

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/30/2012 10:26 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Frederick Outdoor Charter School, Inc. (U282B120081)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	8
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	3
Quality of the Personnel		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	16
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	0
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	82

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Frederick Outdoor Charter School, Inc. (U282B120081)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of 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. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.

Strengths:

The curriculum of the proposed K-G5 school (75) will be of very high quality. FODCS will adopt the Environment as an Integrating context (EIC) model which was developed by a consortium of twelve State departments of education. EIC employs science and social studies as foci for integrating all content areas of the curriculum. This innovative structure is accompanied by carefully selected pedagogical strategies which include collaborative instruction, hands-on experience and constructivist approaches. It is intended that a quarter or 25% of instruction time will be spent outdoors and FODCS will build its curriculum content to take advantage of the particular resources offered by its setting. Such outdoor exposure is designed to combat the current generations diminishing outdoor activity.

There is strong evidence from empirical research to support FODCSs belief that ECI will result in accelerated learning, higher test scores and an improved rate of graduation. Research findings generated by many bodies such as the National Educational Research Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention support FODCSs plan to integrate medically recommended outdoor activity, the benefits being not only academic but physical and psychological also. Generally, page numbers are not provided.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Disadvantaged Students

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The confident expectation is that the FODCS program will have a substantial positive impact on the academic achievement of children who are disadvantaged, whether they be low-income or special needs students.. The research-based belief is that an interdisciplinary curriculum that employs active enquiry, hands-on project based learning and collaborative decision making will work for the advantage of disadvantaged students as much as other groups. In addition to an engaging and effective instructional program, disadvantaged students will be supported by a sophisticated, tiered

array of interventions which will include additional access to a teacher, additional visual clues and limited directions for attention-challenged children.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.

Strengths:

FOCDS has established a set of seven goals each subsuming several objectives. The school has demonstrated its deep conceptual and practical understanding of its own mission and program in this exercise. The goals cover much more than attainment on state standardized tests and represent a highly sensitive awareness of the wide range of criteria to be addressed in a truly valid assessment of school success. Mostly the objectives lend themselves to quantitative measurement. The board of directors is responsible for measurement, recording and analysis.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community Support

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.

The applicant is also encouraged to describe and provide evidence of community support for the proposed project.

Strengths:

FODCS is using a variety of electronic, print and personal contact media in its campaign to raise awareness and recruit K5 students. A major thrust is advertising on the listserves of somewhat specialist organizations such as the Sierra club and the Isaac Walton League to add to its more general website appeal (75). Representatives are attending farmers markets and other outdoor events to distribute literature (75). This seemingly sophisticated campaign has been successful to date. The school has enlisted the support of many businesses and individuals representing environmental and educational interests. A selection of letters of support is included as Appendix C. FODCS will be open to all eligible children on a non-discriminatory basis. In the event of oversubscription the school will conduct a well-documented lottery (75) to ensure a fair and equitable allocation of seats.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Parental and Community Involvement

1. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community 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 curriculum will focus on connecting with the community. The school has established a significant number of community partnerships which will result in the donation of volunteer hours, the provision of guest speakers and visiting artists and the provision of curriculum development resources. With respect to parents/guardians, they are appreciated and welcome asset. The school has been designed by parent professionals and parents will continue to be closely involved both formally and informally during the implementation phase. Parents will have substantial representation on the board of trustees.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Personnel

1. Quality of project personnel.

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers-

Note: The applicant is encouraged to provide evidence of its skills and experience in the following areas: successfully launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; relevant nonprofit organization management and leadership; sound board governance; effective curriculum development and implementation; and strong fiscal management.

Strengths:

The school has great strength in the quality and balance of qualifications and experience shared by the founding trustees and detailed thought has been given already to the nature of the additional personnel to be recruited.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

1. **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 school will follow a non-discriminatory policy in appointing teachers.

Weaknesses:

There is no explicit statement that application from groups underrepresented traditionally will be encouraged.

Reader's Score: 1

2. **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel**

Strengths:

While the opening date is some way ahead there is little doubt that FODCS will have the benefit of high quality personnel. The founding board of trustees comprises a team of highly qualified and extensively experienced persons. Most importantly the trustees resumes reflect an excellent balance of expertise including environmental education, IT, business management, budgeting, psychology and special education (appendix E). While teaching staff have not yet been appointed, clearly much thought has been given to the types of qualification required. Highly detailed job descriptions and person preferences in roles les ranging from principal to custodian are included in the application (82 92). All positions will be filled according to strict principles of non-discrimination.

