

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: High Desert Montessori High School (U282B090024)

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

|   | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Questions</b>  |                 |               |
| <b>Summary Comments</b>   |                 |               |
| <b>Summary Comments</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 1   | 0               | 0             |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>   |                 |               |
| <b>The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.</b>                              |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 2   | 20              | 17            |
| <b>The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.</b> |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 3   | 10              | 9             |
| <b>The extent of community support for the application.</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 4   | 20              | 15            |
| <b>The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.</b>                                      |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 5   | 10              | 6             |
| <b>The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.</b>                       |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 6   | 20              | 16            |
| <b>The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...</b>                            |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 7   | 10              | 8             |
| <b>The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.</b>                        |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 8   | 10              | 10            |
| <b>The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.</b>                            |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 9   | 10              | 5             |
| <b>The contribution the charter school will make ...</b>  |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 10  | 20              | 15            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>130</b>      | <b>101</b>    |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Panel 3: 84.282B

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

Applicant: High Desert Montessori High School (U282B090024)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

#### 1. Summary Comments

##### General:

The proposed school is a logical extension of an existing middle school. It offers a strong explanation of the school design and of Montessori philosophy. Its academic and parent satisfaction goals of 80% success may be set low. More information on the demographics of the expected student population is needed to make that determination. In forming the school, applicant appears to be reaching out to the community and to experts within the field.]

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.

#### 1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards, the grade levels or ages of students to be served, and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used.**

##### Strengths:

Applicant offers a full explanation of Montessori philosophy and use of 4 Houses to organize learning. Plan to meet State math standards through daily math instruction, to implement IB curriculum, and to use computer program to track student projects (pg 16) gives more detail to curriculum.

##### Weaknesses:

Applicant explains the how and why of the school in far more detail than the what of the curriculum. Budget indicates purchasing text books but gives no explanation of how they will support or drive curriculum. Since there is a feeder school involved, stating that school's academic progress might substantiate the applicant's assurances that the school will meet state standards.

Reader's Score: 17

### Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.

#### 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of how the State's law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency**

and exempts the charter school from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

**Strengths:**

Applicant plans to apply to the Nevada State Board of Education and clearly states the authorizer's responsibilities. A significant benefit is that the per pupil funding will go directly to the school with no district withholdings.

**Weaknesses:**

There is minimal discussion regarding a relationship between the school and the authorizer and why, beyond direct financing, the applicant chose to apply to the NSBE.

The draw back that the school will have full responsibility for special education expenses is mitigated by the Montessori instructional practices which allow for truly individualized learning in a least restrictive environment.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - The extent of community support for the application.**

**1. The extent of community support for the application.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school, and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

Applicant thoroughly documents large number of people from varying occupational backgrounds who have had input to the planning. An appendix letter indicates that monthly meetings have and will occur.

**Weaknesses:**

It is unclear to what extent community input reaches beyond those involved with the feeder school. Applicant does not fully explain how so many people have had input. Did they all or some attend one or many meetings, fill out a survey, consent to an interview, participate in phone conversations, etc.? Are they contacts within the wider community or are they primarily parents of students attending the feeder school?

Lottery system is well described, but starts & stops way in advance of the school's opening and the applicant does not explain why (pg 6 appendix).

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.**

**1. The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the objectives for the charter school and how these grant funds will be used, including how these funds will be used in conjunction with other Federal programs administered by the Secretary, in meeting these objectives.**

**Strengths:**

Goals are clearly stated with logical objectives: Goal 1 defines planning objectives. Goal 2 includes the one academic objective and one parent satisfaction objective.

**Weaknesses:**

Goal 1 includes benchmarks but its measurement is weakened by lack of a time line, number of teachers to hire, number of students to enroll.

A goal of 80% meeting or exceeding state standards may or may not be ambitious because the expected student population is not well described. Feeder school serves at risk students, but enrollment process is designed to admit academically motivated students.

**Reader's Score: 6**

**Selection Criteria - The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.****1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.****Strengths:**

Applicant plans multiple means of assessments such as team, teacher, and self assessment followed by standardized testing with state assessments.

