

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/18/2012 01:02 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Gillingham Charter School (U282B120049)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	1
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	21
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	14
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	15
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Panel - 7: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Gillingham Charter School (U282B120049)

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:

Gillingham Charter Schools (GCS) educational program will offer its students a rigorous curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development aligned to Pennsylvania State Standards. Their model is a "Relational Education" (RE) curriculum based Charlotte Masons framework that includes small and multicultural classrooms. Childlight USA (CLUSA) tailors the curriculum and instructional model in an innovative way. They will not have traditional textbooks or central library, rather students read books by passionate authors for the subject area and libraries are in all classrooms. The curriculum will be arranged chronically around history, which integrates language in K-3. There will be English and one modern language in grades 4-12 and science instruction that integrates literature and inquiry based science. Students will be expected to read twenty-seven Shakespearean plays in 4-12. (Pages e26-27)

The RE approach is used for self-directed learning and critical thinking. Teaching methods include narrating, reading, retelling, questioning, and dialoguing. (Page e28) In addition, GCS uses a constructivist approach where students are autonomous learners beginning in K. Students learn via their own experiences and at their own pace, taking risks, experimenting, experimenting with ideas, and imagining. (Pages e29-30) Students will remain with teachers for two years and the school will practice a research-based Restorative practice, a community based program implementing non-punitive measures to offer positive changes in students, faculty, and administrators. Page e30

Teachers will be supported in the Relational Education model, as they will receive regular training and mentoring by Relational Education experts. Teachers will train in Japans Lesson studies where teachers learn to joint plan, observe, analyze, and refine classroom lessons. (Page e35) Reflective practices that allow teachers to think about what they are teaching and how it applies to specific teaching situations and how well it works. (Page e36) Faculty will have monthly scheduled program development meetings, Individualized Learning Plans for faculty and staff will collaborate with the CLUSA's organization. (Page e37)

Weaknesses:

GCS asserts that it will use technology as a daily tool in every classroom (Page e29), yet it fails to demonstrate how they will integrate it in classroom. In addition, there is no evidence of technology integrated in a day in the life of a student. Page e85

Applicant group did not provide achievement data to support their curriculum design or the effectiveness of the instructional practices for their current population. In addition, no data were provided from schools that use this model

with similar demographic populations.

Reader's Score: 12

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:

GCS' approach to assisting educationally disadvantaged students is holistic. GCS provides evidence that the project will assist educationally disadvantaged students including those students who qualify for 504 in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. IEPs will provide students with necessary adaptation and/or modifications of RE curriculum with all related services and support in least restrictive environment. (Page e62)

To ensure that teachers are well equipped to assist educationally disadvantaged students, GCS will offer peer coaching to the regular education teacher and co-teaching opportunities. Struggling students will have access to resource rooms and learning supports that include one on one instruction. GCS has hired Contractual Service Providers that offer speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school psychological services, audiology, social work services, and in-service workshops. (Page e64)

GCS will not track students rather they will develop ILPs that consists of goals and objectives of a meaningful nature aligned with mission/vision. (Pages e65; 309)

Weaknesses:

The GCS lacks specificity in describing how they provide for students not IEP eligible and who enter school performing significantly below grade level in reading and/or mathematics.

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

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

Strengths:

Similar to the school's innovative approach to curriculum, assessing achievement is authentic at GCS. Assessments are generated via a host of formative and summative measures aligned with state standards. Formative assessments include daily child observation assessment, daily oral and written narrations, weekly dictations, essays beginning in 10th grade, math problem solving, student-teacher conferences, etc. Summative assessments include end of term exams, narrative report cards, parent-teacher conferences, Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. (Pages e34-35 See chart of sample assessments Pages e322-323) Students will create a portfolio that contains generated journals, notebooks, essays, etc. Math, grammar, spelling, and writing skills are assessed in context of students work. (Page e34)

GCS intends to equip all students with individual learning plans (ILP) as a means to measure assessment. These ILPs include goals and objectives of a meaningful nature aligned with mission and vision. (Pages e309-311)

Weaknesses:

None 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:

GCS did an excellent job in instituting various methods in informing parents and other members of the community such as posting flyers and posters in inner city neighborhoods, hosting booths at downtown events circulating 700 flyers in Salvation Army Christmas baskets, campaigning door to door, sending home brochures, holding open houses, and posting information on schools website. GCS held thirty public informational meetings each Wednesday. (Pages e61-62) School has provided nine letters of support from organizations and business in the community. In addition, the school presented an extensive list of community support organizations from health services to the YMCA/YWCA. (Pages e109-110, 119-124; 337-340)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

GCS has presented a wealth of information encouraging parental and community involvement such as community outreach fundraising events, monthly field studies, monthly evening collaboration between parents, students, staff, faculty and community, parent involvement in all areas of the school, high school internships, annual retreats with stakeholders. (Pages e57-60) GCS will offer community resource workshops in literacy, GED, foreign cultures, etc. Page e61

Weaknesses:

None 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:

GCS has provided evidence of Quality of leadership team is sound. Leadership team includes CEO/Director of Education, Director of Organizational Development, expert consultants in relational education, Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and other Charter schools from the directors and founders of Pennsylvanias Souderton Charter School Collaborative, Seven Generations Charter School, and the Renaissance Academy Charter School that provide substantial assistance. (Page e41) GCS has provided copies of résumés, including addresses and phone numbers of Board of Trustees, CEO, DOD, which includes sound qualifications and expertise in required fields. All faculty will have the skills/certificates. (Page e362) GCS will employ 16 k-8 full time and part time teachers. (Page e63)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant group makes assurances that they will recruit faculty and staff that are diverse in gender, race, politics, age and class, the response lacked how they will go about making this happen. (Page e362)

Reader's Score: 21

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:

Applicant group makes assurances that they will recruit faculty and staff that are diverse in gender, race, politics, age and class. Page e362

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant group makes assurances that they will recruit faculty and staff that are diverse in gender, race, politics, age and class, the response lacked how they will go about making this happen. (Page e362)

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

GCS has provided evidence of Quality of leadership team is sound. Leadership team includes CEO/Director of Education, Director of Organizational Development, expert consultants in relational education, Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and other Charter schools from the directors and founders of Pennsylvanias Souderton Charter

Sub Question

School Collaborative, Seven Generations Charter School, and the Renaissance Academy Charter School that provide substantial assistance. (Page e41) GCS has provided copies of résumés, including addresses and phone numbers of Board of Trustees, CEO, DOD, which includes sound qualifications and expertise in required fields. All faculty will have the skills/certificates. (Page e362) GCS will employ 16 k-8 full time and part time teachers. (Page e63)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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:

GCS has presented adequate information regarding its management plan to achieve the objectives of its proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. GCS has provided sound evidence of a management team with the qualifications, experience, and capability to manage its proposed project. Its Learning Organization and Shared Leadership models where everyone shares in power are aligned to its relational education program. The team includes CEO/Director of Education, Director of Organizational Development, and Board of Trustees. (Pages e41-42) The Boards responsibilities include carrying out schools mission/vision statement, overseeing the budget, fostering relationships with staff, school, and community. Page e58 Co-Principals - the CEO/Director of Education and the Director of Organizational Development will serve as directors and share responsibilities. Page e43

As a requirement, GCS randomly submits its students exams to CLUSAs Accreditation program. CLUSA then hires professors from all subject areas to assess the students exams, part of the process for determining school accreditation. Page e43 GCSs faculty and staff will be assessed in three areas ILPs, portfolio, and the formal performance assessment. Faculty and staff will develop ILPs collaboratively. GCS presents a step-by-step approach in developing their assessment ILPs. Page e309-311

GCS has adequate policies governing salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, sick and other leave, and benefits. Page e368 Business Manager and schools administrator will be responsible for preparing a proposed budget 90 days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1). Page e350

The budget is reflective of the school's curriculum and instructional design with respect to training (travel and contractual services), technology equipment and extracurricular activities (purchase of a passenger bus for field trips). (Pages e465-469; 472-473)

Weaknesses:

Objective 1 state that school will track success rate of its graduate but does not indicate what it will do to track this success. Pages e46-47

Reader's Score: 14

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:

Pottsville School District denied Gillinghams revised application. GCS petitioned to Charter School Appeals Board (CAB). CAB members unanimously voted to approve GCSs charter on June 7, 2011. It opened on September 6/2011. (Page e52; 238-239; 243)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

Based on the CAB's response and subsequent approval to Pottsville's denial, CGS is an autonomous school and will act independent of the school district. (Page e51) As such, GCS has the flexibility to implement curriculum, structure its school day, hire staff, and manage its budget, etc., as it deems necessary.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Gillingham Charter School (U282B120049)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	1
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	14
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	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	14
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	15
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Panel - 7: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Gillingham Charter School (U282B120049)

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 K12 Relational Education curriculum aligns to the state standards. After the local district denied their charter, the charter school and its curriculum won an appeal to the states Charter Appeals Board who unanimously ruled (e27 and e210) that the school and its curriculum met the states requirements and granted the schools charter.