Weaknesses:

It would enhance the quality of the board of trustees if legal expertise were to be included to the range of existing talents.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. **Quality of the management plan.**

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

The management plan is comprehensive and sound. It indicates prudent design by founders who have not only a thorough understanding of the mission and the instructional design but also a thorough understanding of the structures required to ensure that the mission is achieved and the instructional design implemented effectively. An outline organizational chart is included (109) together with a three-year projected budget and a timeline for action between May 2012 and July 2013. Detailed powers and responsibilities are included. An outline financial management plan with an explanation of budgeting and auditing procedures is in place (115). To ensure secure fiscal management, financial duties will be divided within a hierarchy of different persons or groups. Spending limits will be established at each level.

Weaknesses:

The organizational chart is oversimplified. Below the level of principal it fails to show any details of structure or responsibility beyond a separation into service providers and instructional staff. There is some ambiguity at the top where two public school agencies, Frederick County Board of Education and Frederick County Public Schools are placed above the schools own board of trustees.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Charter or Performance Contract

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.**

The existence of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency and the extent to which the charter or performance contract describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of public schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to discuss whether its proposed project has been denied a charter from its authorizing agency and, if so, how the applicant plans to revise its charter application before resubmitting its charter application to the authorizing agency. The applicant is also encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter contract, if applicable.

Strengths:

No strength

Weaknesses:

At present FODCS does not have a charter.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility

- 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 the flexibility afforded under its State's law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and in terms of whether charter schools are exempt 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:

Subject to the award of a charter, FODCS will enjoy the flexibility accorded under Maryland Charter law, 2003. The intention will be to allow FODCS the autonomy to pursue innovative policies and procedures in its quest to raise student academic achievement. Such autonomy might be expressed in areas such as curriculum design, job descriptions for teachers, budget design and day to day operation.

Weaknesses:

No weakness.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/30/2012 10:26 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/31/2012 10:00 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Frederick Outdoor Charter School, Inc. (U282B120081)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	2
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	7
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	3
Quality of the Personnel		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	18
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	12
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	0
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Frederick Outdoor Charter School, Inc. (U282B120081)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of 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. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a developed a K-3 environmental education charter school (p11). The curriculum was developed by the State Environmental Education Roundtable (p10) and is included in the appendix. A unique component of the curriculum is that courses are integrated and taught as interdisciplinary units (p11). Problem-based instruction (p12), use of local environmental and community resources (p19), and student leadership and social skill reinforcement are also strengths of the curriculum. The charter application in the appendix (section B-5) notes that the environmental education curriculum is in the process of being aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum and the Maryland State Core Curriculum standards.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Disadvantaged Students

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The applicant provides research to support claims that educationally disadvantaged students who participate in environmental education programs improve academically (p20-21). The narrative also clearly describes strategies the proposed charter will use to help students meet standards. Perhaps most notable is the intent to use an instructional support team and the state's response to intervention guide (p23) to ensure students are advancing. The listing of possible interventions for underperforming students (p23-24) is evidence that the applicant is familiar with best practices for addressing academic deficiencies and will likely be able to guide the use of indicated strategies.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address the prevalence educationally disadvantaged students in the target area. The applicant provides research study summaries (p22-23), but does not clearly address the percent of educationally disadvantaged students in the target area or specific academic areas of underperformance. Additional data may have strengthened this

section of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly states that it intends to use the results of the Maryland State Assessment, Maryland Model for School Readiness, NAEP assessments, and local assessments (appendix-p61-62) to gauge school progress toward achieving the school's seven objectives. The inclusion of additional project-based assessments, classroom assessments, and feedback from the school improvement team (p25) will likely yield data to inform school progress.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community Support

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.

The applicant is also encouraged to describe and provide evidence of community support for the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence of community support. Letters of support from business partners are evidence that the school is supported by a variety of environmental entities in the target area (p33). Particularly encouraging is language in several partner letters indicating the type of support they intend to offer the charter school (volunteers, technical assistance, building space, etc) (appendix).

Weaknesses:

The appendix contains a spreadsheet of parent interest data. However, the dates of data collection are not noted. Also, several participants indicated that they either don't have children in the school's target grade range or their children are not old enough to enroll in the school upon its opening. More specificity in the chart may have provided needed context for the information displayed.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Parental and Community Involvement

1. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community 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 applicant provides ample documentation that parents will be involved in school operation and governance. Parents will be allowed to participate in board meetings (p33), and asked to sign a parent agreement specifying support for school activities (p32). Perhaps most encouraging is the intent to have parents fill out an "ideas and talents" survey to identify parent skills and resources available to the school (p32). Involvement is also encouraged through the use of social media (p35), community listserves (appendix-p75), and word of mouth through community events (p35). There is also evidence in the narrative that parents were involved in the planning of the school, including initiating the idea for the school (p32) and serving on the planning committee. The applicant clearly describes its lottery process (appendix-p76-77), which will likely ensure transparency in the lottery and enrollment process.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Personnel

1. Quality of project personnel.

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers-

Note: The applicant is encouraged to provide evidence of its skills and experience in the following areas: successfully launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; relevant nonprofit organization management and leadership; sound board governance; effective curriculum development and implementation; and strong fiscal management.