State assessments will give a number picture of degree to which students master standards. (pg 28 & 35)

Testing 3 times per year will allow for immediate remediation when needed and the school has a plan to use Odyssey for immediate targeted remediation as needed.

Project Foundry allows students to track their own progress toward state standards thus involving them in the responsibility for academic achievement.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant explanation of primary teacher, team teachers, and student evaluations is limited. Will they be based on rubrics, test scores, or a far less formal and less objective format of personal observations? Applicant does not explain the basis for determining acceptability or passing?

**Reader's Score: 16**

**Selection Criteria - The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...****1. The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students during and after the period of Federal financial assistance.****Strengths:**

Applicant's emphasis on assessments as continual and multi-level plus the RTI plan should catch problems as they occur and allow for immediate remediation.

Applicant seeks expertise (plans to visit successful Montessori high schools) and to embed a charter as well as Montessori awareness in major stake holders (will take several stake holders to national charter school conference).

Project director has years of charter school experience so should understand the demands a charter school must face to be successful.

**Weaknesses:**

Goals and objectives appear very reasonable but with out a deeper understanding of the expected student body, they may or may not be challenging.  
The budget for special education seems low and there is little evidence of an awareness of the potential expenses such as testing for IEPs and services after high school.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.**

**1. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

Applicant indicates that parents have been involved in pre planning (letter on pg 10 of appendix), will have a seat on the school board, will be represented on a Parent Collaboration Committee, and will be used as guest speakers.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.**

**1. The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director; and the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

**Strengths:**

Project Director is a certified principal with 8 years of experience with the feeder school.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant is unclear if the full time Project Director is still working for the feeder middle school. Her expertise might be better described by the academic progress of the feeder school and that school's compliance record during her leadership than by simply stating that she is certified.  
If there is a board or a core group of founders of the proposed school, they are not mentioned.

**Reader's Score:** 5

**Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter school will make ...**

- 1. The contribution the charter school will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve to State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

**Strengths:**

Applicant presents a clear explanation of the benefits of individual support opportunities for students of all achievement levels including ILA and IEP and 504 (pg 38-39)

Implementation of the RTI and 9th grade transitional support program should help all students reach graduation.

**Weaknesses:**

The Enrollment process appears to permit selected enrollment through requiring a presentation and, for transferring students, letters of recommendation.

**Reader's Score:** 15

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** High Desert Montessori High School (U282B090024)

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

|   | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Questions</b>  |                 |               |
| <b>Summary Comments</b>   |                 |               |
| <b>Summary Comments</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 1   | 0               | 0             |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>   |                 |               |
| <b>The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.</b>                              |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 2   | 20              | 16            |
| <b>The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.</b> |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 3   | 10              | 6             |
| <b>The extent of community support for the application.</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 4   | 20              | 16            |
| <b>The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.</b>                                      |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 5   | 10              | 5             |
| <b>The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.</b>                       |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 6   | 20              | 15            |
| <b>The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...</b>                            |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 7   | 10              | 8             |
| <b>The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.</b>                        |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 8   | 10              | 10            |
| <b>The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.</b>                            |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 9   | 10              | 6             |
| <b>The contribution the charter school will make ...</b>  |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 10  | 20              | 17            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>130</b>      | <b>99</b>     |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Panel 3: 84.282B

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

Applicant: High Desert Montessori High School (U282B090024)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

#### 1. Summary Comments

##### General:

This a well articulated plan for a Montessori High School with input from a very well informed and highly qualified group of professionals and parents. The budget takes into account the very different needs from years 1-3 and is geared toward startup costs.

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.

#### 1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards, the grade levels or ages of students to be served, and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used.**

##### Strengths:

The school is based on the concept of four "houses" that will allow students to more fully explore their "passions" and develop skills that are needed for post-secondary success. Plans are to have a specific Transitional support year for 9th graders. Flexibility is allowed in the choice of a "house" and the 9th grade year will include equal exposure to all four. Purposeful interactions between the "houses" and an academic focus for each are also a part of the design. The instructional strategies are well explained and are an integral part of the Montessori philosophy. Plans are to include on-line independent course work and International Baccalaureate courses.