Sample alignment documents (e384-e428) provide a picture of how this curriculum aligns to the standards. Teams of teachers are also committed to ensure that the alignment is maintained as the state standards are revised in the future. Although the curriculum unique, it appears to be comprehensive. Samples of the curriculum (e86-e100 e 246-e260) and the narrative of the Day in the Life (pg e84-e85 and e 220-221) give a fairly detailed picture of how a student experiences the curriculum. The school has been in operation and using the curriculum for one year. Multiple letters of support from parents of current students and from students were submitted in the Appendix (pg e109-e112 and 119-124) in support of the learning going on at the school.

A comprehensive list of instructional practices is provided. (pg e281-e307) These practices are consistent with the curricular model chosen for the school.

The extensive professional development program (pg e 35- e37) on both the philosophical and curricular models chosen by the school will strengthen both areas and ensure continued alignment with the state standards.

Weaknesses:

Academic achievement results were not presented.

[The Charter Appeals Board found the curriculum to be appropriate and did not cite any deficiencies. (pg e198-e210)]

Reader's Score: 12

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 objectives include meeting and exceeding the state achievement standards.

Teacher development was comprehensive, but how they would address non IEP students.

The target area, district and existing charter school have significant numbers of poor, educationally disadvantaged and special education students. The district in which the school is located rates 448 of 500 in the number of drop outs in the state. (pg e21) four of the districts from which the school enrolls students are high poverty districts. (pg e 20)

Students targeted for the school are in areas that have not met AYP and/or proficiency standards on the state test. (pg e20- e22) The school has as a primary goal meeting proficiency standards higher than those met by the district.

Weaknesses:

The targeted area has a high number of children in poverty and in need of special education services but does not have a high number of racially disadvantaged students.

Did not specifically address how the curriculum will help under achieving students or provide data to support.

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement**1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.****Strengths:**

Students participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment summative tests. (pg e35)

The student authentic assessment model is consistent with the curriculum model and philosophy of the school. (e 33- e35) The emphasis on with the child assessment and internalized assessment methods are examples of this alignment between philosophy and practice related to curriculum and assessment. (pg e317-e324)

Formative student assessments occur daily and weekly on the multiple aspects of the curriculum. (e 34- e35, e 47)

Multiple formative assessment measures including problem solving assignments, daily observations, oral and written narrative assessments, recitations, student reflections in journals and written assignments are utilized. Summative assessments include: 100% student participation in community service and environmentally focused projects (pg e 48) teacher/student conferences, parent /teacher conferences, portfolios, trimester exams and the state tests. (pg e47-e49) These components combine to form a comprehensive assessment model consistent with the schools philosophical and curricular model.

The school is seeking accreditation from Childlight USA. (pg e43) The accreditation process includes a review of random samples of 30% of student exams, on site observations and an assessment of whether the school meets the standards of the accrediting body. (pg e43, e47)

The extensive professional development program (pg e 35- e37) on both the philosophical and curricular models chosen by the school will strengthen both areas and ensure continued alignment with the state standards.

The school and program assessment measures are comprehensive and include: meeting APY, attainment and maintenance of CLUSA accreditation, 85% of students reading at grade level, 95% graduation rate after five years, 80% student and staff retention rate, 90% continuation to post secondary school 100% participation in internships and globally focused relationships, 75% licensed teachers, 100% non-certified teachers experts in their field, 22.5% (75% of 30%) of students achieving a passing score from CLUSA on trimester exams, attendance above 95% for students and 90% for staff each trimester, and completion of multiple required trainings. (pg e46-e51) In addition they propose meeting satisfaction rate on school designed surveys of 75% for students, 90% for staff, 80% for parents and 80% for community partners (pg e 50-e51)

The time line in the objectives and assessment section (pg e 125-141) is comprehensive and reasonable. The chart presents ample information in an organized and understandable form.

