

**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:** Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (U282B090013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
1. QUESTION 1	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	5
<b>The extent of community support for the application.</b>		
1. QUESTION 4	20	19
<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	15
<b>The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...</b>		
1. QUESTION 7	10	7
<b>The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.</b>		
1. QUESTION 8	10	7
<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	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>98</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel 1: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (U282B090013)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

#### 1. Summary Comments

Reader's Score:

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 applicant will open a K-5, inner city, Sciences and Arts based school, which uses technology and a theme based curriculum to teach the state content standards. Utilizing active learning techniques, the school will have an environmental focus, with each grade being organized around a year long "Big Question". The school will make use of park lands and programs adjacent to the school to root the integrated curriculum in experiential learning. The school will use the local district scope of learning, but the sequence will differ profoundly. (pp. 4-7) The reading program will be augmented with commercial products.

A three-tiered approach will be taken to ensure that all students succeed. Students who do not succeed in the core program will receive supplemental exercises and action plans. The third tier will include pull-out strategies to remediate the problem. (pp. 9-10)

The school will operate under an extended school year calendar organized in quarters to promote continuous learning. Intersessions will be used to remediate and enrich learning based on individual needs. (p. 12)

Multiple assessments will be used to inform instruction, which include: standardized tests, ongoing authentic assessment, and PALS and DRA (reading assessment programs). (pp. 14-15)

Each student will have a Personal Evaluation Plan to assess learning, set educational goals, and guide individual, differentiated instruction. (p. 15)

#### Weaknesses:

Although this appears to be an exciting and innovative approach to education, it is unclear how the school will ensure that all of the state standards will be taught as there is no specific curriculum, or detailed plan to develop a curriculum, which is

inclusive of all of the academic standards.

It is unclear if the intersessions are included as required academic days within the school calendar or are optional sessions.

There is no information about specific math or social studies curricula, simply examples of some standards that will be taught.

**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:**

The state allows for certain education policies to be waived upon request of the charter school applicant. (p. 22)

Charter schools in the state have absolute autonomy over: curriculum, daily operation, budget, expenditures, and hiring. The school is responsible for financial reporting to the district. (p. 23)

The school will utilize district Human Resources for administration of personnel benefits and payroll functions. They will also obtain Exceptional education resources from the district. (p. 23)

The school will be located in a district building.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the charter school has the flexibility to choose and hire staff, employees remain employees of the local district. (p. 23)

The charter school is granted a three-year charter which is too short to make significant long term contract arrangements. (p. 23)

Little detail is provided regarding the administrative oversight required by the local and state policies.

The school will not be its own LEA.

The district will control the charter school budget.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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:**

This school has been established with an extensive grass-roots effort. More than 300 people attended an event sponsored by the founders. Hundreds of community members attended school board meeting in support of the establishment of the school. (p. 24)

In addition to media coverage, a massive outreach campaign is underway to inform parents and the community about the charter school. The Diversity/Outreach Committee has spoken at neighborhood association meetings, public events, festivals, churches, and community meetings. Negotiations are underway to place outreach information on the public transportation buses. Volunteer are doing door to door canvassing in low income neighborhoods and advertising on minority owned radio stations and press. (p. 26)

The school will endeavor to match the demographics of the city and thus be the most integrated school in the district.

If enrollment outnumbers available seats, a lottery will be held. After the first year, current students and siblings will have pre-lottery status. (p. 27)

**Weaknesses:**

During the initial year, there is no stated provision for siblings within the lottery system.

**Reader's Score: 19**

**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 objectives include: an enrolled population that mirrors the demographics of the City; a capacity enrollment by year three; and academic results by year three. (p. 28)

The school will apply for Title I funding once students are enrolled. (p. 30)

The diversity objective is ambitious.

**Weaknesses:**

The academic objectives do not appear overly ambitious and are long-term, three year goals. Shorter goals provide the opportunity to adjust the academic program if it is not successfully improving academic achievement. Students do not have the time to wait three years to discover if they are in a school that can successfully meet academic objectives.

