

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

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: State of Nevada, Department of Education (U282A150016)

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>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Policy Context for Charter Schools</b>		
1. Policy Context	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<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	14
<b>Vision for Growth and Accountability</b>		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	8
<b>Dissemination of Information and Best Practices</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	8
<b>Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies</b>		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	12
<b>Management Plan and Theory of Action</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	9
<b>Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>67</b>
<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>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<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 #17 - SEA Panel - 18: 84.282A

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

Applicant: State of Nevada, Department of Education (U282A150016)

## 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 sufficient, thorough detail regarding the state-level strategy that specifies three frameworks: an academic framework, a financial framework, and an organizational framework emblematic of a compelling vision. The applicant reports recent cultural and systemic reforms that target all citizens. State-wide, six goals concern all schools and result in reliable, regular measurement. The plan is coordinated, detailed and comprehensive and is strategically focused on a charter-driven turnaround mechanism targeting the state's lowest performing schools. (pp.12-14). The strategy includes a first-in-the-nation investment that will fund a non-profit dedicated to incubating high-quality urban charter schools in the state.

The applicant's equitable funding strategy provides for charter schools receiving all eligible funds based on student enrollment and student eligibility. Allocation to charters is equitable yet customizable based on need (p. 14). This includes access to local, state and federal funds. Funding equity is exemplar in that it addresses proportionate funding.

The applicant states that charter schools are afforded great flexibility and are responsive to local issues and needs (p. 15). The Nevada Department of Education encourages adapting, modifying, and amending education programming to fit local need. The Nevada Department of Education adequately demonstrates working collaboratively to achieve performance standards.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide any information regarding facilities. The applicant fails to discuss any specific collaborative strategies for sharing data and practices.

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 schools 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 states quantitative and qualitative evidence will be collected and assessed (pp. 1-4). Flexibility extends to budgeting, models of instruction, hiring, curricular models and professional development. This implies a great degree of flexibility for charters. This is sufficient evidence.

The applicant states Nevada statutes ensure charters receive equitable shares of federal monies (p. 2). The applicant states that charters receive timely notification and equitable consideration. This is satisfactory in terms of access to opportunities.

In order to receive federal funds such as Title 1 and Title 2, eligibility is ensured (pp. 2-3). State law prohibits discrimination as per federal guidelines. This is specified in the management plan.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

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 states charter schools have expanded in a thoughtful manner from 2010 through 2015 (p. 23). Accountability measures have resulted in high-quality educational choice. Utilizing a 5 star system that denotes overall school performance, the annual frequency of increases of 5-star schools has been impressive. (For example in the 2011-2012 school year, the incidence of 5 star school status was 47%).

The applicant states that occurrences of 1 star schools has decreased with just four schools being notified due to breach or concern. A three level intervention ladder has systematically tracked performance and growth, providing current data and feedback on performance. The applicant demonstrates a modest reduction in the number and percentage of academically poor performing charters (p. 25).

Data is provided that demonstrates the increasing academic quality of charter schools as compared to traditional local schools. Robust outcomes have resulted in charter schools experiencing an increase in graduation rates by 26 points compared to a seven point increase in traditional district schools. Additionally, the applicant presents data indicating that the graduation rate of state-sponsored charters exceeds the state graduation rate significantly (p. 25). The comparison data that is presented by the applicant is compelling.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide additional specific data regarding other factors regarding academic achievement and academic attainment beyond high school graduation rates during the past five years.

Reader's Score: 8

### 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 clearly considers quality for educationally disadvantaged students through four specific, measurable project outcomes which are to increase the number of high-quality charter schools serving students at greatest risk for not meeting standards, improve achievement, promote best practice from charters, and strengthen quality of authorizing and infrastructure to support charter schools. The applicant seeks to specifically assist educationally disadvantaged students by exceeding content standards and reducing the achievement gap through increasing the number of high-quality charter schools. Applicant presents objectives that are matched to outcomes and include activity milestones, identifies the responsible party, and is established on a timeline (p. 28).

The applicant requires charters to incorporate recruitment, admissions, enrollment, and retention policies in a non-biased manner. Provision is made to enroll siblings and the children of staff, faculty and Board members as well. Weighted lotteries have been established. This plan adheres to federal guidelines (p. 30).

Successful practices that are innovative are encouraged, providing options beyond traditional school offerings (p. 18). The applicant states charters may deviate from State Board requirements; for instance charters may establish their own graduation requirements, charters can select their own library books bypassing approval process, and additionally, charters can make all staffing decisions and allow children to enroll in other schools for specific needs and purposes. Cluster programs, multi-site charters, and co-located special education micro schools are additional examples of truly innovative practices (p. 22).

The applicant states that regular performance aligned with the academic framework complies with federal and state laws. Monitoring occurs on a regular basis, annually for academics, quarterly for financials and organizational monitoring is an on-going process (p. 34).

**Weaknesses:**

No monitoring plan to ensure charter schools incorporates recruitment, admissions, enrollment and retention policies in a non-biased manner are presented by the applicant.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**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 reports that a state-wide information system is used to systematically track performance by all charters and the state's two largest districts: all other school districts will utilize the state-wide information system by fall 2016 (p. 36). Data such as academic achievement, graduation rates, post-secondary attainment, retention, and discipline statistics are captured; all data can be disaggregated by sub groups.

