

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (U282A150017)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
State-Level Strategy		
1. State-Level Strategy	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Selection Criteria		
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Selection Criteria		
Past Performance		
1. Past Performance	10	7
Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	9
Vision for Growth and Accountability		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	7
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	8
Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	8
Management Plan and Theory of Action		
1. Management Plan	10	8
Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	8
Sub Total	80	55
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1	15	11
Sub Total	15	11
Competitive Preference Priority		
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process		

1. CPP 2

	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	120	89

Technical Review Form

Panel #18 - SEA Panel - 19: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (U282A150017)

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 clearly demonstrates how charter schools are integrated into Indiana law, regulation, and policy. Indiana considers all charter school public schools and they are identifies as LEAs and provided the same level of support and monitoring as traditional public schools. Designating and treating all charter schools as LEAs is a clear indicator of supporting charter school initiatives.(p. 6)

The IDOE intentionally organized and redefined the agency to provide support and monitor LEA efforts in school improvement initiatives. This shift is viewed as instrumental in the SEA and LEA operating as a critical unit of change. By elevating the LEAs capacity aligning resources, and ensuring the right supports, efforts are more aligned to the needs of the LEA and the LEA is involved in determination of what supports are helpful. (p. 9)

The applicant clearly demonstrates how charter schools are integrated into Indiana law, regulation, and policy. Indiana considers all charter school public schools and they are identified as LEAs and provided the same level of support and monitoring as traditional public schools. Designating and treating all charter schools as LEAs is a clear indicator of supporting charter school initiatives.

The Indiana Department Of Education (IDOE) intentionally organized and redefined the agency to provide support and monitor LEA efforts in school improvement initiatives. This shift is viewed as instrumental in the SEA and LEA operating as a critical unit of change. By elevating the LEAs capacity aligning resources, and ensuring the right supports, efforts are more aligned to the needs of the LEA and the LEA is involved in determination of what supports are helpful.

After analyzing statewide trends and studying areas of need for Focus and Priority schools, leadership, quality instruction,

and data use in driving decision making were identified as the three priority areas needing the most assistance. Ongoing professional development, book studies and a state development network for districts and grant applications aligned to the three priority areas were created.

Indiana Department of Education also created an Outreach division to support their locally driven differentiated approach to frequent technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation. The belief is that the department needed the human capital to work closely with LEAs and their Focus and Priority Schools. The 13 field staff live in the regions they serve making them readily accessible to schools needing support.(p. 12)

Indiana passed a law allowing charter schools access to underused or vacant school facilities for one dollar. This action shows a strong state commitment to supporting charter schools in locating and using facilities, one of the biggest problems charter schools deal with in starting up.

The applicant identifies a collaborative process where the Department of Education is working closely with the LEA and their Focus and Priority Schools. Outreach staff from the IDOE are residing in the area where they support the charter schools. Additionally the IDOE created a school Improvement Team, merging departments together so that work can be shared and the cross functional teams decrease redundancy.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a detailed account of the initiatives, data systems, support and technical assistance, and other factors used to improve student achievement and on-track graduation results. However, very little mention is made of unique charter school needs as they are folded in to all public schools and LEAs.

There is no mention in the application of how the creation of these charter schools would be a viable option for students who attend or may attend the State's lowest performing schools.

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:

Indiana's charter school law cites the purpose of establishing charter schools is to allow freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of accountability. The state allows broad exemption from education statutes, rules and regulations and rather than list what does not apply to charter schools, they list the laws that do apply. (p. 16)

Charter schools are fiscally autonomous and the organizer is the fiscal agent for the school allowing for direct flow of state and federal funds to the charter school. The applicant also shows that charter schools have control over their own budgets as well as employed personnel. (p. 17)

The applicant identifies the Grants Management, Monitoring and Reporting division of the Department is responsible for informing all charter schools about federal funds for which they are eligible. They maintain an updated list with contact information for all open and scheduled to be open charter schools. They also keep other funding areas informed including Title I, IDEA, and the Division of Finance.

Monthly meetings are also held with the Indiana Charter School Leaders Association, where information updates regarding the availability of funding are discussed and highlighted. (p. 19)

The applicant cites the process used by the Office of Special Education to gather enrollment information needed for the federal funding allocation formula. Efforts are made to gather early numbers to assure funds are available without delay. This process allows for federal funds to be distributed for use in the early portion of the school year, prior to the December 1 count. (p. 18)

The applicant provides clear evidence of compliance 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). Indiana also has passed legislation conferring public school status and designation as an LEA which meets the requirements of this grant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Past Performance

- 1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:**
 - 1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State;**
 - 2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and**
 - 3) Whether, and the extent to which, the academic achievement and academic attainment (including high**

school graduation rates and college and other postsecondary education enrollment rates) of charter school students equal or exceed the academic achievement and academic attainment of similar students in other public schools in the State over the past five years.

Strengths:

The applicant states that there has been slow and steady growth in charter schools over the last 14 years. Currently, Indiana has seen 92 schools open and there are currently 73 open and operating. (p. 22) The 19 schools that are not open anymore were closed or not renewed due to failure to meet the performance requirements in accordance with their charter. These closures demonstrate Indiana's stance on quality schools and dedication to accountability.

The applicant shows that since 2011, there have been 32 schools that have opened, the number increasing each year, indicating there is growth in the effort to support charter schools. Student enrollment has moved from 1,271 students in 2002 to 37, 448 students in 2014, an increase to 4% of the public school population. While the growth is not huge, it is sustainable. (p. 23)

The applicant notes that in 2010 there were 16 charter schools that met standards for high-quality, representing 27% of all schools. In 2011, that number increased to 19 schools, growing to 32% of the schools. A slight decrease occurred in 2013, which turned into an increase in 2014 to 37% of the total. (p. 27)

The applicant identifies the number of school closures by year showing 3 in 2012, 8 in 2013, 2 in 2014, and 6 closures this year. The commitment to run high quality charter schools shows up in closing schools that fail to meet accountability requirements outlined in Indiana statutes.

Weaknesses:

No data was included to show how charter school achievement compared to traditional public schools achievement over the past five years.

The applicant did not include information about graduation rates to compare the charter school results with the traditional public schools. Additionally there was no information about postsecondary not included academic attainment and postsecondary education enrollment rates in comparison to the public schools. The submission would be strengthened with this information.

Reader's Score: 7

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant shows support for educationally disadvantaged students with the establishment of the School Improvement Center, a division that provides monitoring of Grants, Early Learning and Intervention, Title I, II, II, and Migrant, Special Education, Outreach and College and Career Readiness. (p. 25) This center works to support funding, application approval, instructional support and placing a focus on equity for special populations. Student data, analysis of achievement, and opportunity gaps are used to drive the support. Staff at this center work to provide the necessary support to LEAs and schools.

