related to the CSP that are identified in an audit or other monitoring review.

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive management plan and theory of action for assessing the achievement of the objectives, including developing performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the logic model application requirement and performance measures section of this notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the logic model requirement when addressing this criterion.

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant states their theory of action is that if DC schools receive funding the CSP, then OSSE will be able to continue to support the increase in the number of high-quality charter schools in DC and across the nation. The applicant believes improved monitoring, data collection and collaboration will increase the number of schools in the district through improving processes, expanded communication, and training support. The belief present in their theory of action is "success breeds success".

The logic model/management plan provides information about the objectives of the project. There is a clear model which identifies three project goals and provides details on short term outcomes, long term outcomes and specific performance measures. The chart provides an easy to understand model which breaks out the inputs to categories related to the grant requirements.

The applicant identifies the project director, demonstrates the ability of the manager to manage the project and provide deliverables within the funding period, and identifies the staff available to support the director in the numerous tasks involved. The identification of a program analyst position demonstrates the applicant's commitment to oversee the overall and day-to-day activities within the grant program.

**Weaknesses:**

The management plan would be improved with the addition of a timeline showing dates. While the charts beginning on page 46 are helpful and show short term outcomes and long term outcomes, dates to provide clarity about how the project will roll out over the three year period would strengthen this proposal.

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Selection Criteria - Project Design**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the SEA 's charter school subgrant program, including the extent to which the project design furthers the SEA' s overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and improving student academic achievement. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**1) The quality of the SEA' s process for awarding subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, if applicable, for dissemination, including:**

**i. The subgrant application and peer review process, timelines for these processes, and how the SEA intends to ensure that subgrants will be awarded to eligible applicants demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; and**

**ii. A reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence, of**

**a) the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award during the project period and the average size of those subgrants, including an explanation of any assumptions upon which the estimates are based; and**

**b) if the SEA has previously received a CSP grant, the percentage of eligible applicants that were awarded subgrants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of the applicant pool;**

**2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees;**

**3) How the SEA will create a portfolio of subgrantees that focuses on areas of need within the State, such as increasing student body diversity or maintaining a high level of student body diversity, and how this focus aligns with the State-Level Strategy;**

**4) The steps the SEA will take to inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEA' s charter school subgrant program; and**

**5) A description of any requested waivers of statutory or regulatory provisions over which the Secretary exercises administrative authority and the extent to which those waivers will, if granted, further the objectives of the project.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly identifies three design strategies to accomplish their mission of removing barriers and creating pathways for District residents to receive an education that prepares them for success in college careers and life. Their goal of supporting the creation of new high-quality charter schools commits to three years of funding and sets an amount that grows with inflation and increases during the implementation year. The applicant uses past charter school approvals to anticipate approval of 4 new charter schools per grant year.

Incentives are provided to attract and recruit educationally disadvantaged students. Additionally, trainings will be held to ensure new charter schools are aware of and can access all supports available to them in DC. Incentives are an effective way to draw interest in opening schools for educationally disadvantaged students, and couple with the training opportunities, this strategy should provide results for the applicant.

The applicant identifies two dissemination grant competitions that will prioritize funding dissemination projects that focus

on improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged students; award priority points to charter schools seeking to disseminate best and promising practices related to student discipline and school climate or effectively incorporating student body diversity with respect to improving academic achievement for disadvantaged students; and award priority points to applicants who seek to disseminate successful special education practices to partner LEAs who relied on the district to provide special education services. The applicant has clearly identified crux issues in charter schools and offered funded opportunities for charters to create solutions that can be shared with all.

A peer review process is outlined which will include a call for reviewers, provide training on requirements and scoring, and implement a conflict of interest form.

The applicant identifies a communication strategy on the grant opportunity and shows partnerships that will support broad communication about the opportunity. The description of funded projects will be posted and shared with stakeholders. It is important that the applicant clearly states that charters with significant compliance issues will not be eligible for awards.

The applicant clearly identifies a waiver request to change from a 3 year project period to a five year grant period, and a waiver request to allow high quality charter schools that have effectively disseminated best practices and produced improvement in their partner school be eligible to receive Dissemination grants more than once. They believe the waivers will maximize the impact the SCP funds can have in DC.

On page 53, the applicant states it will create a portfolio of subgrantees that focus on the needs of their state. They identify the area of need as historically underserved students and students with disabilities. Additionally, they will work to share the needs with charter school providers.

The applicant states on page 53 that it will use Learn DC as a specific plan to inform stakeholders about the various charter school subgrants program as well as the schools' results.

The applicant states it will hire a third party evaluator to ensure the goals of the subgrants are being met. The evaluator will monitor schools once annually. (p.37) The evaluator will work with OPCSFS staff to finalize an evaluation plan to include the benchmarks, frequency of reporting, qualitative and quantitative data to be analyzed and the instruments that will be used to assess the validity of the plan and the project objectives.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses seen.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1: High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

**To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:**

**a) Frameworks and processes to evaluate the performance of charter schools on a regular basis that include--**

**1) Rigorous academic and operational performance expectations (including performance expectations related to financial management and equitable treatment of all students and applicants);**

**2) Performance objectives for each school aligned to those expectations;**

3) Clear criteria for renewing the charter of a school based on an objective body of evidence, including evidence that the charter school has (a) met the performance objectives outlined in the charter or performance contract; (b) demonstrated organizational and fiscal viability; and (c) demonstrated fidelity to the terms of the charter or performance contract and applicable law;

4) Clear criteria for revoking the charter of a school if there is violation of law or public trust regarding student safety or public funds, or evidence of poor student academic achievement; and

5) Annual reporting by authorized public chartering agencies to each of their authorized charter schools that summarizes the individual school 's performance and compliance, based on this framework, and identifies any areas that need improvement.

b) Clear and specific standards and formalized processes that measure and benchmark the performance of the authorized public chartering agency or agencies, including the performance of its portfolio of charter schools, and provide for the annual dissemination of information on such performance;

c) Authorizing processes that establish clear criteria for evaluating charter applications and include a multi-tiered clearance or review of a charter school, including a final review immediately before the school opens for its first operational year; or

d) Authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has been successful (as determined by the authorized public chartering agency) in establishing and operating one or more high-quality charter schools.

**Strengths:**

Annual reports are submitted by authorized public chartering agencies to each of their authorized charter schools that summarize the individual school's performance and compliance, based on this framework, and identifies any areas that need improvement. An annual review process will occur on a yearly basis to evaluate progress toward meeting or exceeding the performance goals in the school's application.

A narrative describing the school's statewide assessment results was developed with the plan being to close gaps and maintain or improve results on academic attainment and achievement.

Clear criteria will be developed as a result of Indiana law detailed on page 35 stating the authorizer must develop a closure protocol that allows for timely notification to parents, the orderly transition of student and student records, and the proper disposition of school funds, property and assets. The authorizer must oversee the process.

Annual reports must be shared with the charter authorizer for review. The authorizer will compile these reports into portfolios that are submitted to SCDE. Areas of improvement must be shared with the schools and opportunity for improvement must be possible unless the problem warrants revocation.

Charter school outcomes are based on national industry standards of quality charter schools and practices are consistent with those standards. Authorizers will partner with NASCA to develop Principles and Standards against which they will be assessed. Results to these assessments will be posted in the portfolios on the charter program web site.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses seen.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: One Authorized Public Chartering Agency Other than a LEA, or an Appeals Process**

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that 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 LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

**Note:** In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

**Strengths:**

The applicant shows that there is a public chartering agency that is not an LEA. All schools must enter into a contract with PCSB that describes the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses seen.

**Reader's Score:** 5

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