The applicant states the Nevada Department of Education is committed to working with authorizers to reach capacity in order to sustain quality charter schools. This equates to rigorous oversight and monitoring practices of authorizers. The applicant intends to commission a study through an established and capable entity to examine capacity (pp. 35-37). Expansion of charters will be achieved through three types of grants: post-charters grants will yield 16 additional schools in years 1-3 of grant, year 1 and year 2 implementation grants will result in 27 additional schools, and six to nine dissemination grants will also be awarded over the life of the grant (p. 37). This is a thorough yet reasonable plan that is both ambitious and attainable.

The applicant's plan includes feasible measures to support quality schools while monitoring unsuccessful schools using a high-stakes decision method. This method is used to examine collective school records such as academic, financial, and organization data as well as mission specific performance when making high-stakes decisions to discontinue poor performing charter schools (p 38). High expectations of growth and increased performance make this plan strong and complete.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide a current numbers of charter schools; this information would be helpful in determining the number of charter schools at beginning and end of project. The data provided does not satisfy how the SEA's plan (including key actions) would support the growth of high-quality charter schools during the project period.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 proposes showcase promising practices via two key strategies, increased technological via the state's department of education website and pod casting (pp. 38-39). Objective 3 specifically addresses dissemination of identifying and disseminating information about promising best practices. Including the study of this dissemination plan to test and evaluate is focused and demonstrates commitment to disseminating information.

The applicant states that a weighted formula will address issues of diversity. Two state strategies include the creation of Zoom schools to target learners whose first language is not English and Victory schools that cater to low-performing schools with high-poverty populations (p. 39). Significant resources have been allocated to these diverse segments of the student population in a targeted, systematic and focused manner.

The applicant's plan to incorporate information and research regarding school climate and safety is well thought out. Evidence of this is being awarded a presidential Now is the Time grant for the state's Project AWARE and a Climate Transformation Grant. The applicant also references these recognitions as part of a balanced plan (p. 40).

The applicant adequately addresses the quality of the sub grant award process; it is likely dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools through replication of successful existing schools with strong implementation records. As replication will be modeled after successful schools and expansion of successful schools is planned, it is likely these dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools (pp. 40-41).

**Weaknesses:**

The SEA does not specify if dissemination would pertain to diversity of a portfolio of schools or with specific schools. This information is unclear.

**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 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 employing uniform standards and principles addresses quality (p. 41). Partnering with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers utilizes established authoring practices through the use of tools that are used to evaluate capacity for successful implementation and gauge highly effective operational practices that result in academic achievement. This is a comprehensive approach.

The applicant plans to access exemplar models through the partnership with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (pp. 41-42). This plan will likely result in access to research-based models and theories that should be innovative in design while also providing evidence of success. The applicant intends to transfer this research to Nevada charter schools in a systemic way.

Measureable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools are aligned with current state law (p. 32-36). Under the Nevada Charter School Act, expectations are clearly outlined and compliance is expected.

Charter schools are monitored annually for academic, financial and organizational success. This allows for a standard, operationalized approach to schools in terms of meeting legal and ethical requirements. Mission-specific performance for this charters who have this kind of a mission is also included. This plan is extensive in addressing performance standards (pp. 42-43).

The applicant's plan to assess renewal plans includes four methods, based on the established record of specific schools. This differentiated renewal process examines schools based on an historical record of performance and includes contract

renewal, performance expectation, a streamlined renewal, termination of contracts, and a provision for auto-termination (pp. 44-45). This is a thorough plan based on what the applicant provided.

The applicant states that public data dissemination occurs at three points throughout an academic year. Beginning and ending dissemination is appropriate and on-going dissemination also occurs through the year (p. 45). This is comprehensive practice as it includes an initial dissemination, an on-going plan for dissemination as well as an end dissemination.

The applicant states that autonomy should be differentiated and states it is respectful of oversight based on maturity or novice status of schools (pp. 45-46). Both an annual review and a three year mid-term renewal is used. Two kinds of site visits also occur. This is a sound process as autonomy is viewed as specific to each authorizer and school.

All charters participate in the same accountability system as traditional schools. This alignment is systematic and holds all schools to the same standards of performance (p. 46). This is justified.

#### **Weaknesses:**

No mechanisms to monitor the actual capacity to create charter schools by the SEA is presented by applicant. No mechanisms for monitoring practices focusing on racial and ethnic diversity within student bodies regarding educationally disadvantaged students that is consistent with applicable law bare presented by the applicant.

It is unclear how the state will monitor dissemination of public data on an annual basis. While it is clear reporting occurs annually, including a plan for monitoring would have strengthened this section of the application.

**Reader's Score: 12**

#### **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:**

A logic model is presented by the applicant that delineates Nevada's theory of action strategy which is tightly focused on both competition and choice (pp. 47-52). Specific, measurable goals are addressed by the model's inputs/needs, strategies, outputs, and outcomes. Both short-term and long-term outcomes are specified clearly, making this model extensive and thorough.

The applicant includes project-specific performance objectives matched to data collection, data methods, and data analysis (p. 49). Objectives are clearly specific and measurable. The applicant's logic model and objectives are sophisticated in that it clearly aligns performance objectives to data.

The managements plan and timeline are adequate, aligned, thorough, and comprehensive. They appear sophisticated in the specificity of strategies, activities and performance measures. This will result in observable percentages of applications, the number of schools meeting criteria at year intervals, the number of replications, renewals and school closures as well as the percentage of boards receiving technical assistance (pp 52-55). The management plan timeline is specific (p. 52-55). The three pronged approach to management is thoughtful, extensive, and thorough.

**Weaknesses:**

No performance measure for high school exists beyond high school graduation. For example, providing evidence of meeting state/national standards or including a high-stakes test at high school would have strengthened this section of the application.

