

**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:** Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (U282B120063)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	13
<b>Assisting Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
<b>Assessing Achievement</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	14
<b>Community Support</b>		
1. Community Support	8	8
<b>Parental and Community Involvement</b>		
1. Parental Involvement	3	2
<b>Quality of the Personnel</b>		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	16	13
<b>Charter or Performance Contract</b>		
1. Performance Contract	15	15
<b>Degree of Flexibility</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Total</b>	100	92

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Panel - 7: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (U282B120063)

## 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:

Urban Pathways K-5 utilizes the Core Knowledge Program, an assessment based curriculum, which includes an individual learning plan for each student. There is evidence that Core Knowledge students outperform their counterparts in reading comprehension, science, social studies and math. One of the schools goals is to become an official Core Knowledge Visitation Site by 2015. This suggests a commitment to thorough implementation and results. The school has taken additional steps to reach this goal such as targeting a 10:1 student to teacher ratio and integrating supplementary programs into the curriculum in literacy, math, science and character development. (Pages e23-24)

Representatives from the Core Knowledge Foundation observed the school for two days in February 2012 to provide feedback about the program implementation. The detailed feedback suggests that the team was impressed with the school's progress towards implementation. The evaluating team assessed 14 constructs that were scored and followed with thorough comments justifying the score, as well as next steps. The school received an exemplary rating in 11 of 14 constructs, including effective instruction, high expectations and continuous improvement. School Leadership received the highest score possible, which demonstrates a strong commitment to the Core Knowledge Program (Pages e125-138).

#### Weaknesses:

While there is evident commitment to Core Knowledge, the data provided to demonstrate its effectiveness, does not specify that the achievement is of a similar demographic population. The outline of the curriculum sequence for grades K-5 includes major topic headings for each subject, but there is no supporting document to demonstrate how it is applied (Pages e72-80). Additionally, instructional practices were not flushed out beyond a general description of the core knowledge sequence, and a statement that the Director of Curriculum and Assessment will align the curriculum with state and national standards (Pages e23 24).

Reader's Score: 13

### 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:**

Urban Pathways serves students who represent one of the lowest performing regions in Pittsburgh, according to Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) test scores. The student makeup is 98 percent African-American and 80 percent qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. The narrative states that the majority of students are high needs children. (Page e29) The K-5 school was created in response to an evident need at the existing Urban Pathways 6-12 Charter School for extensive academic remediation in the sixth grade. Urban Pathways K-5 mission is to prepare students with the correct foundation for admission to the 6-12 school, which had a 100% college acceptance rate in 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years (pg. e70). The UPCS PSSA 2010 scores for math were 60% proficient or above, and 80% basic or above. The scores for reading were 55% proficient or above, and 81% basic or above (Page e163). Additional resources to assist students include special education support instruction, a literacy specialist, an on-site social worker and school psychologist, as well as collaboration with Wesley Spectrum Services and Center for Family Excellence (Page e30). 20 percent of the schools students require an Individual Education Plan that is overseen by the special education department. There is also an English Language Learners program; all students take a Home Language Survey, which identifies ELL students and their performance. Based on assessment data, the Administrative Team will adjust the ELL programs as necessary (pp. e 19-20, 119-124)

**Weaknesses:**

None 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:**

Urban Pathways annual measurable academic goals and assessments are clearly stated. The Board of Trustees and Director of Curriculum and Assessment demonstrate a commitment to assessing student progress and evaluating the schools progress. Student assessments are conducted throughout the school year in accordance with the schools assessment calendar (pg. e292). Student assessments include summer diagnostic evaluations for baseline data, Core Knowledge assessment tools, student portfolios, PSST in grades 3, 4, 5, NWEA/MAP, DRA, DIBELS, and teacher checklists that correspond with each students learning plan (pp. e35-36).

School leaders referred to as the Academic Team are responsible for gathering school-wide data and meeting once per month to discuss assessments and results. Additionally a third party conducts an annual satisfaction survey to assess the quality of school leadership, instructional staff, the educational program, and the school climate (pp. e30 33).

