

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

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel 2: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Trinity Restoration Inc. (U282B090016)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Summary Comments

General:

This planning grant application is for the Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts school. The curriculum is also still in development though it will be infused with art.

A preliminary approval was granted to TAPA by the RI Board of Regents for a 9/2010 opening. It will serve grades 7-12 of 34 students per grade, totaling 204 students.

The application provides details of the location and students to be served.

The relationship with Trinity Restoration isn't defined, especially after the school is chartered. It is unclear of the primary role if Trinity Restoration will be as a landlord, leasing the facility to the school.

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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 unifying theme of art is clearly stated. The application recognizes the population that TAPA will be working with and is mindful of multiple learning styles that students will have. Evidence is provided on the need and desire for this school in Providence, RI.

Arts are considered 'an integral part of the academic curriculum' and will be a means 'through which to teach different subject areas'. Page e3

Details are provided on how the curriculum will be framed and taught (Performance Model, Studio Habits of Mind, Cognitive Pluralism, Inquiry-based instruction).

The application describes an emphasis of literacy across all content areas, which is aligned to RI's expectations that all students need 'ongoing opportunities to apply and practice reading strategies'. Page e11

A longer school day is described.

Weaknesses:

There are no specific assurances that the curriculum will be aligned to state standards. It is also unclear how an Arts infused curriculum will work with the intended population. No empirical evidence is provided. The intended student population will be diverse, as indicated in the data provided, but how the proposed methodologies will work with this population and their effectiveness is not indicated.

The schedule provided does not include enough time for core subjects. Given the goal of 100% proficiency in Math, only three hours a week is inadequate. Page e9 The description of the Arts infused curriculum places Arts over core subjects. The emphasis on Arts is at the expense of subjects that students will be assessed on, as indicated in the schedule.

The application is aware of the students to be served and provide clear data on the population but lacks information on remediation and how TAPA will work with students academically behind.

There is a wealth of information provided but the criterion was not fully addressed: "how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards and the curriculum" that will be used to do so.

Reader's Score: 13

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 quotes the law and statutes and describes how the school will use it. Autonomy and flexibility is clearly explained and understood.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

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:

There is ample local community and political support as indicated in the participation engagement meetings and public hearings. Page e18

A comprehensive description of the enrollment, recruitment and admission policy is provided. Applicant also assures that equal opportunity for all applicable students will be given.

Details are provided on how funds from the grant will be used for dissemination of information the school and the enrollment and application process. page e21

Weaknesses:

The relationship with Trinity Restoration isn't defined, especially after the school is chartered. It is unclear if the primary role of Trinity Restoration will be as a landlord, leasing the facility to the school or if there is a greater role of the organization. It is unclear if the creation of the school was in some part done to support Trinity Restoration.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

Specifically assures that by 2014, as mandated by NCLB, the 'Academy intends to enable 100% of its students to achieve the state proficiency standards in reading, writing and mathematics.' Page e0

The application provides adequate data on district demographics and performance.

States TAPA will accomplish the objectives by aligning student assessments and school action plans to state and NCLB mandates. Page e23

Grant funds will be used for professional development for teachers, consultants, an accountability document and a Ladder of Leadership.

Weaknesses:

There are no assurances that the assessment and curriculum are aligned. It is difficult to determine how students will reach the 100% goal without a curriculum in place.

There is little detail on how the grant funds will be used to develop a mutual accountability document (signed by families and staff annually). Page e23 It is also not clear how this document, which one hopes is not mandatory nor a requirement of enrollment, will engage families achieving academic goals.

Inadequate description is provided on how grant funds will be used to develop the 'leadership ladder' and who exactly will develop it (not clear in the budget provided). Pg e24

Reader's Score: 8

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:

Provides a statement that NECAP standardized tests and other diagnostic and performance tools will be used for student baseline assessments. Pg e27

Individualized Learning Plans will be developed for each student and reviewed four times a year. The plan will be adjusted to accommodate the rate of student learning.

Subjective assessments: "Evaluations will take place on individual performance as well as of their social, intellectual and leadership skills in group interactions." page e28

Weaknesses:

It was not adequately described how the assessments will work in bringing students up to the objective of 100% proficiency. As indicated previously, there was not enough time in the schedule (pg 10) to support 100% proficiency in core subjects. It was not clear in the schedule when remediation will take place during the school day. From the information provided in the application, what is being taught is not what's being measured.

In addition to NECAP standardized tests, other quantifiable, academic assessments are lacking.

Evaluations will also take place on individual performance, social, intellectual and leadership skills; it is not explained how these evaluations will be conducted and how teachers will be trained to be objective in their assessments.