The applicant clearly identifies the level of support a school identified as at-risk will receive. (p.27) These levels of support include daily support to schools around funding, program monitoring instructional support and a particular focus on equity for special populations. The effort to receive the highest levels of support and accountability includes meetings at the department and on location regularly, communication with the local school board, participation of key stakeholders, and increased accountability demands.

The applicant provided great detail about the plans, systems, and processes available to conduct monitoring and provide technical support. Use of a Charter School Grant Specialist, Charter School Support Coordinator, and the Office of Special Education, along with the division of Early Learning and Intervention to develop and provide trainings specifically for charter schools.

The applicant shared that of the 37,448 students enrolled in 79 charter schools this year, 60 % were minorities, well exceeding the state average minority enrollment of 30%. (p. 27) They also report that 63% of the population was free or reduced lunch eligible compared to a 49% state average. This data shows that the charter schools are enrolling diverse populations and have a high level of students living in poverty. (p. 27)

Weaknesses:

While the applicant provided detail about their three-faceted approach to support high quality schools and comprehensive school improvement, no data was shared showing how their process will make an impact on the schools.

It is unclear what that support at risk schools will receive entails besides meetings and increased accountability demands. There is no information stating what happens when a school first shows signs of difficulty and whether interventions are developed prior to slipping to at-risk status.

The application did not address plans or methods to encourage innovation or best practices related to improving achievement of educationally disadvantaged student. Mention was made of trainings and highlighting charters that provide exceptional programs and services that draw in these students. However, little mention was made about examples of best practices, how a web page would be an effective means of highlighting these practices, and how trainings would be an effective way of fostering this growth in other charter school. The proposal would be strengthened with more specificity and attention to the elements of an exceptional program and how innovation is encouraged.

The grant does not share information about how educationally disadvantaged students have been identified, recruited and enrolled in high-quality charter schools. It appears that a process is now being developed for LEAs to identify their best practices to share on a web page and develop a best practice training. The use of web pages to identify best practices charter schools is not a strong and effective method to attract these students as it focuses on internal school practitioners and not the public at large. The proposal would be strengthened with a strategy that includes or involves parents and community members to disseminate the information on effective high-quality charter schools available for educationally disadvantaged students, in a way that reaches the eyes and ears of parents and the community.

This grant would be strengthened if information was shared detailing strategies to monitor charter school programs for compliance with laws related specifically to educational equity, nondiscrimination, and access to public schools for educationally disadvantaged students.

While the applicant shared the processes for monitoring which is part of a general monitoring process that occurs annually, it was unclear how charter schools would be examined for their compliance with these laws. The application would be strengthened with a comparison of how many students of color are enrolled in charter schools year by year, and what the success rate has been for those students in retention and graduation.

Reader's Score: 9

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 shared information about an ambitious new assessment system they will be using come spring of 2016. While already using a growth model, the intent of their system will be to capture the data for schools with small subgroups below 30 where results are not factored in to create a clear picture of students slipping through the cracks. To help teachers and parents understand the system, they will put the 2015 data into the new formula to show how the numbers will shift. This model is promising and could provide much needed insight into the gaps our assessment systems are unable to capture. (p. 32)

The SEA has the student performance systems in place to report on school wide data that is accessed through IDOE's website and has a dashboard concept. Parents can put in the name of a school and get the enrollment, subgroups, and standardized testing results back to the 2005-2006 school year. The data shows a school-by-school comparison as well as the IDOE's data web page that provides access to A-F accountability information and data, growth data, enrollment and state testing results, and course assessment data. (p. 29)

Indiana Code determines the standards that charter schools must meet and on a yearly basis are provided with disaggregated data to assess the quality of the charter schools. The intention is to create and sustain a cooperative relationship for data sharing between the IDOE and charter organizers.

While creating efforts to grant charters to the highest quality of charter school proposals, IDOE will also takes steps to provide best practice training and support to charter schools. They also have a plan to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools that are in the lowest category or designation for school improvement for more than three years after initial placement in that category. (p. 35) Their process acknowledges that it takes time to improve poor performance and their plan involves supporting struggling schools. However, poor performance will not continue beyond three years.

The applicant provides a strong consequence for charters that do not perform and cites that changes in the law recently to create a clear and accountability-centered process resulted in the closing of 19 schools. (p. 33) They also have procedures in place for schools that refuse to close, involving transference of the charter to another organization or group. Along with this intense effort, a process has been developed to support movement of students and relevant records to another site once a charter has closed.

Weaknesses:

There is nothing explained about how the vision supports the specific goals and strategies that the applicant has identified. The proposal would be strengthened with a clear vision and state strategy that connects and links the goals and strategies identified in this proposal.

Information is not included that talks about the collection and sharing of data around student retention rates of the charter schools as well as student discipline that is disaggregated by student subgroup.

The proposal would be strengthened if information on the number of high quality schools at the beginning and the end of the projects were identified. This step provides important information about the success and areas to address based on data collected.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices

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

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

section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221a(f)(6)(B)), the quality of the subgrant award process and the likelihood that such dissemination activities will increase the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and contribute to improved student academic achievement.

Strengths:

The applicant provides information about the strong commitment the Indiana legislature has made to improving charter schools through financial incentives totaling millions of dollars over the past 4 years to highly effective teachers who demonstrate best practices and close the learning gap among educationally disadvantaged students. This commitment of funds speaks strongly to the level of investment the state is making in improving student achievement. (p. 38)

A variety of efforts have been developed to highlight and honor schools and teachers making a difference academically and showing great growth gains. Whether it be a certificate, a designation of the school as highly effective, a plaque, involvement in a mentor network, or sharing school best practices at conferences, the IDOE has developed processes to disseminate powerful work and recognize teachers and administrators for their work. Additionally, they survey the award "winners" to determine the effectiveness of the process and result to see how it might be improved each year. (p. 38)

The IDOE has hired staff members who will oversee the charter schools initiative and develop and maintain a website highlighting best practices and teachers/principals to talk with for support or improvement in a school's efforts to move out of improvement. There are also newsletters and mailings that go to all charter schools sharing best practices and opportunities for technical support and assistance. (p. 40)

Weaknesses

The applicant does not share information on how the results gathered from the subgrants will be shared out so that successes and challenges can be shared.

There are no plans shared that address the need to disseminate the information gained about best or promising practices to benefit charter schools that effectively include student body diversity, racial and ethnic diversity and diversity as related to educationally disadvantaged students.