Strengths:

See strengths noted below

Weaknesses:

See weaknesses noted below

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. 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:

No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not specifically address encouraging applications from underrepresented groups. Statements regarding adhering to the school's nondiscrimination policy (p36) do not denote the intent to encourage applications from underrepresented groups. More detail regarding strategies to encourage the submission of applications from

Sub Question

candidates from underrepresented groups is needed.

Reader's Score: 0

2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel

Strengths:

Members of the founding board have experience in education, nonprofit leadership (board treasurer, business plan consultant), and special education, as demonstrated by resumes included in appendix E. The appendix also includes job descriptions (p82-92) for intended staff members, which indicates the applicant has considered projected staffing and operational skills needed to ensure efficient operation.

Weaknesses:

It is not clearly noted in the attached resumes that Board members have backgrounds in curriculum development, law or finance. These skills are crucial to ensuring the effective and efficient planning and operation of a charter school. The applicant states that the selected principal will have these skills (p37), but they are not currently represented among board members.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan.

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

The budget presented is reasonable. Salaries, although somewhat high (i.e., \$104,000-principal; \$65000-teachers), are comparable to each other. The timeline presented addresses major project activities and reflects program design expressed in the narrative (p37-39). Board duties are also clearly delineated (p39-41). A particularly strong board member commitment is its pledge to review school curriculum and budget status monthly (p45). The management plan, as noted in the narrative, will likely achieve the objectives of the project.

Weaknesses:

While the budget is reasonable, several line items are not clearly supported by the narrative. It is not clear how permitting fees, a security deposit, a contract for minor repairs and groundskeeping, inspection fees, and legal fees are within the scope of allowable purchases (appendix). More detail is needed. Also, the narrative states that the Board will be recruited and appointed to serve (p42, appendix-p103). To ensure equitable representation, the Board should be seated based on voting that includes parents. Consideration should be given to revising the Board selection process. Finally, the organizational chart on page 44 needs to be revised to give the charter board autonomy over the charter school, not the local Board of Education.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Charter or Performance Contract

1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.

The existence of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency and the extent to which the charter or performance contract describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of public schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to discuss whether its proposed project has been denied a charter from its authorizing agency and, if so, how the applicant plans to revise its charter application before resubmitting its charter application to the authorizing agency. The applicant is also encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter contract, if applicable.

Strengths:

No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

While the applicant has submitted a concept proposal in May 2012, the applicant does not currently have a charter with Frederick County Public Schools (appendix).

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility

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 the flexibility afforded under its State's law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and in terms of whether charter schools are exempt 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 language from the Maryland Charter Act that states that charter school will have flexibility to operate the proposed charter school (p50). The applicant will have flexibility over various areas, including school operations, the educational program and school governance (p50).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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Last Updated: 08/01/2012 05:40 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Frederick Outdoor Charter School, Inc. (U282B120081)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	7
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	3
Quality of the Personnel		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	15
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	0
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Frederick Outdoor Charter School, Inc. (U282B120081)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of 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. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.

Strengths:

The application proposes expeditionary learning curriculum aligned with the Common Core State Standards to serve students in grade K ~ 3 and adding one grade level per year till grade 6. Some of the instructional strategies the charter school proposed are integrated-interdisciplinary instruction, learner-centered, and project based. The application has provided the detailed explanation of each instructional strategy to be implemented and its implementation process. The evidence of the success of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices is presented in the application. Such curriculum and practices are proven and research-based which enable all students to meet the standards. The evidence suggests there will be fewer students who will need the additional academic support with the proposed model.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Disadvantaged Students

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The application proposes an Academic Support Plan with tiered instructional approach to support achievement for all students including students with special needs.

The place and environment based learning model is a research proven model enabling students who fail in traditional school settings to succeed. With this approach, the charter school ensures the educationally disadvantaged students who perform below grade level or with IEP meeting the standards.

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.

Strengths:

The charter school has provided a detailed description of seven goals with objectives listed to assess its achievements. All learning objectives are clearly defined and measurable. Explanations of each goal and time frame are provided. An example of a goal is: Demonstrate student achievement and school success by meeting or exceeding district measures on state assessments. The related objectives are: Meet or exceed the average proficiency standards in state reading and math assessments of a Frederick County Public School with similar demographics, or rectify and deficiencies through targeted instruction within two years.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community Support

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.