Weaknesses:

The mixing of school and student assessments in the narrative makes it difficult to see the school assessment process as a unified process.

No metrics are provided for determining success on the 360 degree Feedback process. (pg e 48)

Reader's Score: 14

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:

Evidence of support is strong. Multiple letters of support from students, and parents and community members appear in the submitted supporting documents. (pg e109-112 and e119-124) In addition, 980 signatures were secured on petitions supporting the school when 400 were needed to proceed to the state authorizing agency. (pg e 52)

Information was distributed to parents and the community in multiple forms including door-to-door visits. (pg e54-e55)

The effectiveness of the process was evidenced by the school opening with the desired number of students. (pg e54-e56)

The school will continue to provide information to parents and community members through similar methods as they continue the development and expansion of the school.

The school has committed in its application and documents that went to the Charter Appeals Board not to discriminate in its recruitment, admissions, hiring or policy processes and practices. The school has also committed to a lottery.

Equal access has been demonstrated through the demographics of their current enrollment 60% are free and reduced lunch eligible (pg e64) and 33% qualify for special education or 504 services compared to 12% in the district. (pg e62)

The location in the downtown neighborhood also strengthens the schools ability to attract disadvantaged students. (pg e64)

The attendance at over 30 informational meeting (pg e 61) and support from parents and community members during the appeal process and first year of the school provide evidence of both opportunity to participate and actual participation. (pg 54)

The community service and environmental community based projects which are part of the curriculum also add provide evidence of community involvement designed to maintain and build community support.

Multiple community partnerships entered into during development and the first year of operation attest to the level of community support. (pg 55-57)

Weaknesses:

None

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:

Founders included parents and community members. (pg e54) Both groups are also included on curriculum selection and design, community outreach, facility, finance, fundraising, grant and technology committees. (pg e 54)
Service learning, field trips, internships, place based nature studies and the philosophy of parents and community members as models of lifelong learning all increase the opportunities for involvement. (pg e 54)
Multiple partnerships have already been formed. (pg e55-e56)

Weaknesses:

None

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 board and current staff (pg e147-148 and e 165-180) have management, curriculum development, program design, and governance experience.

The school has had one successful year under the current leadership.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 20

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 has emphasized hiring a diverse staff despite the fact that the county in which the school is located is 95% white. The current staff is 20% persons of color including persons of Asian, Black and Latino descent. (pg e43 and e67) The school commits to continuing this practice. (pg e 67-e68)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The resumes of the board and current staff (pg e147-148 and e 165-180) provide evidence of a diverse experience base and a commitment to the vision, mission and curriculum of the school.

The contracted personnel (pg e 41) with expertise in the curriculum model will support their staff as they implement the model.

The CEO/Director of Education has significant training in the Relational model, an M. Ed in Educational Leadership and a state issued principals license. (pg e39)

The Director of Organizational Development has background in counseling, public relations, human resources (pg e 40)

Weaknesses:

A more detailed description of the board and staff in relation to the function, training and skill level of each was needed. A single chart providing details of qualifications would have helped clarify these areas of concern. It was difficult to combine all of the pieces that related to this issue.

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:

A plan is in place for the maintenance and review of school and student records. (pg 313-316) This will ensure adequate oversight.

The service of a contracted business manager with charter school experience has been secured to ensure financial practices are sound and within legal and audit requirements. (pg e59)

The budget is well thought out and a 5 year budget projection is included. (pg e 59 and e560-e561)

The special education and 504 processes and plans are well thought out. The use of contractors and the intermediate agency further strengthen the application in this area. (pg e62-64, e211 and e 261- 280)

Weaknesses:

A list of the staff is provided. (pg e 142) A brief discussion of the qualifications of the various staff and how they will cover content areas and elective course content would have strengthened this section. It was difficult to put the personnel pieces into a comprehensive whole picture the way this material was presented.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

Student performance measures are extensive and fit the philosophy of the school. Multiple instruments are used. Also, state assessments are given and analyzed by staff to determine information that could be used to increase student achievement.