The proposal would be stronger if information was shared about how the subgrants would specifically impact student learning. The collection and sharing out of that information would benefit Indiana charter schools in examining how to improve and implement best practices.

There is not enough information included to clarify what the grants will be funding and how the information will be used. More specificity is needed.

Information is not included that discusses how the successes of charter schools could be shared out to raise awareness of innovative and effective practices. Sharing these successes could also impact traditional public schools and no mention is made of this in the proposal.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not share information on how the results gathered from the subgrants will be shared out so that successes and challenges can be shared.

There are no plans shared that address the need to disseminate the information gained about best or promising practices to benefit charter schools that effectively include student body diversity, racial and ethnic diversity and diversity as related to educationally disadvantaged students.

The proposal would be stronger if information was shared about how the subgrants would specifically impact student learning. The collection and sharing out of that information would benefit Indiana charter schools in examining how to improve and implement best practices.

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Information is not included that discusses how the successes of charter schools could be shared out to raise awareness of innovative and effective practices. Sharing these successes could also impact traditional public schools and no mention is made of this in the proposal.

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 describes the process for charter schools to be approved. An important first step they identify includes submission of a pre-application or letter of intent to allow evaluators to determine the viability of the organization to meet the high academic requirements for approval. After those steps are taken, applicants may be invited to submit a full proposal. The applicant states that there are more examples of efforts to seek applications from charter school organizations that may develop high-quality charter schools. (p. 42)

The applicant details the process for obtaining authorization to open a charter which includes the application, interviews, site visits, board interviews, public meetings for public comment, and more. The process is well defined and clearly spelled out. The process is also clearly identified on the IDOE website. The process clearly states their standards of

quality for charter school authorizing and ICBSB staff and external experts play a role in evaluating the full application to explore question and concerns that may arise. (p. 42)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not specify or identify program design elements or school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in the student population. There were references throughout the section that referred to Indiana Code and Indiana Statutes, but nothing that specifically identified a process for encouraging the incorporation of evidence based practices.

Reader's Score: 8

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's logic model posits that clear performance expectations set by authorizers will lead to more effective charter schools and improved student achievement such that economically disadvantaged populations will be provided equitable learning opportunities. This logic model supports the goals to increase the number of high quality charter schools, increase academic achievement and increase opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students. (p. 45)

The management plan is developed in tiers with levels of support for the schools, the staff, supportive communities of practice, support for the application process to charter providers, and an annual even focused on resources, grants and other funding available to charter schools.(p. 46-48)

A chart detailing performance measures is located on p. 49 that gives baseline data and targets for outcome measures and process measures. The chart provides a clear picture of the intent of the project and puts to paper multi-year targets. (p. 49)

An evaluator is identified to monitor and track project success. This position will be required to give status reports to the SEA quarterly during each project phase with an end of year data analysis and synopsis of changes made, and the status of meeting performance indicators. Use of an external evaluator provides an unbiased view of the project.

Weaknesses:

The timeline would be strengthened with clear articulation of who is responsible for overseeing and tracking the timeline activities. Additionally the charts included in the grant do not appear to align to the appendix and are confusing. It is not clear how the two documents support each other.

There is no mention of disadvantaged populations mentioned in the management plan and theory of action. As this population is critical to the proposals, the proposal would be strengthened if this population had been referenced.

Reader's Score: 8

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 identifies the process where it will review, evaluate, and award funds to potential subgrantees as an important component of the plan. They will provide opportunities for funding requests to be resubmitted if they do not make the scoring cut point. (p. 52)

The applicant provides strong support for authorizers in holding conference calls with applicants to clearly explain and review processes and rules. The scoring is also done by a 3 person panel review team that includes charter and non-charter participants.(p.52)

Funds will be awarded for a two year period and schools will need to share their progress when finishing the planning phase in year 1. The applicant states there is a desire to assure accountability through the various stages of the subgrant. (p. 55)

Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis. The applicant provides a chart detailing how subgrants will be distributed over the three years and the amount available for grants. Multiple oversight processes are in place to monitor, check in and evaluate the plans.

Information is included detailing how information will be communicated about the funding for the subgrants in a timely way. Information is included on the website with details of the funding process.

Weaknesses:

There is no information about a portfolio of subgrantees to identify the areas of need within the State. The application would be strengthened with the creation of a holding place where portfolios which contain information on how the focus of the grants aligns with the State-Level strategy would be helpful.

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 identifies clear criteria for the authorizers as they conduct reviews of the charter schools progress. The proposal shows flexibility for charter schools. Reports must be submitted to the IDOE and the ISBD indicating the results of statewide standardized tests, student growth and improvement data, attendance rates, graduation rates, enrollment data, and expulsions. They will also show non-renewal and closure information.

Annual reporting will occur by authorized charter agencies. Reports will be posted in the ISSBE and the IDE websites. They are required to conduct their work through statutory requirements to ensure there are specific standards and process to measure performance, to establish clear criteria for evolution charter applications and implementation of authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions.

Multi-tiered processes for review exist that acknowledge the different stages charter schools are in. The process includes a review of the application and proposal prior to approval so that the school opens ready to go in the first year. Schools that are going to renewal are not subject to requirements that are more focused on a first time applicant.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the results will be analyzed and what rubric or outcomes are expected in this review. The application would be strengthened with information about expected outcomes related to required components of the yearly reports from charter authorizers.

Reader's Score: 11

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process

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

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant meets this priority as the legislative code provides charter authorizer status to school districts, the Mayor's Office, public and private universities that offer a four year baccalaureate degree, and a state chartering board as entities which are able to authorize charter school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses seen.

Reader's Score: **5**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/05/2015 12:28 PM

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (U282A150017)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
State-Level Strategy		
1. State-Level Strategy	15	12
Sub Total	15	12
Selection Criteria		
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Selection Criteria		
Past Performance		
1. Past Performance	10	6
Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	11
Vision for Growth and Accountability		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	6
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	7
Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	10
Management Plan and Theory of Action		
1. Management Plan	10	8
Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	7
Sub Total	80	55
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1	15	12
Sub Total	15	12
Competitive Preference Priority		
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process		

1. CPP 2

	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	120	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #18 - SEA Panel - 19: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (U282A150017)

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:

In order to document the extent to which the SEA's CSP activities, are integrated into the State's overall strategy for improving student academic achievement and attainment the applicant has labelled the state priorities as "leadership, quality instruction, and the use of data to drive decision making". With those priorities in mind, the state has required that all charter schools participate on school improvement teams that have on-going professional development, book studies, and state developed networks aligned to the three priority areas. (pg.e22)

In order to increase collaboration the applicant points to the improvement system created by the SEA which has an infrastructure that will create clarity for cross functional groups, reduce redundancy, assist with understanding federal and state statutes as well as providing a link to resources for academic achieve and gap reductions. (pg. e22)

The applicant has worked with AdvanceEd to develop an electronic state-wide comprehensive school improvement plan template.