##### Weaknesses:

Although attempts are made throughout to tie the project based learning and Montessori framework to academics, it is still difficult to determine what the actual academic curriculum and scope and sequence will be. The applicant did not tie course work to actual graduation requirements. It would help to have some guidelines as to how and when the teaching curriculum will be chosen and developed. The setting up of 4 "houses" in the first year, with only half the enrollment (page 13) is not explained.

Reader's Score: 16

### Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.

**1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.**

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

**The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.**

**Strengths:**

There seems to be a good understanding of the school's responsibilities, including the responsibility to special education students. Some explanation is give related to state law.

**Weaknesses:**

The flexibility and autonomy are not explained fully. The choice of the state as a possible authorizer is not justified, not the relationship that would exist. It would help to know what the applicant has already done to increase the likelihood of approval.

**Reader's Score: 6**

**Selection Criteria - The extent of community support for the application.**

**1. The extent of community support for the application.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school, and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The list of contributors to the plan for the school (pages 30-33) is very impressive and obviously strengthened the application and the chances for success. There are requirements for transfer students but this does not seem to be tied to the lottery. A lottery system is explained.

**Weaknesses:**

It would help to have some idea of the number of students currently attending the Montessori Middle School who are interested in attending this high school. The plan for dissemination of information is not well explained, nor is the "habit of dialogue" with the community. There is no explanation for the lottery ending 6 months prior to enrollment.

**Reader's Score: 16**

**Selection Criteria - The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.**

**1. The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the objectives for the charter school and how these grant funds will be used, including how these funds will be used in conjunction with other Federal programs administered by the Secretary, in meeting these objectives.**

**Strengths:**

Goals include start up goals and intermediate objectives.

**Weaknesses:**

The goals of 80% of 10th graders meeting or exceeding core proficiencies, while high, would be better stated in terms of value added (increase in levels of proficiency over time). Goal #2, page 34 (improve opportunities to learn) should include high academic targets for each grade, not just the 10th, and not just "opportunities". Objective 2.2 (80% of parents and staff will express satisfaction with school curriculum and management) is not ambitious.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.****1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.****Strengths:**

A variety of assessments will be in place to determine the achievement of the students. Goals and objectives (page 33-34) include appropriate Measures of Progress.

**Weaknesses:**

Only students in grade 10 were included in the objective for academic achievement and therefore the other grades were not included in the measure of progress.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...****1. The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students during and after the period of Federal financial assistance.****Strengths:**

There is a plan for slow growth, beginning with grades 9 and 10 the first year, and taking two years to plan. The budget reflects a progression from planning to implementation to life beyond the grant. A non-profit organization has been established to provide financial support to the school. The probable "feeder system" from the Montessori Middle School should assist in ongoing enrollment.

**Weaknesses:**

In the explanation of the lottery system (page 7) a statement is made about reaching the capacity of 200 students, 50 per grade for 4 grades, in the first year, but on page 13 the statement is made that the first year will only enroll 9th and 10th graders. The lottery does not allow for any priorities, such as siblings, students within the neighborhood, or students attending the current Montessori Middle School. The possible facility or the plan for obtaining it is not mentioned.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.**

**1. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

Parents and community members have been involved in the planning of the school and will be a part of the governance as well as the operation once the school is started. Plans are to have a Parent Representative on the Board, a Parent Collaboration Committee for outreach and involvement, and parents serving on various committees within the school.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.**

- 1. The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director; and the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

**Strengths:**

The job description for the Project Director is very comprehensive. The background of the Project Director as stated on page 37-38 is very appropriate. The leadership plan, page 4, includes a student team leader from each house.

**Weaknesses:**

Although page 37 states that the resume of the Project Director is attached, it was not, so it is difficult to adequately determine that person's qualifications. The job description for the Project Director states that it is time limited (approximately 18 months, yet the budget is for 3 years. The application does not state who will be hiring and evaluating the staff.