**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 states that planning sub grants, and dissemination sub grants are proposed over life of grant (pp. 57-58). Incubation grants address quality leadership and talent development. An external evaluator will be hired to ensure feedback on robust performance management and sound operational practices. A peer review panel is proposed. Timelines are presented that appear reasonable (p. 59).

Yearly processes have been proposed by the applicant. Informational meetings and workshops are planned to address information dissemination as well as a new website and a social media strategy is proposed to reach as many stakeholders as possible (p. 59). The applicant proposes planning sub grants; implementation sub grants, and dissemination sub grants which addresses a variety of opportunities for growth.

The applicant's current proposal addresses previous experience and successful implementation contingent on successful annual reviews. A loan fund will also be established (p. 58).

A comprehensive monitoring plan is proposed. The applicant states it possesses the capacity to manage the project efficiently. Detailed and specific guidelines have been developed and proposed and training for all sub grantees is included which indicates the plan is well thought out and comprehensive (pp. 57-58).

The applicant states that all reports will be assembled in a portfolio for review and analysis. Maintaining a focus on reducing and eliminating achievement gaps through the project's design is ambitious, but attainable in this reasonable and well-conceived plan (pp 57-60).

The Nevada Department of Education intends to widely disseminate information (p. 59). The methods provided are comprehensive and will effectively support dissemination.

Waivers were not requested (p. 60).

**Weaknesses:**

Application award process is not described in sufficient detail. No specific CSP monitoring plan is discussed. A plan to monitor grant activities would have strengthened this section of the application.

**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:**

High quality authorizing is adequately addressed and the use of frameworks for all authorizers is noted. Clear processes to evaluate academic and operational performance is discussed satisfactorily (p. 4). The applicant notes that frameworks and processes to evaluate charters schools includes advancing policy to support best practices, providing a “voice” for high-quality charter schools, and fostering and maintaining productive relationships between all stakeholders. The three include high expectations for authorizers. Academic, financial, and organizational frameworks are comprehensive and aligned to performance standards (p. 4).

Criteria for renewal are clearly established and rigorous. Schools must meet the objectives set forth in their frameworks in order to be renewed. In addition, schools that exceed expectations can receive an expedited renewal (p. 5). Two methods of revoking charters exist. Academic, fiduciary, and organization data is considered (p. 6).

Annual reporting by authorizers to their charter schools summarizes the individual school's performance and compliance, based on the three frameworks, academic, financial and operational, identifying any needed areas of improvement (pp. 4-9). Academic performance is evaluated each fall, financial reporting occurs quarterly, and managerial performance is monitoring on an on-going manner. Nevada state statute defines the consequences for poor academic for both charter and traditional schools.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**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:**

In 2011, the State Public Charter School Authority was created as an independent entity to address appeals. The applicant satisfied the requirement for a single public authorizing agency that is not an LEA to address appeals (p. 10).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:** 5

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/03/2015 11:45 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2015 04:16 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** State of Nevada, Department of Education (U282A150016)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>State-Level Strategy</b>		
1. State-Level Strategy	15	12
<b>Sub Total</b>	15	12
<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	14
<b>Vision for Growth and Accountability</b>		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	8
<b>Dissemination of Information and Best Practices</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	7
<b>Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies</b>		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	10
<b>Management Plan and Theory of Action</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	8
<b>Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	63
<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	100

# Technical Review Form

Panel #17 - SEA Panel - 18: 84.282A

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

Applicant: State of Nevada, Department of Education (U282A150016)

## 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 state uses charter schools to close the achievement and attainment gap for students in poor performing schools. The state created the Achievement School District. This is a proven model for increasing the number of high quality charter schools that will help close the achievement gap for students (p12).

The state also provided funding for a Harbormaster to incubate new charter schools. This is another effective way to increase the number of high quality charter schools and help close the achievement and attainment gaps for students.

The applicant has revised its statutes to ensure charter schools receive equitable operating funds (p14).

The state created the Achievement School district to focus on changing poor performing schools into new high quality charter schools for those students who are currently in the poor performing schools.

### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not state that charter schools will receive equitable funding for facilities. The creation of a revolving loan fund suggests that charter schools will have to finance their facilities on their own out of operating funds with third party capital.

The applicant does not discuss collaborative strategies between charter schools and traditional schools.

### 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 notes that charter schools have a high degree of autonomy compared to traditional schools and can allocate resources such as time, people, and money according to the needs of the school (p16,17). The board of trustees of the local district cannot interfere with the operation of the school (p18,19).

The applicant works with the state authorizer to notify all charter schools of eligible grants and funding opportunities (p19). The applicant works with the authorizer to ensure the school receives all of its funding (p19).

The applicant notes that funding is based on student enrollment and is treated the same for charters as for traditional schools.

The applicant notes that charter schools have an approved continuum of services set forth in their charters to comply with federal rules (p20) and has a Memorandum of Agreement listing their responsibilities (p21). If a charter school requests a placement involving another LEA, the charter school must consult with the state authorizer and receive prior approval (p21). This added level of approval will ensure the charter school has met its compliance obligations.

#### Weaknesses:

None identified

## 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 chart on page 23 shows a significant increase in the percentage of high performing charter schools over the last five years. The text further states there has been an annual increase in each of the five years (p23). The number of 5 star schools has increased from 14% of the portfolio to 47% of the portfolio.

The chart on page 23 shows a significant decrease in the percentage of low performing charter schools over the last five years, and the elimination of all 1-star schools. The text further states there has been an annual decrease in each of the five years (p24).