There are also multiple factors used to analyze student progress including but not limited to state and federal data reports, attendance, behavior, and academic performance. (pg.e24)

The applicant states that the formula used to calculate funding allocations includes tuition, special education and career and technical education. (e. 28)

The applicant states that the state tuition support formula is detailed and is applicable to all public school corporations and charter schools in Indiana. (e. 28)

In 2011, the legislature in Indiana created a provision that allowed charter schools to attain unused facilities for instructional purposes. The state has made a provision that charter schools can lease or purchase facilities listed on the IDOE website for one dollar. The information regarding the facilities and the process to obtain them can be found on the Department's website. (pg. e29)

They have created a collaborative team (including Entitlement program reps, ELL and Special Ed reps) that meets weekly to align resources, human capital, and approached to coordinating best practices in classroom practices and instruction. (pg. e23)

Weaknesses:

There was no evidence presented to determine how charters are a viable option for students who currently attend the State's lowest performing schools.

Reader's Score: 12

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:

public schools freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional level of accountability". Further the SEA points out that charter schools are only accountable to their authorizers and the Indiana State Board of Ed. Being accountable to only those two agencies increases the autonomy of the charter school from local rules. (pg. e30)

The applicant also states that the laws of the state also allow for fiscal autonomy (pg.e16 para. 3) and personal hiring freedom (pg. 16 para 4).

The Support Specialist in the Charter school office works directly with the CSP Grant manager in order to manage day to day activities such as communicating grant availability, grant application and review processes, the monitoring of sub grants and the sub grantee support. (pg. e29)

All notifications regarding allocation and availability of federal funds are sent directly to the charter school since each is designated as its own LEA. (p. e31) In addition, the department conducts monthly meetings with the Indiana Charter School Leaders Association and quarterly meeting with representatives from active charter school authorizers. (pg. e33)

The SEA points out that Indiana statute requires that charter schools are subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination. (pg. e33)

The SEA points out that IDOE requires each charter to have specific language regarding how they will maintain compliance with the all federal and state special education law. These charters are then maintained and monitored by the state. In addition, at the local level each charter must have a Title IX Coordinator, whose name is submitted to the state. (pg. e34)

The SEA lists a specific example of how one authorizer applies the law to delineate how they will ensure compliance. (pg. e34)

There is an "early count" system for the early release of IDEA funds. This allows for the release of federal funds prior to the December 1 disbursement period. (pg. e33)

Weaknesses:

Based on the way the application was written it was unclear if the eligible federal funds were to be released 5 months after being disbursed. More clarity is needed to fully assess whether charter schools receive funding in a timely manner. (pg. e31)

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Past Performance

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

In 2013, all Indiana authorizers adopted the nationally recognized standards of quality charter school authorizing. (pg. e37)

According to the applicant in in 2010 16 (27%) of charter schools were considered high quality charter schools. The number of high quality charter schools rose to 22 (37%) by 2014. (pg. e37)

The remaining four years data was as follows:

2011-2 19 (32%)

2012- 17 (29%)

2013- 21 (36%)

2014 22 (37%)there were 16 (27%) high quality charters schools as described by state regulations. This number rose to 22 (37%) by 2014. (pg. e37)

Since 2012, 19 charters have been closed, all for either poor academic performance recognized by the authorizer or because the charter school voluntarily closed because of self-determined poor performance. There were 3 schools closed in 2012, 8 in 2013, 2 in 2014 and 6 in the current year. (pg.e38)

According to the applicant, these closures were all actions taken by authorizers to meet the accountability requirements outlined in Indiana statute and in line with national standards for quality authorizing. (pg. e38)

The percentage of students enrolled in charter schools has increased by almost 4% since 2002. (pg. e37)

Weaknesses:

There was no specific data discussing the comparison of charter schools students with their non-charter peers.

The applicant does provide five year worth of data detailing 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.

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:

The School Improvement and School Support Services are two agencies created to provide technical support and monitoring. These centers have been organized by commonalities and in a way that allows the division to “easily work in convergence while providing the best streamlined customer service as possible”. (pg. e38)

Supports to all schools are provided in a multi-faceted approach. The three stages allow for (pg. e38-40)

- Support and accountability through activities such as timely technical assistance, monitoring, and ensure all these schools have the necessary tools
- Provide daily support with funding, application approval, program monitoring and putting particular focus on equity for special populations
- Provide support collecting and analyzing student data looking for gaps in achievement

The application points out that the charter schools have demonstrated a commitment to serve diverse populations. During the 2014-2015 year 60% of students attending the 79 operating charter schools were minorities, compared to the states 30%. Likewise 63% of the students were free/reduced lunch compare to 49% in the state. (pg. e 41)

The IDOE will also identify charter schools that are providing exceptional service that attract, enroll, serve and retain educationally disadvantaged students. Once identified, those charters will be highlighted in a Department’s best practices charter school web page which should encourage innovations in charter schools that are designed to improve academic achievement. (pg. e 41)

The applicant discussed the development of a new section of the CSP grant where potential sub grantees will outline plans to attract, enroll, and serve disadvantaged student populations. There will be bonus points awarded to final application scores and encouragement to propose and implement such efforts.

The applicant states that the IDOE has been explicit with Focus and Priority schools (low performing schools) about the requirement to create an intentional plan to address school improvement needs. The state holds the schools accountable by monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan and providing support to enable all schools to have the capacity to be successful. (pg. e35)

The SEA requires that all schools on improvement plans create a plan with Turnaround Principles. These plans must have an intervention, timeline, action plan, lead person and more. Newly identified schools and districts are invited to regional meetings to receive technical support. (pg. e35)

The Charter School Support Specialist will develop and provide best practices training to charter schools. (pg. e41)

The SEA points out that IDOE requires each charter to have specific language regarding how they will maintain compliance with the all federal and state special education law. These charters are then maintained and monitored by the state. In addition, at the local level each charter must have a Title IX Coordinator, whose name is submitted to the state. (pg. e34)

LEAS are monitored in a three tiered rotational basis. Each year the LEA will either be assigned a desk review, through fiscal monitoring or through an on-site visit. All LEAs that are in the desk review cycle and found to have at-risk behaviors will have further scrutiny during their fiscal and on site cycles. (pg. e42)

Weaknesses:

The application does not address if the students who are at risk are actually performing at an appropriate level. Providing this information would strengthen this application.