**Reader's Score: 6**

**Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter school will make ...**

- 1. The contribution the charter school will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve to State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

**Strengths:**

A Response to Intervention plan is included to address those with specific academic needs and fits well with the Montessori organization of the school. The application demonstrates a good understanding of the school's responsibility for special education. The school is clearly designed to meet the individual needs of all students.

**Weaknesses:**

The plan does not include the specific needs of all educationally disadvantaged students, such as English as a Second Language learners.

**Reader's Score:** 17

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: High Desert Montessori High School (U282B090024)

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

|   | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Questions</b>  |                 |               |
| <b>Summary Comments</b>   |                 |               |
| <b>Summary Comments</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 1   | 0               | 0             |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>   |                 |               |
| <b>The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.</b>                              |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 2   | 20              | 20            |
| <b>The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.</b> |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 3   | 10              | 8             |
| <b>The extent of community support for the application.</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 4   | 20              | 15            |
| <b>The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.</b>                                      |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 5   | 10              | 5             |
| <b>The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.</b>                       |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 6   | 20              | 15            |
| <b>The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...</b>                            |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 7   | 10              | 9             |
| <b>The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.</b>                        |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 8   | 10              | 9             |
| <b>The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.</b>                            |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 9   | 10              | 6             |
| <b>The contribution the charter school will make ...</b>  |                 |               |
| 1. QUESTION 10  | 20              | 14            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>130</b>      | <b>101</b>    |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Panel 3: 84.282B

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

Applicant: High Desert Montessori High School (U282B090024)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

#### 1. Summary Comments

##### General:

The application has developed a particularly innovative program, combining the rigor of the International Baccalaureate program with the flexibility of thematic "Houses," using the principles of the Montessori Method to accomplish its goals. In particular, the school will benefit from having an active and successful "feeder school" currently providing Montessori services to a k-8 population. The result will be that the new school will have not only a student and parent population accustomed to the Montessori Method, but also an engaged, active and supportive community to financially and culturally sustain it.

Reader's Score: 0

### Selection Criteria - The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.

#### 1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards, the grade levels or ages of students to be served, and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used.**

##### Strengths:

The application proposes to use a project-based program based upon the Montessori philosophy that affords students a opportunity to pursue their own interests and for interdisciplinary learning (pp 12-13). The instructional practices will be aligned with the Nevada state standards and combine a number of innovative methods, with a strong emphasis on technology and multimedia opportunities, student collaboration, and "real world connections." (pp. 14-15). Students will learn in a variety of venues, including seminars, individualized lessons, workshops, and on-line independent work, with an emphasis on math instruction (pp. 17-18). The school will, through its Montessori connection, offer International Baccalaureate courses (p.17).

Of particular note is the use of "Houses" that offer particular emphases for students based upon their interests, and appear to operate similar to thematic "schools within schools." From science, language arts, math and social studies, four "houses" will be developed to facilitate student instruction (pp. 20-26). Each ninth graders will spend part of the time in each "house" and, at the conclusion, will select their choice for the remaining three years (p. 26).

To ensure student success, the school will utilize the Response to Intervention program to address student deficiencies (pp. 2, 28).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.**

**1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.**

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

**The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.**

**Strengths:**

The application reflects an understanding of the flexibility provided to the school, which acts as the LEA (pp.28-29), and indicated a clear understanding its revenue stream (p. 29).

**Weaknesses:**

The application would have benefited from a delineation and explanation of the reports required by the State Education Authority (p. 29).

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - The extent of community support for the application.**

**1. The extent of community support for the application.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school, and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The application demonstrates an understanding of the lottery system and includes a detailed description of the process to be used should the school reach its capacity of 200 students ("Other Attachments" pp. 6-9). Particularly impressive was the use of an outside Montessori advisor to help develop a "habit of dialogue" early on with all of the school's stakeholders (p. 30).