The applicant states the rate of growth for graduation rates has risen faster in charter schools than traditional schools (p26). The graduation rate for state sponsored charter schools is 3x the rate for traditional schools.

### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not present absolute numbers for the academic achievement or attainment for traditional school and for all charter schools.

**Reader's Score: 8**

## 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 states their subgrant program will give a competitive priority to schools serving educationally disadvantaged students (p28). The applicant has also created funds for a Harbormaster to create charter schools for educationally disadvantaged students (p28). These two strategies will help create more schools serving this population of students and lead to a greater number of students meeting state standards and reducing the achievement gap.

The applicant requires all charter schools to address attracting, recruiting, retaining, admitting, enrolling, serving, and retaining students in their charter application as recommended by the National Alliance Model Law (p29). One particularly useful strategy is that the applicant allows for weighted lotteries to help schools serve a targeted population such as one serving educationally disadvantaged students (p30).

The inclusion of the strategies in the charter application will force charter schools to pay attention to this issue and they can be held accountable to their charter contract.

The applicant will encourage innovation models by creating a new website to showcase innovative models (p32).

The applicant allows schools to deviate from standard traditional school models. Charter school applicants who want to use an innovative school model will be more inclined to apply for a charter school now that there are no longer limits on the educational programs.

The applicant will study the capacity and processes of select authorizers to meet statutory regulations.

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant requires schools to state how they recruit and retain students, it does not provide any plans to ensure that the charter school actually does recruit and retain students.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**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 instituted a single statewide information system to collect and analyze all school data by subgroups (p36). This will allow is to provide a comprehensive and comparative analysis of students in all schools and lead to more information about relative performance.

The applicant has an ambitious plan to support the creation of high quality schools. It will be investing in a Harbormaster to increase the number of schools. This is ambitious for a government agency; these harbormasters are typically philanthropically driven.

The state has evidence of eliminating all poor performing schools that are ranked only one-star schools in the state's ranking system This provides confidence that the applicant's continued plans to close poor performing schools is feasible.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not discuss how it will publicly report charter school performance, including student achievement data, student attainment data, retention data, and discipline data for all students and disaggregated by subgroups.

The chart on page 37 does not state how many charters are currently in the state, and it does not clearly state the number of new schools. Some of the data does not make sense – for example, the number of schools receiving Year 2 implementation grants in the third year of the program is more than the number receiving Year 1 implementation grants the year before. It is unlikely a school would not receive a Year 1 implementation grant but then get a Year 2 grant the following year.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 will support two websites for promising practices (p38) and hosting podcasts. These strategies can be very effective to reach a broad audience in a wide geographical region. These strategies appear to be the leading efforts to disseminate charter school results.

The applicant has a strategy for funding two school models that serve specific subgroups (ELL and high poverty - p39) and represent a diverse population within the portfolio of charter schools. The applicant will support the dissemination of the practices at these schools.

The applicant will award priority points to dissemination grant applicants addressing the social emotional awareness of students. This is a positive step to address issues of student discipline and school climate.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not present a targeted plan for disseminating information about schools that have a diverse population within the school.

The applicant does not present a plan that addresses the outcome of the dissemination grant as being the likelihood of increasing the number of charter schools serving educational disadvantaged students.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**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 will be assisting the local authorizers by creating the same set of standards for all authorizers (p40). These standards will be prepared with the assistance of the national trade association and will help local authorizers in approving high quality charters.

The applicant will be assisting the local authorizers by providing access to evidence-based school models (p41). This will help the local authorizers in approving high quality charters.

The applicant will be assisting the local authorizers with establishing performance expectations with the Performance Framework (p42). This will help the local authorizers in approving high quality charters.

The applicant has created a schedule of annual and mid-year reviews (p43) that will help the local authorizers monitor their charter schools. This will help the local authorizers in creating high quality charters.

The applicant has created a state ranking system (a 5 point star system) that uses academic achievement as one of the most important factors. The ranking system helps stakeholders identify and then focus on lower performing schools. The applicant holds the local authorizers accountable for renewals and revocations by offering an appeal process. Local authorizers will be reluctant to not renew a charter when the state affords the school an appeal process.

The applicant is assisting the local authorizer to provide reports by posting the annual charter school reviews on-line on their CharterNevada portal (p43).

The applicant provides a number of systems, including compliance reporting requirements manuals (p45) and review schedules (p46) to assist the local authorizers in balancing autonomy.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not address how they will monitor, evaluate, and hold accountable the authorizers in seeking high quality charter school applicants.

The applicant does not address how they will monitor, evaluate, and hold accountable the authorizers in approving evidence-based models. A local authorizer could approve a school without an evidence-based model and the applicant would not be in a position to take action.

The applicant does not address how they will monitor, evaluate, and hold accountable the authorizers in balancing autonomy and accountability. A local authorizer could raise the accountability requirements and the applicant would not be in a position to take action.

### 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 logic model that presents a cohesive approach to the use of the grant funds (p48). The strategies and outputs are cohesive because they include steps by both the state agency and the LEAs.

The applicant lists a table of performance measures (p49,50,51,52) that support the logic model outcomes. The performance objectives align with the logic model outcomes. For example, the logic model states it will increase the percentage of proficient students while the performance measures state that there will be a 2% increase each year in proficiency.

The management plan has clear activities and timelines by quarter (p59). For example, the revolving loan fund RFP will be released and reviewed in the first quarter of each year. That will provide enough time to complete the construction of the school building. This level of detail suggests the plan has a strong probability of achieving the objectives.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The logic model does not measure success for all students, leaving out key achievement measures for high school students.