Also there are many initiatives that are in implementation or the early stages of implementation and due to this, more

could have been provided on the efficacy and validity of those initiatives.

Reader's Score: 11

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:

To illustrate the way data is collected the applicant states that data is collected by the IDOE and entered into an online system. The system verifies the data and then submits it for verification. All data is verified before public release (pg. e43)

There are two components used to report the data. There is a school by school system, DOE COMPASS, that parents and community members can access. The other, the Indiana Dept. of Education a webpage which can be accessed by educators and other stakeholders gives enrollment data, graduation data, and course assessment data. (pg. e43-44)

The access to charter school data by authorizers is facilitated through the requirements to establish cooperative relationships for data sharing between the Department and the authorizer's Indiana Code. (pg. e47)

In order to support high quality charter schools, the SEA intends to create a method to highlight the schools where the bottom 25% of students reside. Using these "super groups", the SEA will be able to highlight and address gaps that are occurring. (pg. e.44-45)

Annually each authorizer provides key stakeholders disaggregated data to assess the quality of each of their charter schools. (pg. e47)

The standards for renewal require authorizers to include in the charter agreements that the charter school not remain in the lowest category of school improvement for more than three years after initial placement in that category. (pg. e49)

To support the closure of academically poor-performing schools, the State has adopted statute that requires that an authorizer develop closure protocol that allows for the timely notification to parents, the orderly transition of students and

student records and the proper disposition of schools funds, property and assets. (pg. e50)

The State has a method in which to call an authorizer to a hearing if the authorizer renews or fails to close a charter that does not meet the minimum standards outline above.

Weaknesses:

While the application states that there is data collected on the part of the authorizer, it is unclear as to what type of data is collected. Clarifying what type of data would strengthen this application.

There was a lack of information provided on the retention and discipline of the students in charter schools. More information would strengthen the application.

There was no information regarding the high school graduation rates or the post-secondary education enrollment rates included in the application.

The applicant fails to define the number of high quality charter schools in the State at the both the beginning and the end of the project period.

Reader's Score: 6

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 SEA plans to provide Title I schools that are not priority or focus schools, with incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement. They will receive technical assistance from IDOE. (pg. e51)

The best practices being highlighted in monthly Title I newsletter that are shared with the field via email, Learning Connections and through the IDOE website.

The SEA intends to use state funds to provide financial rewards to high performing teachers. The financial incentives reinforce the emphasis Indiana has placed on identifying and rewarding effective and highly effective teacher, increasing student learning, closing achievement gap and promoting utilizations of highly effective educators to enhance school improvement efforts. (pg. 54)

To assess the impact of grants, the applicant has required LEAs to complete a survey at the end of the grant period. The results will inform IDOE decisions about applications during the upcoming grant cycle

In order to disseminate information about the best practice the state will create a community of practice that will identify charter schools in Indiana that have been successful in the implementation of best practices and sharing those best practices across the state. (pg. e55)

The applicant will recognize high performing schools, Title I Distinguished schools and Making It Happen schools, by publishing the best practices that they are exhibiting including those around school climate and student discipline. (pg. e 51)

The SEA has hired a Charter School Support Coordinator to ensure that all schools in Indiana understand and implement research-based best practices in education and focus that work on charter schools. (pg. 54)

Weaknesses:

There doesn't seem to be clarity around the methodology to disseminate information that specifically incorporates student body diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity with respect to educationally disadvantaged students consistent with applicable law.

There was only minimal discussion on what portion of the grant would be used for dissemination and how likely the activities would be to have an impact on student achievement. More information about both of the items would strengthen the application.

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 SEA states that over the past few years the authorizers in Indiana have instituted a pre-application process to ensure applications accepted provide the best opportunity to become high quality schools.

To ensure that charter schools are provided with information and research on best practice to address diverse student bodies, the Charter School Support Coordinator will partner with the Division of Early Learning and Office of Special Education. (pg. 55)

The community of practice will be utilized to identify charter schools in Indiana that have successfully implemented best practices and sharing those best practices. (pg. e55)

The application points out that in Indiana all charter school authorizers are required by statute to submit an annual report for each charter in the authorizer's portfolio as a component of their monitoring process.

Based on Indian statute, there is a requirement for authorizers to use academic achievement as the basis for accountability designations as well as decision to renew or close charter schools. (pg. e58)

The application points out that in Indiana all charter school authorizers are required by statute to submit an annual report for each charter in the authorizer's portfolio as a component of their monitoring process.

The Planning Grant Application includes sections in which applicants must discuss the charter school mission and educational goals of the charter school, as well as ways in which the school is autonomous, will comply with special education law and will involve parents and the community. (pg. e66-67)

The Indiana statute outline the purposes of a charter school including that there are established to provide innovative and autonomous programs while allowing freedom and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels leadership. (pg. e58)

The applicant discusses the transition to a new accountability plan. The plan will incorporate performance, growth, and multiple measures. To assist the schools to understand the new A-F accountability system, spring 2015 assessment data will be used to calculate accountability using the new model for illustrative purposes. (e. 47)

Weaknesses:

It was difficult to ascertain what the full process for seeking charter schools petitions. Further clarification would strengthen the applications.

The applicant lack clarity regarding 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.

The applicant did not address the in-depth component review that is required at least once every five years.

Reader's Score: 10

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 submitted a Logic Model that includes discussion on acquiring the grant in order to provide technical assistance, guidance and professional development in research based best practices all to the end of increasing student achievement and providing options for economically disadvantaged populations. (pg. e59)

Based on the applicant there are three key elements that are to be accomplished with the funds. (pg. e 60-62)

1. Effective school leadership
2. Address the needs of charter schools rated "C" or lower
3. Provide support directly to the CSP grantees

There is a position created (the Charter School Support Coordinator) that will provide additional support that focuses on the needs identified through a collaboration effort of the charter school's leadership and assigned Outreach Coordinator that address the use of data to drive improvement leadership and instruction. (pg. e61)

The applicant includes a timeline charts that outlines the measures and timeline for completion of measures. (pg. e63)

The IDOE will address findings related to CSP sub grantee by implementing the monitoring plan outlined in the Project Design section. (pg. e64)

Weaknesses:

The cohesiveness and strength of the logic plan and its role in addressing the grant in promoting the State-level strategies for using charter schools to improve educational outcomes for students through components of the applications was not specific enough. For example, it was unclear how the sub-grants would improve educational outcomes for students. Further clarification would strengthen the application.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

awards for implementation.

IDOE conducts a 90 minute conference call/meeting with the applicant to review all aspects of the planning and implementation application process and discuss relevant rules and regulations surrounding management of the grant.