The applicant claims to have a large amount of support for this school making, the enrollment goal not very ambitious.

The attendance goal of 90% average daily attendance by year three lacks rigor. (p. 28)

**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:**

The applicant describes an assessment plan to measure academic achievement and inform instruction, which will determine if the academic goals have been met. (p. 32)

Enrollment and attendance data will determine if the enrollment and attendance objective has been met. The data will also be used to assess the marketing plan and involve parents when absenteeism becomes a problem. (p. 33)

The school will use a mix of standardized tests, teacher made tests, and authentic assessments to measure achievement. There will be a checklist of state standards in each child's educational folder for constant monitoring of achievement of academic standards.

Objective data will be used to inform instruction.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant plans to measure the applicant pool to determine if the school has attracted a diverse population. Although this is a good indicator of the success of the marketing program, the enrollment data will be a better indicator of the demographics of the enrolled population. (p. 32)

Although there will be ongoing academic assessment, it will be difficult to determine how progress toward the long term goal is being met.

The assessment strategy for objective 3 is overly broad and poorly developed.

**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 applicant has many factors in place that will facilitate success in achieving its objectives, including: a board with diverse experience and training; relationships with other charter schools; a strong marketing plan; and a wide web of expert and volunteer resources. (p. 35)

The staff will be provided with professional development opportunities.

**Weaknesses:**

This school requires a lot of curriculum development and cooperative planning in order to be successful.

It is unclear that volunteers will be able to sustain this program after the period of Federal funding has expired.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**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 school has received numerous letters of support from elected officials and community members, as well as, in-kind donations of furniture, labor, and professional services, including pro bono legal assistance. The school has also received financial support from individuals and community associations. (pp. 24-25)

**Weaknesses:**

Although the focus on parent involvement is highly desirable, the mandatory volunteer hours may eliminate this school as an option for some students. The school is looking for financial and volunteer help in operating the school. There is no mention of parent/teacher conferences or other involvement in the academic program.

**Reader's Score:** 7

**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 founders of this school bring a wide variety of divergent qualifications, backgrounds, and experiences to this school. (pp. 42-43)

Applications for employment from a diverse population are encouraged. (p. 41)

The broad experience and expertise of the board members makes it likely that they will succeed as high level policy-making governing body.

**Weaknesses:**

Although one of the board members is said to have be a former headmistress, there is no indication of such on her resume. It is therefore unclear that there is anyone involved in the school that has any background in school administration or school start-up.

The applicant did not provide information about the characteristics or credentials that will be required of applicants for the position of principal.

It is unclear what the balance of power will be for the operation of the school between the principal, the school improvement and the board.

**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 focus on assisting all students at all ability levels to achieve academically makes this school likely to contribute to the community. The reported widespread support of this school demonstrates the community need and the potential to satisfy a need. The applicant is aware of the needs of the educationally disadvantaged and has research-based strategies to differentiate instruction so that all students can learn. (pp. 44-45)

The plan for this school is likely to make an overall sound contribution and be a valuable asset within the community.

**Weaknesses:**

There is little discussion about a continuum of services for special needs students. It is unclear what will be done to meet the student's needs when a mainstream education with pull out services as needed do not work.

The contribution of this school would be strengthened by more rigorous pursuit of strong academic objectives.

**Reader's Score: 16**

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Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (U282B090013)

**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	18
<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	20
<b>The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.</b>		
1. QUESTION 5	10	7
<b>The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.</b>		
1. QUESTION 6	20	17
<b>The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...</b>		
1. QUESTION 7	10	7
<b>The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.</b>		
1. QUESTION 8	10	8
<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	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>104</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel 1: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (U282B090013)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

#### 1. Summary Comments

##### General:

The applicant proposes a charter school that will focus on environmental science issues. The applicant has brought together a good assortment of curriculum and instructional practices that will enable this vision to become reality. Unique to this application is the cooperation with the City of Richmond park system. The proximity to two parks will allow these students real time observations in the environment they are studying.]