The applicant needs to hire three people (p57) to implement this program. The process of training new staff will inhibit the success of this program in the first year.

### 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 will partner with and leverage the Harbormaster to identify and support high quality charter school applicants to apply for the CSP application.

The applicant lists the timelines for the release of the subgrant RFP in the Management Plan Timeline (p 59).

The applicant projects a reasonable number of awards by year (p37). Two planning grants in the first year and 5 planning grants in the second year is an achievable goal.

The applicant lists in Project Objective 4 (p58) that it will engage an external evaluator to monitor the CSP subgrantees. The applicant has stated it focused on at-risk students. The applicant will partner with the Harbormaster to develop a portfolio that meets the needs of the state, whether it be in terms of diversity, or geography, or other factors considered important by the state.

The applicant will inform teachers, parents, and communities of the subgrant program by creating a new website.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not describe a peer review process to award the subgrants.

The applicant failed to describe the previous subgrant usage rate.

**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 has a framework to evaluate the performance of charter schools. This applicant will report on each authorizer's portfolio of schools and address academic data from the statewide system of accountability. The applicant will also review quarterly and annual financial reports to identify problems early. (p5).

The performance objectives are included in the frameworks and are based on each charter school application and the needs of the students it is serving. These performance objectives are used for the renewal of a school. This provides

consistency in expectations for the school.

The authorizers have standard approval criteria (p7). The authorizers are required by statute to check a series of pre-opening requirements (p8) and mandate a site inspection (p9).

The applicant lists clear criteria for closing a school such as financial mismanagement, or the health and safety of students is at risk (p7).

The state authorizer uses a differentiated review for experienced and new charter applicants (p9)

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses identified

**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:**

There are multiple authorizers besides the LEAs, including a state authorizer, the State Public Charter School Authority, which also serves as an appeals agency.

**Weaknesses:**

None identified

**Reader's Score: 5**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/05/2015 04:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2015 01:01 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** State of Nevada, Department of Education (U282A150016)

**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	6
<b>Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students</b>		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	11
<b>Vision for Growth and Accountability</b>		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	8
<b>Dissemination of Information and Best Practices</b>		
1. Dissemination	10	8
<b>Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies</b>		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	10
<b>Management Plan and Theory of Action</b>		
1. Management Plan	10	9
<b>Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	80	60
<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	98

# Technical Review Form

Panel #17 - SEA Panel - 18: 84.282A

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

Applicant: State of Nevada, Department of Education (U282A150016)

## 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:

Page e 20 Changes were made in education reforms as a part of a statewide comprehensive reform strategy during the 2015 legislation session. These changes included significant changes to the charter school laws intended to more clearly align charter school expectations to the state's overall strategy for improving student academic achievement. The sub grant process for charter schools reflects the changes in the statewide mission of improving student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities facilitating learning and promoting excellence.

P e30 The state reform efforts also ensured more alignment of the state's public school choice and public school accountability systems. Charter schools are now measured against the state's standards. Similar traditional public schools and charter schools will be held to the same graduation rates and college and career readiness expectations as a traditional public high school. In addition, page E. 42 states that Senate Bill 509 requires an authorizer to close any school which performs at the lowest level in the statewide system of accountability in any 3 out of 5 years. This aligns the state's system of charter accountability with the broader set of definitions set forth in state law for all schools.

Changes in state legislation that allowed the state Charter School Authority to be identified as an LEA shifted some of the previous concerns about the allocation of federal funds to state-sponsored charter schools. The Charter School Authority is now the third largest public school system in this state and the application acknowledges that this increased size "brings with it additional "clout" to the charter movement." As an LEA, the Charter School Authority is entitled to receive its proportionate share of money available from federal state and local sources as a school or pupils were enrolled in traditional schools. In addition the state appropriated general fund revenues to seed revolving loan fund for charter school startups and this is an additional source of funding for charter schools. Funding formulas for special education have also changed in the last year.

This identification of “clout” along with the fact that the employees of the State Charter School Authority are political appointees highlights the state’s overwhelming commitment and determination to expand charter school opportunities in the state under the current state government leadership.

The Nevada Department of Education collaborates with all charter school authorizers to ensure that they all receive information relative to the charter school performance framework through guidance for: preopening implementation and maintenance stages of running a charter school. Outside entities have also sent letters of support for Nevada charter schools and state their desire to collaborate when the grant is received.

The authorization of a charter for the Achievement School District was intended to serve as a viable option for students who currently attend some of the state's lowest performing schools.

**Weaknesses:**

The process for facilities funding was not addressed. This information would be helpful in clarifying that aspect of the funding equity issues.

Collaborative strategies that would ensure that the traditional public schools would benefit from the innovative practices and successes of charter schools were unclear. Sharing the strategies with traditional public schools would support the state’s agenda of providing a quality education to all students.

**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:**

Flexibility in Nevada charter schools includes the responsibility to decide the ways to allocate resources such as time, curriculum, conditions of employment, and money. Charter schools can increase the number of school attendance days beyond those required by the state and they may also determine the length and structure of each school day depending on the instructional approach chosen by the charter school. The charter school contract document which begins on page E150 clearly spells out ways in which the schools are flexible in meeting state requirements and which requirements they are free from. Charter schools have the ability to modify their curriculum and add additional measures to student achievement beyond those required in the states assessment program..Other sources of flexibility listed on page E. 36 include the ability it to deviate from the state board requirements for courses except those required for graduation. Charter schools can structure their budgets to correspond to the needs of the particular instructional model. These aspects of flexibility allow charter schools to adopt innovative programs, instructional practices and course scheduling that may be necessary to implement a particular best practice model.