The schools leadership has established a comprehensive evaluative measure called the Balanced Score Card to evaluate overall school performance (pp. e30, 220-224). The Academic Team uses actively the Balanced Score Card to make data driven decisions about the curriculum and program improvements.

**Weaknesses:**

Lack of detail on how authentic assessments will be measured within the structure of Core Knowledge. (Page e17)

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:**

The applicant does inform the community about the school through direct mailings, open houses, participation in community events and outreach to the media (pp. e43-44). All students within geographic reach have an opportunity to apply, and new students are selected by means of a lottery system (pp. e44, 110-112). There is extensive community support for the school, which is documented with several letters of support (pp. e89-105) as well as established community partnerships.

#### **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:**

The applicant demonstrates a commitment to developing and maintaining relationships with community organizations, notably organizations in the areas of health and human service (Pages e39-43). Urban Pathways established a partnership with Wesley Spectrum Services, which provides structured therapies and support for children with emotional disabilities. Wesley Spectrum Services offers guidance to families on mental health treatment, food, family services, housing, and employment through an array of services and strong community partnerships. Cultural organizations provide tutors, family support, classroom and office supplies and arts and sporting event tickets for students. (Page e19) There is also evidence of community partnerships with cultural and environmental organizations to foster responsible citizenship.

Parental involvement has been encouraged since the school was initially proposed. Parents and stakeholders are encouraged to provide input during the board meetings, the Parent Advisory Committee and the annual satisfaction survey. The applicant also enumerates the methods in which parents may reach out to the school and teacher, as well as the logged teacher communication with parents. The Parent Involvement Policy is included with the application (pp. e113-118).

**Weaknesses:**

Parental input appears to be limited thus far and no specific information about how it will be increased in the future. Little evidence of parental involvement in the program design implementation of the charter school. (Page e28)

**Reader's Score: 2**

**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:**

Dr. Clautti has been CEO of Urban Pathways 6-12 Charter School since 2003. The 6-12 school achieved a 100 percent graduation rate in 2009, 2010, and 2011 as well as a 100 percent acceptance rate into post-secondary institutions (pp. e220-224). School leadership includes the CEO, Principal, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Director of Special Education, Director of Finance and a Board of Trustees. Job descriptions, resumes and bios for all for all of the above are included with the application (pp. e70, 148-162). Teacher/staff recruitment sources include websites, progressive teaching institutions and education journals. (Page e47)

**Weaknesses:**

Though the current faculty includes a strong female presence in leadership positions and 20% of the teachers are African-American, it does not appear that the administration actively recruits persons from traditionally underrepresented groups. Note that the attached Employees/Equal Employment Opportunity Policy does state that Urban Pathways is committed to affirmative action to assure equal opportunity (pg.146 section 1.1).

**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:**

The current staff represents 20% female presence in leadership and 20% of the teachers are African-American. (Page 146)

**Weaknesses:**

Though the current faculty includes a strong female presence in leadership positions and 20% of the teachers are African-American, it does not appear that the administration actively recruits persons from traditionally underrepresented groups. Note that the attached Employees/Equal Employment Opportunity Policy does state that

**Sub Question**

Urban Pathways is committed to affirmative action to assure equal opportunity (pg.146 section 1.1).

**Reader's Score:** 1

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

**Strengths:**

Dr. Clautti has been CEO of Urban Pathways 6-12 Charter School since 2003. The 6-12 school achieved a 100 percent graduation rate in 2009, 2010, and 2011 as well as a 100 percent acceptance rate into post-secondary institutions (pp. e220-224).