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:

There is a convincing likelihood that the school will improve the education results for students.

Focused emphasis is placed on professional development for teachers based on the various pedagogy/methodology to be employed in the school. Page e31

It is reasonable and clear that the applicant will be successful in using grant funds to develop a curriculum and disseminate information.

Weaknesses:

Given the intended student population, specifics on how TAPA is going to bring students to 100% proficiency were lacking.

There are no specific assurances that the curriculum will be aligned to state standards. It is also unclear how an Arts infused curriculum will work with the intended population. No empirical evidence is provided. The intended student population will be diverse but how the proposed methodologies will work and their effectiveness is not indicated.

It is difficult to ascertain without a curriculum in place if students will be 100% proficient in three years.

Reader's Score: 6

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:

Describes parental involvement during the planning of TAPA, namely during the public hearings.

The application specifically states that 'Parents and guardians will be afforded the opportunity to engage' within the school in numerous ways, including school board members. Pages e35, e36

Appropriately aware of and acknowledges the population the school will serve and the challenges these families face. TAPA will actively seek out and encourage parental engagement to create a learning community.

Weaknesses:

As mentioned previously, it appears that the accountability document (signed by families and staff annually) is a requirement and mandatory. The application should make clear that family signatures were optional and those who choose not to sign or participate would not be penalized.

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 program manager presented is a strong leader. Dr. Stevos has extensive experience as an educator and administrator.

The steering committee reflects the community and minority population of Providence. Page e37, e38

A detailed job description and qualifications for the school Director is provided.

Weaknesses:

An explanation of the relationship w/ Trinity Restoration is not provided though at least two members of the Steering Committee are associated with Trinity. Page e39

Reader's Score: 9

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 application makes clear assurances that it will work with Special Education students. It has also focused on an educationally disadvantaged population and provided sufficient data to illustrate the percentages of educationally disadvantaged students in Providence.

The application describes means and methodologies to be used with these challenged students.

Weaknesses:

How TAPA will assist these students to achieve State Standards is difficult to evaluate since there is no curricular content provided.

It is not clear on how the strategies described, working individually and in conjunction, will raise students academically. No evidence has been provided that support the supposition that these methodologies, through an Arts infused curriculum, will work with this student population. Given the student population, information on remediation is sparse.

Specific language on working with ELL students is not mentioned.

Reader's Score: 8

Status: Submitted
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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Trinity Restoration Inc. (U282B090016)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Summary Comments		
Summary Comments		
1. QUESTION 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Selection Criteria		
The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices.		
1. QUESTION 2	20	10
The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.		
1. QUESTION 3	10	8
The extent of community support for the application.		
1. QUESTION 4	20	20
The ambitiousness of the objectives for the charter school.		
1. QUESTION 5	10	7
The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of those objectives.		
1. QUESTION 6	20	14
The likelihood that the charter school will meet those objectives ...		
1. QUESTION 7	10	6
The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement.		
1. QUESTION 8	10	8
The quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.		
1. QUESTION 9	10	8
The contribution the charter school will make ...		
1. QUESTION 10	20	13
Sub Total	130	94
Total	130	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel 2: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Trinity Restoration Inc. (U282B090016)

Questions

Summary Comments - Summary Comments

1. Summary Comments

General:

A thoughtful and well written application. The arts are not extracurricular and the applicant's passion for incorporating academics into the core of arts instruction is evident. The application would have been stronger had it included more evidence based data to support the curriculum and instructional design.]

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:

As described in the applicant's grant abstract, the intent is for all students to be prepared to meet the state's evolving high school graduation standards through proficiency in the arts.

The school intends to open with 34 students in 7th grade in the first year and will serve a disproportionately low-income and educationally disadvantaged student population. (Abstract) The school will eventually serve 204 students in grades 7-12. (page e3)

The applicant proposes a curriculum that will utilize a culturally responsive, arts integrated instruction. Instructional practices include an emphasis on a Studio of the Mind framework based through quality arts instruction. (page e4) Other instructional practices include Inquiry-based Instruction, Culturally Responsive Instruction and a Unified Theme and Arts Focus. (page e10)

Weaknesses:

This application lacks a clear understanding of curriculum design as it applies to alignment with state academic content and achievement standards. There is no indication that the proposed curriculum will align with state standards.

The applicant does not include any research data to support the use of Studio of the Mind and Inquiry Based Instruction. The application would have been strengthened by including statistical data showing increased student content knowledge and academic achievement.