The applicant is also encouraged to describe and provide evidence of community support for the proposed project.

Strengths:

The application has established partnerships with various businesses and community such as the Green School of Baltimore, Green Woods Charter School, and Audubon Society of Central Maryland. Letters of support are evident in the application. A spread sheet with sign-in information to demonstrate the support obtained from the parents is presented. Various strategies to inform the parents and community about the school are evident in the application such as advertising at the local business by displaying and distributing school information materials. Lottery is to be conducted if necessary to ensure providing an equal opportunity to all students to attend the charter school. Lottery management process is evident in the application.

Weaknesses:

The charter school did not include an example letter from the parents. Though a spread sheet with sign-in information to demonstrate the support obtained from the parents is presented, it needs more details such as parent names, contact information, intention to enroll their children, and any other evidence of support.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Parental and Community Involvement

1. The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community 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:

It is evident that the charter school has established partnership with various business organizations in the community such as Audubon Society of Central Maryland and The Green School of Baltimore. A community member who has been involved in the planning is on the Founding Board. Parents and community members will have the opportunity to make key policy decisions that affect the school. A comment period during open Board meetings will be established to allow for parent or community input. Parents will be involved in the curriculum planning and volunteering opportunities are to be offered. At the beginning of each year, a detailed curriculum overview will be shared with parents and students. Parents will be welcomed to complete a Ideas and Talents survey with their child, in order to provide the teacher with knowledge of local per personal resources that she/he may choose to draw on that connect with and enhance the planned curriculum. Specific areas of the curriculum that incorporate family involvement will be pointed out, so that families can begin to think of how they would like to contribute. Parent conference will be held regularly to solicit feedback.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Personnel

1. Quality of project personnel.

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers-

Note: The applicant is encouraged to provide evidence of its skills and experience in the following areas: successfully launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; relevant nonprofit organization management and leadership; sound board governance; effective curriculum development and implementation; and strong fiscal management.

Strengths:

The charter school proposes to hire highly-qualified and certified teachers regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

The credentials of key project personnel are qualified with relevant skills and experience. Resumes of all founding board members are included in the application. Experiences which key personnel have are in the areas of secondary education, special education, business management, technology, and science education.

Weaknesses:

The application did not provide clear wording to encourage the applications for employment from traditionally underrepresented groups. The applicants did not demonstrate that they have experience in effective curriculum development and implementation.

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

- 1. 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 charter school proposes to hire highly-qualified and certified teachers regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

Weaknesses:

The application did not provide clear wording to encourage the applications for employment from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Reader's Score: 1

- 2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel**

Strengths:

The credentials of key project personnel are qualified with relevant skills and experience. Resumes of all founding board members are included in the application. Experiences which key personnel have are in the areas of secondary education, special education, business management, technology, and science education.

Weaknesses:

The applicants did not demonstrate that they have experience in effective curriculum development and implementation.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. Quality of the management plan.**

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

The application proposes the governing structure of the organization. A detailed project management plan including timelines and milestones to measure its success is evident. A list of tasks with projected starting and ending date is

presented in the application. The roles and responsibilities of the board and school personnel are clearly defined such as Upholding the charter schools mission and purpose; Participating in appointing the charter school administrators . The Board will assess its own performance based on the material and measures in the annual report, including academics, fiscal responsibility, conducting effective meetings, etc. The budget outline is itemized and detailed such as projected spending on Professional Development, materials, and office supplies.

The learning objectives and performance expectations are defined and measurable as stated in the previous section of assessing the achievement of the charter schools objectives.

Weaknesses:

The charter school is recommended to adopt benchmark assessments to provide immediate feedback to adjust curriculum and instructional practices when necessary.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Charter or Performance Contract

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.**

The existence of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency and the extent to which the charter or performance contract describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of public schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to discuss whether its proposed project has been denied a charter from its authorizing agency and, if so, how the applicant plans to revise its charter application before resubmitting its charter application to the authorizing agency. The applicant is also encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter contract, if applicable.

Strengths:

No strengths

Weaknesses:

The approved charter contract is not evident in the application.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility

- 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 the flexibility afforded under its State's law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and in terms of whether charter schools are exempt 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 has provided the citation of the state charter law describing the degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA. The application provides a description of degree of autonomy the charter school will have over budget expenditures. The charter school has decided that there no other State or local rules that will inhibit the flexible operation and management of the school due to the fact that the district is home to successful charter schools.

Weaknesses:

No weakness

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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