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not describe a process for outreach prior to the opening of the school. Because the Montessori concept remains an unusual one, the application would benefit from a program of public communications, including press releases, public information meetings, listings on Montessori websites, meetings in the Montessori feeder middle school, and other mechanisms designed to explain the school to the public at large. These appear to be lacking in the proposal (p. 30).

Reader's Score: 15

**Selection Criteria - The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.**

**1. The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the objectives for the charter school and how these grant funds will be used, including how these funds will be used in conjunction with other Federal programs administered by the Secretary, in meeting these objectives.**

**Strengths:**

The application proposes that 80 percent of its 10th grade students will meet or exceed State levels of proficiency in the core academic areas in year two (p. 34). The application enumerates a number of non-academic objectives, including parental satisfaction and intermediate steps towards opening the school (pp. 33-34).

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal's objectives seem less than ambitious in the area of academic achievement. They should establish a baseline against which to judge improved academic achievement and contain intermediate steps for all years of the proposed charter's grant. In particular, academic achievement should be judged against current accomplishments within the student universe from which the student population will be drawn (p. 34).

Reader's Score: 5

**Selection Criteria - The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.**

**1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.**

**Strengths:**

The application includes a strategy that incorporates a variety of assessments, including self-assessment, teacher/team assessments, the use of state standardized tests and internal assessments using the NWEA tests (p. 35). The application offers several assessment measures for non-academic objectives (pp. 33-35). The school will use a Response to Intervention team to regularly assess the needs of students in potential need of remediation (p. 2).

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not indicate a timeline for use of the assessments and the number of academic assessments seems limited (p. 35).

Reader's Score: 15

**Selection Criteria - The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...**

**1. The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students during and after the period of Federal financial assistance.**

**Strengths:**

The objectives are sufficiently gradual that the charter will likely meet the objectives, and the budget reflects that progression (Budget, p. 36). Many of the objectives are in preparation for opening the charter school and are necessary

for the charter's success. The school benefits significantly from the existence of a feeder middle school serving k-8 grade students, both in terms of incoming students and the pre-establishment of a base of financial and community support (p. 36).

**Weaknesses:**

The application lacks data about the expected student body, which could have been obtained from the expected feeder school (p. 36).

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Selection Criteria - The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.**

**1. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The application lists more than 40 individuals from the Montessori academic community and the parent community that have been involved in the planning, design and implementation of the charter school (pp. 30-33). The school plans to establish a Parent Collaboration Committee responsible for parent outreach and communications and there will be a parent representative on the school's Board (p. 37). Parents are also encouraged to participate on key committees, including Finance and Human Resources (p. 37).

**Weaknesses:**

The method by which the Board will secure a Parent Representative is not noted, nor is it explained how many Board members there will be (p. 37).

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Selection Criteria - The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.**

**1. The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director; and the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

**Strengths:**

The Project Director is a licensed school administrator and has served as an administrator for the High Desert Montessori School (the feeder school) for eight years (pp. 37-38). The school includes a non-discrimination clause in its proposal (p. 38). Nearly all community members involved in the planning of the school have a wide swath of educational backgrounds (pp. 30-33).

**Weaknesses:**

There is no indication that other members of the project's leadership have substantial backgrounds in key areas needed to operate a charter school, such as finance, legal and facilities. Although the application states that the credentials of the Project Director can be found in the Attachments, those pages are missing (p. 38, Attachments).

**Reader's Score:** 6

**Selection Criteria - The contribution the charter school will make ...**

- 1. The contribution the charter school will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students to achieve to State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

**Strengths:**

The school's design is one that would lend itself to assisting educationally disadvantaged students. The school will include a number of support specialists (pp. 38-39) and the Montessori method is known to be especially successful with special education due to its hands-on methodology (p. 8). The use of Houses is particularly innovative in assisting at-risk students to succeed (p. 11).

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not provide information about the surrounding community or the demographics, beyond a general description that the school would be located in a low-income community. The application would benefit from information describing the universe of the expected student population, without which it is difficult to judge the impact the school will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students.

**Reader's Score:** 14

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 02/11/2010 02:04 PM