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 applicant proposes a hands-on theme-based curriculum with a science and arts focus. The charter school will address environmental awareness through a well thought out series of "big questions" that students in grades K-5 will address. This will be accomplished with an integrated approach to the curriculum. Pg. 4-6

Throughout the application it is obvious that the applicant understands how students of this age learn and has provided the necessary curriculum elements and instructional practices that will enable that process to occur. Hands on and investigative methods allow these students to obtain first hand knowledge about a variety of topics. Pg. 4-11

The applicant understands the need for a strong language arts curriculum and has provided the necessary elements of that curriculum. A specific program has been chosen and several supplemental programs are in place to assist students in becoming proficient readers. In addition, discussion indicates that students who are struggling with the acquisition of reading skills will be assisted through a series of tier interventions. Pg. 8-10

The applicant provides a school calendar that has time allotted between quarters for intercession studies enabling students who are struggling or those who need enrichment to get additional help. Pg. 12

**Weaknesses:**

There is no information relating to a specific math curriculum. While the narrative states that the state standards will be taught, more information would have been helpful. Pg. 10-11

More information regarding the social studies curriculum should have been provided. It is good to use the historical contexts available in immediate vicinity, but at times a more formal type of curriculum would be necessary. Pg. 11

**Reader's Score: 18**

**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:**

State law provides for waivers from some state regulations and allow the charter school to be exempt from some school policies as well. Pg. 22

The charter school will have autonomy over operations and final authority over all expenditures. In addition, all new personnel will be interviewed and selected by the charter school board of directors. Pg. 23

Because the charter school is sponsored by the local school district, it has the ability to utilize existing district buildings and several key services from the district that will help cut costs to the charter school. Pg. 23

**Weaknesses:**

The charter school is sponsored by the local district board for a period of three years. This is a very short time period in which to establish a well-run charter school that can deliver on the performance indicators stated in the application

**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 applicant has utilized a variety of public settings to inform prospective parents and community members about the charter school. Speakers have been present at neighborhood meetings, public events, and churches. Volunteers have also made contact with local daycare centers, public libraries, and community organizations. Pg. 25-26

The applicant will have access to the district's automated voice system so that parents can be notified when attendance applications are available. Pg. 26

A concerted effort has been made to reach the population of students that are typically free/reduced lunch eligible through door to door canvassing and through printed media. This effort will help make the charter school option available to all groups of students. Pg. 26

**Weaknesses:**

none noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**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:**

Given the fact that most schools in the local district are either predominantly minority or white, the objective relating to ethnic diversity is ambitious. Pg. 28

The benchmarks set for achievement by the end of the three year charter contract are ambitious. There is an expectation for 80% of the students to pass the state standards and 80% to be reading on grade level. Since some of these children will come to the charter school as 3rd graders, possibly already behind in reading skills, it will be a large task to help them catch up and achieve grade level status in three years. Pg. 28-29

**Weaknesses:**

There is little discussion regarding other federal funding opportunities except Title I. The application would have been stronger in this area if more information had been provided concerning other federal programs in which the charter school would be eligible to participate. Pg. 30-31

The attendance goal is not ambitious in any way. If true achievement of objectives is the goal of the charter school, students should be expected to be in attendance almost 100% of the time. To indicate that students attendance will be more than 90% implies that students can miss almost a full day of school for every ten days in attendance. If this is the case, students will not be able to master objectives because absence from school will deter that progress. Pg. 30

**Reader's Score: 7**

**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 applicant understands the need to use both standardized and teacher-made, authentic, assessments in the assessment of students. Several different testing programs will be utilized to discover which strategies students are struggling with so the curriculum can be adapted to meet their needs. Pg. 32

Checklists of state standards will be provided in portfolios, so that the staff can monitor each student's progress toward meeting these standards. Pg. 34

**Weaknesses:**

There is no timeframe discussed relative to objective #4. It would be helpful to know if this assessment occurs once a year or is ongoing.