The contract also spells out specific provisions for charter working with an educational management organization (EMO). All employees of a charter school are considered public employees and teachers and must meet Nevada licensure requirements. Charter schools have the ultimate responsibility for the dismissal and discipline of its employees including personnel employed by the EMO. Authorizers and charter schools can establish and implement its own dispute resolution process (page E159).

E 37 The Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) provides the legal authority to ensure that each charter school pupil must be included in the per pupil count for the purpose of apportionments and allowances from the State Distributive Account. The SPCSA also works to make sure charter schools receive a proportionate share of federal funds.

The state education agency has identified numerous ways in which it will inform each charter school about state and federal funds. Timelines for this are given in this management plan. Since charter schools are local LEAs they receive the same funding notification as all other public schools in the state.

For all charter schools, the authorizer serves as the local education agency and retains the responsibility to comply with all federal obligations that ensures equity of services to all students. E39.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**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 document that was created to guide reporting requirements (beginning on page 189) is very specific in terms of what must be collected in the area of academic achievement. Specific numerical data relative to the performance of charter schools is included in the Academic Performance Framework. (page 130)

The application notes that there have been increased high school graduation rates for district sponsored charter school programs and notes a higher graduation rate among state-sponsored charter high schools than district sponsored charter high schools.

**Weaknesses:**

According to Nevada's star rating system, changes in the rating of charter schools have been greater than the changes and the rest of Nevada public schools. However, the star status information is based on a lower set of metrics than those that have been adopted by the 2015 reforms in the charter school performance agreement. Knowing the explicit criteria for of the Star metrics could reveal more important insights about actual student achievement.

The narrative includes the process that is used to revoke lower performing schools, but does not provide information about the results of using this process. It is not clear if the use of this process has resulted in the revocation of any charter schools in the state.

The application mentioned that there was a decrease in one star level school every year due to the ongoing requirements of the Charter School Performance Framework, but no specific data is given to corroborate this.

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**Reader's Score: 6**

**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:**

Provisions listed in the state statutes identify enrollment preferences for the charter school may adopt. Charter schools may elect to adopt mission specific enrollment preferences if they are nondiscriminatory and serve one or more tiny populations. There is a statutory provision that states that schools located in counties with attendance zones for charter's must have similar enrollment requirements as those in the attendance zones in which the school is located except for mission specific schools. Having similar enrollment requirements ensures equity of opportunities for students. P 45

Changes in the education statutes allow charter schools to use weighted lotteries. State law also requires that the use of weighted lotteries is consistent with federal guidance.E45

Although it is not a statewide strategy for addressing the needs of the educationally disadvantaged, the state has conducted two small pilot programs identified as the ZOOM and Victory schools. The Zoom Schools are located in urban areas with high ELL populations. Victory schools have been implemented in lowest performing schools in areas of extreme poverty disadvantaged students statewide. These pilot programs have the potential to inform the DPE of successful practices and modifications in the schools that may be incorporated into the state's plan to serve educationally disadvantaged students.

The State Public Charter School Authority Reporting Requirements Manual identifies all elements that are part of the permanent reporting contracts. Permanent reporting requirements specifications that are articulated include: special education reporting requirements monitoring the information, Title I reporting requirements, Title III reporting requirements, information regarding facilities, personnel and equipment and other things relative to the state statutes Nevada's public charter authorizers monitor academic improvement expectations and submit this information in an annual report. The Nevada Department of Education and other public agencies also have responsibility to monitor various aspects of operation the same the way they would any public school that is not a charter school relative to state and federal compliance mandates.

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear how the state defines educationally disadvantaged students for the purpose of specifically targeting students within this group and collecting data about their progress. E58 identifies project objective #2 to "improve student achievement in Nevada charter schools for students who have historically underachieved" but it is not clear if all underachievers are considered educationally disadvantaged. The Academic Performance Framework (e 131) consists of a question about whether or not students in sub groups (FRI, ELL, IEP) are making adequate growth and data is collected about each of these subgroups. However, all these subgroups may not be educationally disadvantaged.

Retention issues and policies were not fully developed. Understanding the number of students who have been retained by school level, charter level and state wide data would provide insight as to whether charter school are retaining fewer students. If the retention rate is lower in charter schools, learning how the charter schools accomplish this has the potential to be shared as a best practice

The means of monitoring to ensure that charter schools attract, recruit, admit, enroll and served educationally disadvantages is not clear.

### 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:

Page E. 54 states that under the Nevada Charter Schools Act, the Nevada Department of Education has oversight authority for charter school authorizing within the state. Recent changes in state statutes required the creation of the State Public Charter School Authority. Since this authority is also an LEA, it is now the third-largest school district in the state

. NDE will partner with the SPCSA in the plan to create more high-quality charter schools.

Page E. 65 on the application lists the proposed expansion of charter schools through planning and implementation and dissemination grants.

Data is collected not only on academic achievement but on discipline, school climate, operational and fiscal aspects of a charter school. (e57) The Detailed Financial Performance Indicator descriptions identify specific metrics for what must be included for the purposes of analysis of whether or not the charter school is operating on sound fiscal practices. Specific reporting criteria and guidelines relative to the financial and organizational indicators are included in a separate document. These documents provided by the state ensure that all charter school authorizers and charter schools are held to the same operational standards. When the state analyzes all the information in the required reports it will be another source of obtaining information about best practices at the same time it assures compliance with all activities have been met.