The authorization for the charter was granted by the Charter Appeal Board after the charter was denied by the district. (pg e198-e210)

A contract/charter is in place (pg e58) and a copy is attached.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 15

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:

Despite the fact that the school district has not been supportive of the school and fought the application until the state Charter Appeals Board ruled against it, the charter school continues to reach out to the district and has also established relationships with the 10 other districts from which students come to the school. (pg e 52)

The charter school has appointed a liaison to the district and the relationship appears to be improving since a new superintendent began at the district. (pg e52) The fact that the school and new superintendent are drafting a new document defining the relationship between the school and district is promising. (pg e 53)

The school is its own LEA and has autonomy over budget, expenditures, daily operation and personnel. (pg e50 and e51)

The school receives the funds specified in state law from the district.
The school will wisely set aside 3% per year for contingency funding.
Contract renewal is every five years. (pg e51)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/21/2012 08:29 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/25/2012 06:39 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Gillingham Charter School (U282B120049)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	10
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	1
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	7
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	3
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1. Quality of the Personnel	22	22
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	12
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	13
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	86

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Panel - 7: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Gillingham Charter School (U282B120049)

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:

- A) Applicant states that the curriculum is Relational Education and is based on the principles of Charlotte Mason. This is to result in a broad, rigorous curriculum is to provide students with the ability to witness relationships throughout the curriculum. Applicant will use the non-sectarian curriculum developed by Childlight USA (p. 26).
- B) Applicant identifies key elements of the curriculum such as idea-rich curriculum as presented through living books, aligned with State standards, arranged chronologically around history, primary documents, autobiographies, biographies replace traditional textbooks, English and one modern language in K-3 and Latin, English, and two modern languages in grades 4-12, career internships are available for 11th and 12th grade students, and architecture in grades K-12 (p. 27-28).
- C) Applicant states that the curriculum is designed for self-directed learning and critical thinking through the following practices: narration, constructivist pedagogy, masterly inactivity, student talk, Reggio Emilia in kindergarten, balanced literacy, Asian math instruction, respectful ethos, integration of arts instruction, observation skills, classroom libraries, daily chores, meaningful, individualized homework, and mentoring and learning from community members (p. 28-32).
- D) Applicant initially serves grades K-8 and adds a high school grade each subsequent year (appendix).

Weaknesses:

- A) Applicant does not adequately address how the educational program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards. Applicant needed to provide additional information directly addressing this criterion.
- B) Applicant does not describe the implementation of the identified practices and does not provide academic results achieved under these practices.

Reader's Score: 10

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:

A) Applicant identifies its special needs program as an area where educationally underserved students needs are being met (p. 62 -64).

Weaknesses:

A) Applicant inadequately addresses how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content and achievement standards. Applicant states, briefly, that 60% of its students receive free or reduced priced lunches, but does not specifically address how the curriculum and instructional practices will help these educationally disadvantaged students succeed. Additionally, applicant mentions students with disabilities and has 30% in parentheses next to it, but does not clarify if 30% of the school actually is comprised of students with disabilities (p. 21). The lack of clarity and specificity is problematic regarding this criterion and throughout the application.

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement**1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.****Strengths:**

A) Applicant provides nine objectives for the school. These objectives include assessments/measures for attaining these objectives as well as a timeline and the individual(s) responsible for achieving the objective. The objectives range from preparing students for higher education to student achievement and success by meeting NCLB to model-school certification under Childlight USA by the third year of operation (p. 46-51)

Weaknesses:

A) No weaknesses are 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:

A) Applicant states that it held over 24 monthly informational meetings at local venues such as the historical society to gain maximum pre-enrollment and get input from the community about the educational program (p. 54).

B) Applicant hosted booths with flyers and posters at downtown events such as American Way Fair and local arts festival. Flyers and posters were circulated at thrift store, pregnancy center, public mental health service provider, galleries, cafes, public housing headquarters, grocery/convenient stores, YMCA/YWCA, Salvation Army, and Child

Development centers, visitations with family, door-to-door canvassing in low-income areas (p. 54-55).

C) Applicant used website, local radio, community bulletin board announcements, radio interviews, articles and letters to the editor in the local paper, mass emails sent to homeschoolers, booths at Block of Art Festival and Halloween Parades, county fairs, mall events, holiday festivals, flyers in Salvation Christmas baskets, television ads, and bulletin boards (p. 61-62).

Weaknesses:

A) Applicant does not provide information regarding how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

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:

A) Applicant states dedicated parents, Founding Group members, and community members spread the word about and generated support for the school. These members discussed curriculum options and agreed on the Relational Education model. Committees were formed from this group such as Community Outreach, Facilities, Finance, Fundraising, and Technology and Grants (p. 54).