**Reader's Score: 17**

**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:**

Teaching staff will be provided with professional development opportunities to help them assimilate into the curriculum and be proficient at delivering the prescribed curriculum in a way that will meet the needs of all students. Pg. 37

There is a large group of people in place that are experts in specific areas of need that have committed to helping this charter school be successful. Pg. 37

The application is well thought out and the groundwork is in place for this school to be very successful, thus meeting or exceeding the stated objectives.

**Weaknesses:**

While volunteers are always helpful, it is not wise to base the sustainability of the school on the group of volunteers. The applicant should have provided other assurances as to how the school will continue to operate after federal funding has expired. Pg. 37

**Reader's Score: 7**

**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:**

This charter school was created by a large group of parents and community members looking for an educational alternative. During this year long process of planning, the community support has been evidenced by the attendance at the local district board meetings when the charter school was discussed. Pg. 24

Once the charter school was approved by the sponsor, support began to grow, and to date, the school has over 600 community supporters and has received monetary and in kind donations. Pg. 25

**Weaknesses:**

There is no indication how this level of community support has been utilized to plan, design, or implement this charter school.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**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 application indicates the charter school will encourage applicants from typically underrepresented groups. Pg. 41

The project director is well qualified to bring this charter school to opening day. She has good experiences working with all levels of students and has expertise in methods that will be utilized in this charter school. (Resume)

The board of directors includes individuals with a variety of professional experiences whose expertise will greatly benefit the charter school. Pg. 42-43

**Weaknesses:**

The narrative indicates the charter school is in the process of advertising for a Principal. There is no indication what the qualifications are for this position. This is an important piece of information that should have been included in the application. Pg. 23

**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 instructional approaches that will be utilized in the classroom lend themselves to assist all types of learners at all differing levels of achievement. Pg. 44

A multi-tiered approach to assisting students that are having difficulty will be in place. Pg. 18

The applicant indicates an understanding of the services that could be needed depending on the level of severity of special needs students. A good relationship has been established between the charter school and the local school district to contract for these services. Pg. 19

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant discusses the fact that special needs students will be mainstreamed for most of the time and pulled out for special services that may be needed. There is no discussion of the options if a student's needs are not being met with those two alternatives. There does not appear to be an understanding of the other options available to students on an IEP. Pg. 20-21

**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:** Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (U282B090013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
<b>Summary Comments</b>		
1. QUESTION 1	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	4
<b>The extent of community support for the application.</b>		
1. QUESTION 4	20	20
<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	14
<b>The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...</b>		
1. QUESTION 7	10	5
<b>The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.</b>		
1. QUESTION 8	10	6
<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	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>94</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel 1: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (U282B090013)

## Questions

### Summary Comments - Summary Comments

#### 1. Summary Comments

Reader's Score:

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:

Curriculum design is supported by research and includes authentic teaching and learning experiences. State-level content standards are addressed and incorporated. Thematic integration of subject matter is at the heart of the curriculum.

Local resources are utilized to allow for the inclusion of an environmental aspect to the curriculum.

The scope and sequence of the curriculum is defined. Teaching and learning at the classroom level is described, along with corollary instructional resources (My eCoach, page 7)

The curriculum demonstrates attention to the needs and characteristics of the student population to be served.

#### Weaknesses:

More information about curriculum development should be included?feels open-ended. No specific math curriculum or social studies were included.

It is not clear whether the inter sessions are required or optional. A good deal of instruction is occurring during these sessions and it should be made clear who must attend.

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:**

Waivers from regulation exist (page 22), affording some flexibility to the school.

The school's contract provides for control over its own curriculum, daily operation, budget, expenditures, and hiring processes.

**Weaknesses:**

The school does not serve as its own LEA (page 23). The LEA board has approval authority for funding sources and expenditures, and the proposed school has voluntarily granted its authorizer with the ability to interview and select its staff. This is a significant constraint on the school's autonomy.

The contract period is only three years, which will further hamper the school's ability to operate freely.

The facilities issue is significant for the school. While it is a benefit to have a building to use, it further makes the school beholden to the LEA board and could serve to diminish its autonomy.