#### Weaknesses:

It is unclear as to whether or not only the charter school authorizers have the ability to revoke the charter or if the NDE also can revoke a charter. The NDE can close other public schools based on criteria including this state star rating system and there is a provision for automatic closures.

There is nothing within the SEA application that indicates whether or not a charter school means one location or multiple locations or campuses. Because this information is lacking it is difficult to understand the impact of charter schools relative to the whole state school population and what impact the charter schools have had on raising averages on state assessment data.

E 49 states the project objective is to improve student achievement in Nevada charter schools, particularly for students who have historically underachieved and identifies graduation rates and charter and college enrollment but the management plan objective 2 only identifies collecting data at grade 4 and 8 (e 119); without a system to track progress towards these objectives, it is not clear how feasible the plan is.

**Reader's Score:** 8

### **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 would like to be able to identify specific best practices related to ethnic diversity, discipline, and climate. The planned means of disseminating information on these best practices across all schools in the state includes podcasts and postings on the state website. Sharing the information in all schools may lead to more success in meeting state education goals for all children.

The sub grants for dissemination will have clear requirements for the activities that are going to take place as a result of receiving the funds. (Page E. 59). A review team will evaluate and rank applications based upon the degree that they meet the stated requirements and review check lists. A multi-step process has the likelihood of selecting the most promising practices that are worth sharing and celebrating.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The process for evaluating whether or not the dissemination grant activities have actually resulted in other charter schools changing their programs is not clear.

It is not clear what information has been collected relative to charter school discipline practices and other factors that

affect school climate. Collecting this information could lead to an in-depth discussion about what is effective and what is non-effective in this area. Other schools across the state may want to adopt the more successful measures.

**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 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 authority of the Nevada Department of Education over charter school authorizing and performance contracting is found in statutory and regulatory mandates governing charter schools. Oversight NDE provides includes : oversight, intervention, termination, renewal, and closure processes for charter schools, reviewing performance compliance of charter schools within the terms of the agreed upon contract and applicable laws, policies and regulations, ensuring charter schools are in compliance with reporting requirements, monitoring the educational, legal, fiscal and organizational condition of charter schools and providing guidance to charter schools on compliance and operational matters. E22. Many of these oversight activities are conducted in a relationship with the actual charter school authorizers.

The NDE set forth an expectation to ensure that all the state's authorizers of charter schools work from the same set of standards and principles. The state has partnered with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA)

to strengthen authorizing practices in the state. Adopting nationally recognized standards and principles for authorizing charter schools has the potential to raise the quality of charter schools in the state

NDE proposes to encourage innovative practices through identifying and expected outcome of the dissemination grant metric related to measure the implementation and fidelity of implementation of best practices. E 50

The authorizers make the renewal decisions and must base the decisions on data analysis, review of operational financial and academic achievement, compliance with applicable state and federal laws. Renewal decisions based upon a common set of criteria and assurances ensures that all stakeholders have an understanding of what is expected of them statewide.e24

Authorizers use the information about the increase in student academic achievement as one of the important factors are the renewal decision and renewal is based on a comprehensive set of criteria as stated in the performance contract. Legislative mandates state that a virtual high school is held to the same standards as all other public high schools. E 64.

The NDE, in conjunction with the State Public School Charter Authority, will publish an annual report on the academic, fiscal, and organizational performance of all charter schools statewide. Authorizers must compile annual reports on the status of the various elements of the performance agreement for charter schools and submit these reports to the Department of Public Education e20. The authorizers must also report information with respect to each charter school in terms and expectations set forth in the performance contract. According to state law, a charter school must be closed after obtaining three ratings of one star of the Nevada performance framework in any five-year. This is an automatic Termination. There are established measurable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools and these are clearly written as SMART goals with measurable objectives and academic benchmarks.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The application states that legislative mandates require charter schools to adopt and model best practices. E 28 However, this requirement was not incorporated into the Charter School Contract Reporting Requirements, or the Application for Grants Under the Charter School Program. (pages 3 153-157) It is not evident how or what guidance is given to ensure that charter schools address factors of racial and ethnic diversity selecting best practices that are the basis of their curriculum and instructional model.

Although local school districts have the authority to authorize new charter schools P E 26 stated local school authorities have not granted any charters since 2007 and the only new charters have been granted by the state through the State Charter School Program.

It is not clear as to the extent in which the state education agency can hold authorized public charter authorizing agencies accountable beyond those accountability measures required of all public schools in the state.

The capacity for the SEA to take action directly on a charter school or charter school authorizer based on the monitoring data is unclear. However, it does provide technical assistance to charter school providers based on the onsite reviews it periodically conducts.

**Reader's Score: 10**

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

**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:**

A logic model is included for the comprehensive education reform agenda for the whole state and not just the charter school sectors. The whole state logic model is intended to improve traditional public schools as well as charter schools. Strategies are divided into those that are the responsibility of the new Nevada Charter Schools office and those that are the responsibility of local school authorities. The management plan is very specific in terms of timelines data to be collected instruments in ways things will be analyzed elements will be analyzed the timeline includes identification by quarter of when activities will be implemented.

The charter school performance framework is the backbone of the management plan and the theory of the action. Additional student progress growth measures over time have been added to strengthen the understanding of student progress at all charter schools. Detailed financial performance indicators and sustainability measures as discussed previously are also included. Finally, a charter school contract itself is very specific in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the authorizers. As mentioned previously, the state public-school charter authority reporting requirements are specific and extensive.