Reader's Score: 10

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 applicant provides a description of its state charter school law and includes a discussion on the advantages of the autonomy a charter school enjoys. (page e16) Under the auspices of Site Based Management the school has freedom in its hiring practices, development of work schedules, governance structure and overall development of policies and procedures. It is also afford financial and fiscal autonomy with sole decision-making authority over its budget and purchasing. (pages e16-e17)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe what its relationship will be with its sponsor or how it will capitalize on the autonomy afforded the school through the existing charter school law.

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:

A preliminary mass mailing of postcards to all persons in the targeted zip codes supplemented by announcements made in local newspapers and magazines as well as on the radio will inform parent and community of the school. Mailings and announcements will be in both English and Spanish. (page e19)

Informational sessions will be held at the school and steering committee members will go out to public community venues to introduce the school. (e20)

Admission to the school will be given to students chosen at random by a lottery system. (page e20)

Weaknesses:

None

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:

The applicant includes three highly ambitious student academic objectives. Its goals include 100% of students will be proficient in writing as measured by the New England Common Assessment Program, 100% of students will be proficient in reading as measured by the New England Common Assessment Program, and 100% of students will be proficient in mathematics as measured by the New England Common Assessment Program. (page e22) The ambitiousness of these objectives is measured by the comparisons made to the surrounding district students achievement rates.

An additional objective students will increase leadership in the school by 25% each year as measured by a leadership survey. (page e24)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provides a description of how the grant funds will be used (page e45) there is no information provided describing how funds will be used in conjunction with other Federal programs.

There are no performance objectives listed for the governance and operations of the school.

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 describes four strategies to be used for assessing achievement of its objectives. Creating baseline assessments, developing individualized learning plans, and continuous monitoring of progress can assure both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis as to the effectiveness of its objectives.

The fourth strategy for assessing achievement is the reliance on an inquiry based approach to teaching. The creation of student portfolios will be used to assess the effectiveness of the objectives.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that not only standardized tests will be used for creation of the baseline but also other diagnostic and performance tools. There is no description of what assessments will be used or how the specific assessment measures the goal. The application would have been strengthened by including more information of what assessments will be used.

There is no strategy directly linked to improving the quality of instruction in core content areas. The applicant lists strategies of smaller class sizes, individualized learning plans and a longer school day as helping to accomplish the objectives but there is no research based data provided to support the use of these strategies.

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:

Development of Professional Learning Communities is viewed as paramount to the likelihood that the charter school will meet its objectives. Quality professional development in the arts and Studio of the Mind, inquiry based, culturally responsive pedagogy, essential assessment skills and content specific skills should enable teachers to effectively facilitate improved education results for students. (page e32)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly describe how it will continue to meet the objectives and improve educational results for students after the period of Federal assistance. Generating a model annual operating surplus is mentioned, but that would not be enough to sustain the school's activities at the end of the grant period.

Reader's Score: 6

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 will be encouraged to be involved in the school in numerous ways. Parents will have the opportunity to be voting members of the Board of Directors, voting members of the Foundation, or volunteering to help mentor/tutor students. A Parents' Advisory Board will be established to offer ideas and support and parents will be invited to participate in school affiliated activities such as the Gospel Choir and the Children's Theater. (page e35-36)

Weaknesses:

It is not clear to what extent parents have been involved in the initial planning of the school. There is no indication that any of the founding board members are also parents of prospective students.

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:

As evidenced by in the narrative and attached resume, the project director possesses exemplary qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed project.

The applicant provides a job description for the Executive Director that clearly outlines the desired persons qualifications, teaching experience, managerial experience and other desired qualities. (page e39-e40)

The applicant states that it will be the school's policy to seek out and encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented. Outreach and recruitment strategies include media based outlets that are known for reaching this population and outreach to institutions of higher education that have significant percentages of students enrolled from these underrepresented groups. (page e41)

Weaknesses:

The application does not include a staffing plan or job descriptions for teachers and key personnel.

Reader's Score: 8

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 applicant acknowledges that the majority of the students coming to the school will in all likelihood be deemed educationally disadvantaged or deficient. Through the use of already mentioned strategies for meeting the school's performance objectives, each student will be baseline tested, individual learning plans will be developed and teachers will work on bringing each student's academic standards up to proficiency. Local student demographic information was provided to support the wide gap in academic achievement. To this end, the school will have contributed greatly.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that in the event that any student requires intensive special education services, the school will provide and administer them within its integrated curriculum and classroom models. (page e43) There is no detailed plan included for policies and procedures of working with special needs students and no mention of hiring of a special education director or special education teachers.

Reader's Score: 13

Status: Submitted

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