The application is scored by a three panel peer review team. The reviewers come from both the charter and non-charter sector as well and employees of community based agencies and others with charter school experience. (pg. e67)

The applicant created a table to illustrate that during the grant period they intend to increase the number of charters by 30. (pg. e70)

The SEA applicant lists a number of ways to monitor sub grant.

- 60 days after CSP planning grant project period end date, a Planning Grant Final Report must be submitted to the CSP Grant Specialist
- All CSP sub grantees will be required to submit an Implementation Grant Interim Report 10 weeks prior to the end of the year 1 grant contract
- All CSP grant recipients will be subject to an onsite monitoring visit during the summer between Implementation year 1 and implementation year 2
- All CSP recipients will be required to submit and Implementation Grant Final Report 60 days after the end of the 24 month project period

The state provides a centralized housing place for all information regarding charter school information.

To inform teachers, parents, and communities of the SEAs charter school sub grant program, the IDOE will develop a web page dedicated to providing a general overview as well as specific information related to the CSP grant program. (pg. 72)

There were no waivers requested.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not list the number of previous sub grant awards. Discussion of how these awards have impacted the overall impacted the overall quality of the applicant pool would strengthen the application.

There is no discussion on how the applicant will create their focused portfolio to address the needs of the state.

Reader's Score: 7

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 demonstrates clear process for the initiation of a charter application. There are statutes that outline the need for rigorous academic and operational performance. Also there are clear measures that must be met in order to renew charters. The applicant was also able to articulate the triggers that would cause the revocation of a charter.

The applicant stated that statutes require the annual review of the faithfulness to the charter as well as the methods that are used to communicate the status and progress to stakeholders.

There is a pre-opening checklist that is a part of the multi-tiered application process and one the initial charter prospectus is approved, the applicant provides on-going supervision and support to charter applicants.

Finally, the applicant discussed a differentiated approach to those charter schools that are looking to expand or replicate their services. There is still a multi-tiered process, however the SEA condenses some of the paperwork. (pg. e18-19)

Weaknesses:

The method for communicating charter progress is primarily electronic, postings on Boards websites. In order to reach more stakeholders, other forms of communication can be used.

Reader's Score: 12

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process

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

To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant was able to list a number of authorizers that are not LEAS as well as provided a clear process for charters that want to appeal their application denials.

Weaknesses:

None observed

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2015 01:18 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (U282A150017)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
State-Level Strategy		
1. State-Level Strategy	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Selection Criteria		
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Selection Criteria		
Past Performance		
1. Past Performance	10	8
Quality of Plan to Support Ed. Dis. Students		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	12
Vision for Growth and Accountability		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	7
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	8
Oversight of Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	15	11
Management Plan and Theory of Action		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	10
Sub Total	80	66
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1	15	13
Sub Total	15	13
Competitive Preference Pritority		
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeal Process		

1. CPP 2

	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	120	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #18 - SEA Panel - 19: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Indiana Department of Education (U282A150017)

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 proposal clearly articulated a state strategy guided by the SEA initiative "Putting Schools First", (Page 7), and the SEA has developed processes to support the state's commitment and supports charter schools state wide. State level strategies are integrated in the SEA goals for charter schools. Strategies include (Pages 8-9):

- a robust system to analyze statewide trends
- processes for determining quality instruction
- processes for the usage of data to drive decision-making

The narrative includes a description of factors to be used to analyze how well schools meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students indicating a focus on meeting the needs of targeted student populations, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and secondary students. A clear set of appropriate indicators of success will used include attendance, behavior, and academic performance. (Page 9-10) Additionally, an early warning system is used to identify struggling schools in an effort to close the achievement gaps of their students by addressing factors that are preventing academic achievement. (Page 10)

The proposal discusses SEA efforts to ensure funding equity for charter schools based on a funding formula that mirrors calculations for traditional public schools, and is mandated by state statute. (Page 14). This initiative is likely to ensure equitable funding for charter schools and significant strategies in this area include extra improvement planning funds for effective schools (identified as Focus and Priority schools), and charter schools are eligible for tuition support funding. (Pages 14-15). The initiative that allows charter schools access to vacant facilities at a greatly reduced cost is a

particularly strong indicator of the state's commitment to ensuring funding equity for charter schools, and this initiative is further bolstered by state law legislation (IC 20-26-7-1, Page 15)

The applicant describes a comprehensive school improvement plan that is a component of the school review process and includes standards, diagnostics, surveys, assurances, planning, and reporting tools for accountability and compliance reporting. (p 11)

The SEA has an expectation that high quality performing schools share best practices with other schools in the state as a component of professional development and has a staff of Outreach Coordinators to support this goal. (p 11) Additionally, where significant achievement gaps for any population are identified, the LEA is required to develop and implement specific and targeted actions to address and close achievement gaps. (Page 12) These indicators of success and focused efforts are likely to ensure continuous effort to create and sustain high quality schools geared to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students,

The state provides opportunities for collaboration among all schools and stakeholders that includes direct stakeholder engagement forums and outreach to key stakeholders including:

- students,
- parents,
- community based organizations,
- civil rights organizations,
- business organization, and
- organizations representing students with disabilities
- groups representing English learners (Page 13)

The applicant also describes a strong set of strategies around efforts to share data with stakeholders. It appears likely the strategies, if implemented with fidelity will ensure access to a broad group of stakeholders regarding data and promising practices in the state's charter schools. Key strategies include:

- creating a Director's position within the SEA to oversee and guide outreach efforts
- stakeholder engagement forums
- SEA newsletters distributed to school leaders, and pertinent community groups principal and teacher associations,
- a quarterly parent newsletter video for parents
- a Student Advisory Group that engages teens to share school-based program initiatives
- a parent involvement survey distributed state-wide

The proposal states the CSP subgrant program will be a component of the state's strategy to meet state wide goals. The strategies provided indicate a commitment to integrating charter school creation and oversight into state level planning. Key strategies include:

- hiring Charter School Support Specialist to work directly with the CSP Grant Specialist
- communicating grant availability
- a grant application and review process
- monitoring of subgrantees,
- subgrantee support during the grant cycle

Weaknesses:

The narrative does not clearly describe how the creation of charter schools would serve as a viable option for students who currently attend, or would otherwise attend, the State's lowest-performing schools. (Criteria 3.ii) The response would be improved with the inclusion of a brief description of the SEA's intentions to use charters schools as a viable means to expand educational access to under resourced communities.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The SEA maintains a comprehensive process to inform charter schools of available grant funding that is likely to ensure overall equity in this area. All charter schools throughout the state are informed of federal funds for which they are eligible. The state Division of Finance is required to calculate the allocation for Federal funding to ensure that all operating charter schools receive funding. Also of note, formula funding is used annually to identify and provide additional funding to charter schools during the school year. (Page 15-17)

The proposal provided a strong indication that state laws bolster autonomy through statutes that extend to charter schools a variety of levels of freedom and flexibility in lieu of extended accountability (State Code 20-24-2-1). Additionally, under state law 20-24-9-3, charter schools are only accountable to their authorizers and are ultimately under the auspices of the State Board of Education with an expectation for maintaining compliance with applicable laws and their individual charter contract. These mandates and initiatives indicate the State's commitment to ensuring flexibility and autonomy for charter schools throughout the state. (Page 17)

The key exemptions for the state's charter schools that are supported by state law includes: (Page 18)

- accountability for school performance and improvement
- serving as the fiscal agent for the school
- operations and personnel management

All notifications regarding allocations and available federal funds are sent directly to the charter schools as each are designated as an LEA under Indiana Code.