**Weaknesses:**

Objective 2 of the management plan identifies the collection of achievement data for grades 4 and 8 only and does not identify the collection of data relative to high school students. However, the Academic Performance Framework does indicate other points of data for high school students. It would be important to have multiple measures for high school success besides the graduation rate. If there is a high school that is based upon unique innovative practices, sharing school level data would help in the analysis of whether or not that instructional delivery model positively impacts students.

Given the fact the charter schools can adopt unique innovative practices and curriculum it would be helpful for to identify measures of academic achievement at multiple grade levels specific to the innovations. The high stakes state assessment may not measure student achievement in areas that are unique to the curriculum and not included in the statewide assessment system. For instance, if a charter school adopts a project based learning model where specific elements are graded in the student performance assessment based upon qualitative measures, a student can show growth and

achievement relative to the expectations of the innovative practices. Measuring the progress of students at all grade levels and not just grades 4 and 8 would give the authorizers more data about whether or not the selected innovations are actually best practices that resulted in improvement of student learning.

No provisions for monitoring or technical assistance are identified relative to Objective 2 of the management plan. Since the goal of this objective is to improve student achievement it is unclear how the SEA or the SPCA staff is actively engaged to support the authorizers and schools in improving student achievement.

**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 project design clearly aligns with the objectives of the grant, and performance measures that appear on e 67. Elements of the project design are woven throughout the application and not just addresses in this section. The attention to detail and guidance on specific performance measures will assist the state in keeping on track in implementing the project design.

The applicant states that 2-3 dissemination grants must focus on best practices for greater academic achievement, ethnically diverse settings, OR social emotional climate projects. E 76

**Weaknesses:**

The explanation for the applicant awarding process is unclear.

Specific monitoring responsibilities and protocols were not identified in the application design plan.

Steps to keep all stakeholders informed of the sub grant program, especially parent outreach efforts, are unclear. Communication is critical to the growth of charter schools and parental support for this model.

**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 State Public Charter School Authority (SPCA) is currently the sponsoring agency for all new charter schools. This entity took over the sponsorship of charter schools that were originally sponsored by the State Board of Education.

Charter schools must be evaluated on their performance using a rigorous academic and performance expectations. In the case of this state they have moved to include a growth model for student achievement that can provide data on each individual student growth from year to year. This goes beyond defining academic success relative to the percent of schools that are in the meet or exceeds category relative to statewide assessment results. Expectations for student progress over time are found in the Academic Performance Framework section 2.1 and include a six category range for assessing the median student growth percentiles in reading and mathematics. Page B1 30.

The academic framework incorporates data from both statewide system of assessments for accountability as well as any objectively verifiable rigorous and ambitious metrics identified relative to the mission of the specific charter school. Including specific charter school performance assessment measures allows this day greater insight into this success of a particularly chosen curriculum or instructional approach. Page E. 23

When conducting data analysis the State Public Charter School Authority reviews elements of the child's performance included in the academic framework and compares that performance to the performance of a child that attends a traditional school in the same geographical zone. Page E. 24

There are also specific benchmarking metrics for the fiscal aspects of holding the charter. These are found in appendix B.: Detailed financial performance indicator descriptions are provided on page E1 36 of the grant application. Additional specific benchmarks are described for the purposes of assessing the charter schools' sustainability measures including cash flow, debt service coverage ratio in debt to asset ratio.

The Charter School Performance Framework section 5 clearly identifies the steps on an intervention ladder where if a school fails to comply with any of the material terms or conditions of its charter it must schedule remedies to be followed. If these remedies are not followed a notice of breach of contract will be communicated and the charter may be revoked at any time during the contract when any of these issues or failures occur. Page E1 26

Monitoring takes place of organizational performance. Monitoring is ongoing and conducted by the authorizers as well as the Nevada Department of Education and other public agencies that have responsibilities towards a public school i.e. compliance monitoring for state and local regulations.

Nevada Department of Education collects data on academic fiscal and organizational performance of all charter schools and publishes this information in an annual report. The report also includes a summary of performance of each of the authorizer's portfolio to inform all stakeholders of the state of the charter schools statewide. The report is based on the information collected relative to how well the charter school meets the criteria of the charter school performance framework.

p e27 The SPCA has created for different RFP tracks. Nevada charter schools authorizers can create their own RFPs for applying to become a charter school or to continue to receive funds as an experienced charter school. However, all charter schools must adhere to the items in the charter school performance framework. This ensures that there is a balance between the ability to implement unique innovative practices but at the same time hold each charter school to standards that can be compared across all charter schools in the state.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

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:**

There are numerous state authorizers for charter schools. A new state authorizer was recently accepted called the Achievement School District whose focus is on serving the needs the lowest performing schools.

.P e26 states that although the statewide chartering agency approved applications since its inception, local district authorizers have not granted any new charters since 2007.

Regulations for the identification of authorizers of charter schools have gone through numerous changes since the inception of the Nevada charter school law in 1997. In 2011, Nevada moved to an independent charter board and created the State Public Charter School Authority SPCSA. Members of this board are gubernatorial and legislative appointees and charter schools previously sponsored by the Nevada State Board of Education were transferred to this entity. Although the application states the intended move was to create an independent charter board, since members are made up of gubernatorial and legislative appointees it is not free of political agendas of the appointees relative to changes in educational policy. However, all or authorizers use their created Nevada Charter School Performance Framework. The Nevada Department of Education continues to partnership with SPCSA to assist authorizers.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

Reader's Score: 5

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