Reader's Score: 4

**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:**

Parents appear to have been a driving force behind the school and have been closely involved in its design.

A recent event commemorating the building's service as a school was attended by over 300 people who are said to support the continuation of the buildings service as a school (page 24). Hundreds of community members also have voiced support.

Evidence of support through letters, in-kind and financial donations have been provided.

Massive community outreach is in place and the strategies used appear to be effective.

Future community outreach activities are appropriate.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**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:**

Objectives are related to clearly-defined indicators, including standardized assessment, enrollment, and attendance.

Attention to diversity is included - the school proposes to be integrated, which is unique in the community. The concerns of special needs students have been considered in the development of the objectives.

**Weaknesses:**

The demographic enrollment objective is difficult to carry out. A charter school that is free and open to all should not be setting "targets" for enrollment for any reason.

The academic achievement objectives lack ambition and do not reflect NCLB targets. Objective #2 does not specify the measure to be used.

The attendance goal also lacks rigor, as does the enrollment goal. If demand is so high, as parental support data appears to indicate, the numbers should perhaps be higher.

**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:**

Objective #1 uses objective demographic data collected by the school.

Objective #2 includes interim PALS assessments.

Objective #3 will use school - level attendance data.

**Weaknesses:**

Objective #1 appears to measure the makeup of the applicant pool. This could either mean staff or students. If it is staff, then the measure misses the mark as the goal is enrollment diversity. If it is students, then there could be serious concerns about counseling out or otherwise seeking to artificially control the makeup of the student body. This poses legal concerns, as charters are to be free and open to all.

Objective #3 does not sufficiently measure perceptions about the school that could lead to lower enrollment. Opinion data through surveys, focus groups, or other methods are more appropriately utilized.

Objective #4 does not include a time frame by which the objective will be accomplished, which makes it difficult to determine whether interim/formative assessments should be utilized.

**Reader's Score: 14**

**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 school has strong community support and resources that should help ensure its effective and continuing operation.

**Weaknesses:**

At least two of the objectives related to enrollment and attendance are in large part outside the school's control (or should be). While the strategies described appear to be appropriate, it is not clear why these measures have been adopted or how likely they are to be obtained. More research and data are needed.

There is a very heavy reliance on volunteers to sustain and support the school long term. This is outside the school's control and could prove detrimental should volunteerism slide off.

Professional development strategies should be more robust.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**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:**

A parent compact/volunteer requirement is in place (page 39). Other strategies, such as PTO and teacher support requirements, are also planned.

Large numbers of parents involved in supporting and backing of the school. Financial support, in-kind contributions, and all sorts of participation in an ongoing dialogue about the need for the school have been evidenced. This is a significant strength for the school.

**Weaknesses:**

There is a heavy emphasis on the volunteer requirement and limited attention paid to teacher/parent communications about student performance and behavior issues. This is a one-sided equation. The student should be at the core, with teachers connecting with parents on student issues, rather than a mere mandate that someone be in the classroom for six hours.

It is unclear how much voice the parent community has had in school design.

**Reader's Score: 6**

**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:**

A strong board of directors is described (page 42). Credentials of board members appear strong and sufficient to allow for success.

Diversity among board members is clear.

A school planning and management team also has been created.

**Weaknesses:**

No information is provided about the characteristics and credentials of the principal or other key staff.

It is not clear how the school planning and management team will work together and balance their respective roles and authority to govern the daily operations of the school effectively. More organizational/management description is needed.

The application notes that Katherine Shipherd was a former headmistress, but this fact does not appear on her resume. There seems to be an inconsistency between the narrative and the resumes, which makes it difficult to assess the qualifications of the personnel.

**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 proposal indicates a high degree of awareness of the school's responsibilities to special education and at-risk pupils. Attention to pupils living in poverty also is paid.

**Weaknesses:**

More rigorous pursuit of strong academic content objectives would help support educationally underserved pupils in a broader way. The goals set forth in the project are a good start, but are not sufficiently aggressive.

**Reader's Score:** 16

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**Status:** Submitted

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