Additionally, state charter schools are provided comparable services to traditional school districts, and new charter sites are notified of eligible funding within 5 months of beginning operations. (Page 19)

On page 19 The applicant describes the timeline and process for an IDEA funding that is in keeping with federal and state requirements, (IC 20-24-2-2). The process supports appropriate funding allocations and the state mandated efforts to ensure compliance as set forth in state Special Education rules 511IAC Article 7. (Page 20)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were evident in this area.

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:

A review of the narrative on pages 22-22 indicates steady progress in increasing the number of high quality charter schools in the state. Over the previous twelve years this has included authorizing 92 schools, with 73 schools currently operating.

The narrative provides additional details that indicate steady, controlled growth in the number of charters authorized over prior years. The applicant also provides research and data cited as evidence of success in this area and cites the 2014 National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, Measuring Up to the Model outcomes as evidence.

The narrative states nineteen charter schools have closed in the previous three years. Reasons for closure include actions taken by the authorizer due to poor performance and school based decisions due to performance. (Page 24) The proposal indicates the state has increased the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools over the past five years. Indicators include a description of a 10% increase in the high quality schools charter during this period. (Page 24).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly articulate performance outcomes for charter schools during the previous five year period. The proposal would be improved in this area with the addition of details on graduation rates over the previous five years.

The description should include evidence such as the impact of charter schools on state graduation rates or a comparison of academic progress among charter schools and traditional public schools over the previous five years.

The applicant does not clearly articulate whether college and post secondary education enrollment rates met or exceeded those of students in traditional public schools during the previous five years. The response in this area would be improved with the inclusion of a summary of explaining these issues that is accompanied by quantitative evidence.

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:

On page 24 of the proposal, the applicant describes the collaboration of two departments or centers, School Improvement and School Support Services, who spearhead efforts to ensure the needs of educationally disadvantaged students are met. This unique strategy indicates a keen focus on ensuring supports are in place for these students in pertinent ways. The applicant provides an example of a recent project whose plan includes a system for intervention as evidence of efforts to meet needs of the targeted student populations.

The process focuses on support and accountability of school programs in closing achievement gaps. This is met through:

--direct interaction with LEAs and schools. (Page 25)

-- the development and implementation of special projects

-- a collaboration experts,

--the state Department of Education provides support for schools may be identified to receive a concentrated intervention

--support is based on an assessment that includes a variety of student and operational performance data including

The applicant indicates charter schools are monitored and held accountable under the monitoring expectations as LEAs. The monitoring is supported by state law special education administrative code 551 IAC 7 ("Article 7") and overseen by various state entities.(Page 28) A desktop monitoring cycle and site visits are used to monitor compliance and risk based assessments are used to identify the need for corrective action. (Pages 28-29)

Weaknesses:

While the applicant indicates there are some efforts in place to encourage innovation in charter schools, the response in this area would be improved with the addition of details outlining a specific process to ensure this objective is met.

(Criteria 3) Indicators for a solid focus on this subject would include incentives embedded in the subgrant application process that focuses charters school innovations and evidence based promising practices.

The proposal does not clearly articulate how the subgrant process will be used to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. (Criteria 1) The proposal would be improved with the addition of evidence that explains how subgrant funding will be allocated based on specific initiatives or objectives that focus on the targeted student population.

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 proposal indicates charters schools are analyzed using a universal, statewide accountability system. Collected data is disaggregated to stakeholders through a dashboard format on the digital COMPASS platform. According to the schools recently implemented school grading system, student achievement, including closing achievement gaps, is the driving indicator of school effectiveness. Students in the lower 25% are used to track efforts to close the achievement gap and a data table s provided on page 31 as evidence of recent success in this area.(Page 30)

The state's plan to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools is based on the charter school statute, ability to meet compliance standards as required by law, and meeting the standards for renewal. (Page 30)

Weaknesses:

It is not always clear how the vision supports the specific goal of creating high quality charter schools within the narrative. Due to this it is difficult to ascertain the targets and overall ambitiousness of the plan. The response in this area would be improved with the addition of strategies that are specific to the creation and replication of high quality charter schools throughout the narrative in this section.

The applicant does not clearly address expectations for discipline, retention, and graduation in the narrative. Additionally, it is not clear whether the data system will provide rigorous tracking in these areas. The response in this area would be improved with the addition of a plan that has been developed based on past performance in key areas, and the expected indicators of success to be in place throughout the grant cycle.

The applicant does not provide an estimate of the number of high quality charter schools to be created over the grant period. Details indicating the estimated number of high-quality charters in operation at both the beginning and end of the grant cycle would improve the response in this area.

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 SEA clearly is at the forefront of efforts ensuring the broad dissemination of information on best practices. A solid set of strategies are described that indicate a robust dissemination plan is in place. Significant strategies include:

- providing incentives and support for struggling Title I schools based on new information
- supports, including technical assistance, to ensure continuous improvement
- implementing interventions based on new information on efficacy
- using Title I Distinguished Schools and Making It Happen schools as examples of success
- identifying strong leaders and effective practices

(Page 38-39)

The strategies for differentiating dissemination for Title I schools particularly indicate the SEA's strong focus on ensuring racial and ethnic diversity as it relates to educationally disadvantaged students.

According to the proposal, the SEA plans to create a new position (Page 40) to focus on ensuring schools statewide understand and implement research-based best practices in education. There is a focus on charter schools in this effort. The SEA will also develop a "Charter School Community of Practice" (Page 40) that will include charter school stakeholders in the effort to disseminate effective charter school programming.