B) Parents, grandparents and guardians who wanted to be Founding Members had to attend one Founding Members Meeting and read a synopsis of the philosophy, thus more knowledge about the school. Additionally, parents and staff collaborate to develop orientation materials. Staff will host town meetings in the second year for parents and community members to learn about the school and exchange ideas (p. 55).

C) Community partnerships will be developed with groups such as the YMCA, Penn State University, Schuylkill Wellness Services, and Stonehedge Gardens. Additionally, parents and community members will be a part of monthly field studies, service learning, parent visitations and adult learning, monthly evening collaborations, parent expertise, internships, and lesson study (p. 57-58).

D) Applicant has located the school in an underserved section of the downtown area where it is convenient for educationally underserved students to attend (p. 64).

Weaknesses:

A) No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Personnel

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:

- A) Applicant states that persons of color only make up 5% of the county's population, thus making it difficult to recruit candidates of color. Applicant does state, however, it will recruit at local historical black colleges and the local state university campus (p. 67). Additionally, applicant acknowledges the relevance of a diverse teaching staff for its school.
- B) Applicant demonstrates the ability to launch a public charter school. The school will be entering its second year of operation. Applicant successfully appealed to the State to overturn the local district's denial of applicant's charter petition.
- C) Applicant's CEO/Director of Education has developed an innovative school design with Relational Education. Additionally, this individual has been an educator for over twenty years and for twelve of those twenty years has been involved with Relational Education (p. 40). Also, this individual has been a curriculum developer for the History Alive! program (p. 40).
- D) Applicant's Director of Organizational Development has been a college professor, worked in both Public Relations and Human Resources, and operated a private mental health practice (p. 40-41). Additionally, this individual used Relational Education for three years while conducting a home school program (p. 41).
- E) Applicant has contracted with consultants to provide guidance with the planning and implementation of the Relational Education program, serve as business manager, and provide legal assistance (p. 41).

Weaknesses:

- A) No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 22

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:

- A) Applicant states that persons of color only make up 5% of the county's population, thus making it difficult to recruit candidates of color. Applicant does state, however, it will recruit at local historical black colleges and the local state university campus (p. 67). Additionally, applicant acknowledges the relevance of a diverse teaching staff for its school.

Weaknesses:

- A) No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

- A) Applicant demonstrates the ability to launch a public charter school. The school will be entering its second year of operation. Applicant successfully appealed to the State to overturn the local district's denial of applicant's charter petition.

Sub Question

- B) Applicants CEO/Director of Education has developed an innovative school design with Relational Education. Additionally, this individual has been an educator for over twenty years and for twelve of those twenty years has been involved with Relational Education (p. 40). Also, this individual has been a curriculum developer for the History Alive! program (p. 40).
- C) Applicants Director of Organizational Development has been a college professor, worked in both Public Relations and Human Resources, and operated a private mental health practice (p. 40-41). Additionally, this individual used Relational Education for three years while conducting a home school program (p. 41).
- D) Applicant has contracted with consultants to provide guidance with the planning and implementation of the Relational Education program, serve as business manager, and provide legal assistance (p. 41).

Weaknesses:

- A) No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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:

- A) Applicant provides objectives and assessments with a timeline, benchmarks, and persons responsible (appendix). These are all measurable and attainable and identifying the persons responsible for their achievement.
- B) Applicant provides a reasonable budget and budget narrative and is appropriate for its management model (appendix). The budget is aligned with the proposed project objectives.

Weaknesses:

- A) Although applicant provided objectives and assessments with a timeline, benchmarks, and persons responsible, applicant does not provide a management plan related to the grant.

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:

A) Applicant has submitted its charter application and has received authorization to operate beginning in the 2011-2012 school year. Applicant has included a copy of the charter and included the States letter approving the charter (appendix).

Weaknesses:

A) Although applicant indicates that the curriculum is aligned with the State standards, applicant does not adequately describe in the narrative how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

A) Applicant cites State law regarding autonomy. Additionally, applicant describes the development of an improved relationship with the local district. Applicant describes a willingness to collaborate with the local district on several issues such as professional development and enrollment, both of which are not mandated by law.

Weaknesses:

A) No weaknesses are identified.

Reader's Score: 3

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