Weaknesses:

The ways in which charter school success will be disseminated to traditional schools is not clearly articulated. The response in this area would be improved with the addition of a brief discussion of strategies to be utilized to ensure all schools have awareness of charter school innovation and success as well as platforms to consider ways to implement best practices at traditional school.

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 proposal indicates the applicant seeks and approves petitions from developers guided by state code (20-24-2.2-1.5) that requires authorizers to adopt standards based on national high quality charter school authorizing during the charter school application processes. A comprehensive evaluation process is included. (page 42)

The state charter school board requires an appropriately rigorous application process that includes: (Page 43)

- external experts evaluate the full applications,
- applicant interviews
- public hearings (as required by law)
- additional interviews depending on authorizer
- approval or denial of application

The SEA's oversight strategies include a 5 year review, an indicator that a rigorous plan is in place to guide both compliance and charter renewal efforts.

The proposal states application reviews consider proposals based on the ability to serve the targeted population, with a

particular focus on innovative and autonomous programming that aligns to the needs of the targeted student population as well as expanding educational options for students. (Page 43)

The applicant states all charter school authorizers are required by statute (IC 20-24-9-1) to submit an annual report for the charter school they oversee as a component of their own monitoring process. The report is intended to provide information to ensure compliance with state and federal government requirements, as well as the methods by which the charter school will be held accountable for achieving the academic of the charter school. Performance is also measured by governing board performance and stewardship and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. (Page 44)

The reports are posted on state websites and new legislation (IC 20-24-2.2-8) was passed requiring the State Board of Education to conduct and post on the state website a formal evaluation of all charter school outcomes every five years.

The monitoring conducted by state authorizers is supported by law 20-24-2.2 and sets for the process to determine revocation or renewal of charters. Standards are set forth within the charter agreement and are based on charter school autonomy and innovative programming. Additionally the narrative includes a description of effort to ensure accountability determinations will continue should there be changes to assessments or accountability systems. (Page 45)

Weaknesses:

The response in this area would be improved with a deeper discussion of public reports on the performance of the portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school.

Models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic populations are not clearly articulated. The response in this area would be improved with the inclusion of clear initiatives and strategies expected to be implemented during the grant cycle that focus on how the state will address the oversight of disparate student populations.

Reader's Score: 11

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 extensive detail that outlines a comprehensive management plan and theory of action. The plan includes a clear theory of action in key areas within an "if/when" format that focuses on meeting academic performance expectations.(Page 45) The management plan also considers:

- specific performance measures (table page 49)
- efforts to increase the number of high quality charter schools (page 45)
- effective school leadership (Page 45)
- professional development and training (Page 46)
- addressing the needs of struggling schools (Page 47)
- providing support to CSP subgrantees

Additionally, a table is provided on page 49 of the proposal that indicates baseline measures and expected progress during the duration of the grant cycle and a logic model that is in keeping with grant guidelines and clearly aligns with the management plan.

The evidence reveals the applicant has developed a robust management plan for the grant project that aligns to state performance goals. The plan is appropriately robust and includes indicators of success in pertinent areas, such as academic achievement with annual targets, and describes how the SEA will use outcomes to inform the overall monitoring process. It is evident that the management plan is appropriately solid and, if implemented with fidelity, is likely to provide rigorous oversight of the project. (Page 49)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were evident for this area.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Project Design

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

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

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

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

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

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

2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees;

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

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

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

Strengths:

The narrative and supporting evidence indicates approximately 40 subgrants were awarded during the previous cycle and provides details to describe plans to award an estimated 60 awards for the upcoming grant cycle. (Page 56)

Subgrantees must share progress in a variety of ways including using interim reports and a final reports during the cycle of the grant. Additionally, the narrative indicates the SEA will gather and use outcomes for the reports to support continuous project improvement while focusing grant resources to the areas of greatest need. (Page 57) Stakeholders will be notified through website postings and community collaborations. This is an indicator of the state's commitment to inform a broad range of stakeholders. (Page 58). This process overall indicates a robust cycle of data-based decision-making is embedded in the oversight of the project.

The applicant reports plans to differentiate the application process by including incentives for plans to attract, enroll and serve low income and other educationally disadvantaged student populations expected to be served by the proposed school. The narrative also indicates plans to provide awards for new and continuing grants for charter school planning and implementation . (Page 55)

Stakeholders will be notified through website postings and community collaborations an indicator of the state's commitment to inform a broad range of stakeholders.

The CSP sub grant plan is appropriately comprehensive and includes a variety of elements that are likely to ensure a pool of quality applicants. Unique strategies include accepting grants on a rolling basis and planning continuation grants. (Page 54?)

The process for selecting CSP subgrantees is appropriate for both planning and implantation grants to meet the goal of attracting quality applicants.

The proposal describes a comprehensive CSP subgrant monitoring process that appears robust and efficient to oversee awardee success. The monitoring process includes a desktop report outlining the findings as well as the expected corrective action. This report is informed by outcomes from interim and final reports an on-site monitoring. There are also plans to increase staffing, (i.e. a Charter School Support Coordinator) to support efforts in this area. The combined strategies, if implemented with fidelity, are likely to ensure overall subgrant monitoring that will guide subgrantees toward meeting project goals. (page 56-57)

No waivers were requested by this applicant.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses evident in this area.

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 narrative provided describes a framework to guide the development of charter schools in the state. The overall process found in the framework is likely to ensure the creation of high quality charter schools statewide. State statute IC 20-24-4 (6) mandates that authorizers adopt standards informed by national trends that measure specific indicators of success in key areas : (Page 3)

--operational performance

--academic achievement

--attendance rates

--graduation rates

--finances

--governance

Additionally the applicant discusses the statutory requirements for charter renewal criteria that appear appropriately sound and likely to insure effective monitoring of charter schools statewide.

The proposal describes a statutory requirement to annually report progress for authorizers (Page 4) and provides an example of this process involving the Indiana Charter school Board portfolio that also indicates the authorizing processes provides a differentiated review of charter petitions.

The proposal includes details on the authorizing process that indicates appropriate criteria are in place to support the creation of effective charter schools. The process includes: (Page 5)

- submittal of letter of intent
- submittal of prospectus
- prospectus review
- interview with staff
- interview in a public hearing
- prospectus revision
- submittal of full application,
- Indianapolis Charter School Board vote for approval or denial

Additionally the applicant describes a pre-opening process leading up to a final review prior to individual school site openings. (Page 5-6)

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to include a description of frameworks and processes to evaluate the performance of charter schools on a regular basis. The response in this area would be improved with the addition of details that explain 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.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

State law (Code 20-24-1-2-5) allows for multiple chartering authorities and an appeal process is in place that carries the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA. (Page 7).

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses evident in this area.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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