School leadership includes the CEO, Principal, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Director of Special Education, Director of Finance and a Board of Trustees. Job descriptions, resumes and bios for all for all of the above are included with the application (pp. e70, 148-162). Teacher/staff recruitment sources include websites, progressive teaching institutions and education journals. (Page e47)

**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:**

The schools board of trustees ensures that the school complies with the Charter granted by the School District of Pittsburgh. The board also governs appointing and dismissing school administrators, the annual budget and other fiscal duties, approving courses of study and textbooks, building and land issues, and employee compensation. (Page e217) Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School Board, management, faculty, and staff will use the results-driven planning system to develop the school accountability plan. The accountability plan will provide the framework for tracking the schools progress towards goals and reporting results to parents, the community, the Pittsburgh School District Board of Education, and the state and federal Departments of Education. The accountability plan is designed to enable performance comparisons with traditional public schools and other public charter schools. The plan outlines performance goals, objectives, and plans in three areas: (1) student and school academic performance, (2) student and school non-academic performance, and (3) organizational and management performance. (Page e59) Each member of the schools Administrative Team has unique responsibilities aimed to meeting the schools goals. The applicant outlines the schools budget and fiscal operations (Pages e62-64) and provides an attached budget narrative and board of trustees finance policy. (Pages e 225-234).

**Weaknesses:**

The school CEO, Director of Finance, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, and some board members are shared with the Urban Pathways 6-12 School. The management plan does not clearly outline how the added responsibility of a second school was assumed without creating an impossible load.

Reader's Score: 13

#### 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:**

The applicant group was granted a charter by the School District of Pittsburgh on February 16, 2011, renewable every five years. The charter agreement is attached in the grant application. (Pages e239-246) The charter states that the school performance is measured using the PSSA. The school must provide the school district with preliminary and final test date each academic year.

##### **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:**

The application includes several of the exemptions Pennsylvania charter schools are permitted from the school district. The school is permitted flexibility or autonomy over the curriculum and teaching methods, personnel, the number of hours and school days per year, as well as the school response to truancy. Urban Pathways also demonstrates autonomy over the budget and daily operations. Page e48

##### **Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/21/2012 08:35 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (U282B120063)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	13
<b>Assisting Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
<b>Assessing Achievement</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	13
<b>Community Support</b>		
1. Community Support	8	8
<b>Parental and Community Involvement</b>		
1. Parental Involvement	3	2
<b>Quality of the Personnel</b>		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	16	14
<b>Charter or Performance Contract</b>		
1. Performance Contract	15	15
<b>Degree of Flexibility</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Total</b>	100	92

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Panel - 7: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (U282B120063)

## 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 Hirsch Direct Instruction Core Knowledge curriculum serves as the base curriculum for the K-5 school. Data is provided to support the choice of this curriculum (pg 7)

Multiple high quality supplementary curricular components including: Covey, Leader in Me, McGraw-Hill SRA Open Court Reading Program, ASSET teacher excellence program, and arts partnership program and specials (PE, Yoga, art, and culture) will be added to the base curriculum to encourage innovation and problem solving within this otherwise teacher driven model. (pg 8-10)

If successful in securing a Keystones to Opportunity literacy grant the applicant will have strengthened the literacy component and literacy assessment team. (pg e26) The thirty days of school-wide professional development provided per year should ensure that staff is adequately prepared to deliver all elements of the curriculum. (pg 4)

Application of technology is a vital part of the program. Technology will be incorporated in the areas of literacy and math and e-readers will be used. (pg 5)

The Director of Curriculum and Assessment will be tasked with aligning the Core Knowledge curriculum to the state and national standards (pg 6) and to ensuring continued alignment. (pg 16)

#### Weaknesses:

The suggestion (pg 5) that the Core Knowledge curriculum encourages innovation and creativity and the fact that each student has an individual plan appears to be in opposition to the Hirsch philosophy. The addition of the other non-Hirsch components to the curriculum may add elements that allow some degree of innovation and creativity to an otherwise teacher driven instructional model.

An explanation of how students will engage in thematic units and small group projects in a Core Knowledge/Direct instruction environment was needed?

Details on how the staff would balance teacher directed instruction which is the hallmark of a Core Knowledge curriculum with activities and inquiry-based learning within the time frame of the hours available for instruction was needed.

Reader's Score: 13

### 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:**

This section is addressed through several elements. 20% of current students have an IEP. Services for EBD students including structured therapies and support services are provided by Wesley Spectrum Services. (pg 1)  
Home language surveys will be completed by all students upon entry to the program. (pg 1)  
The districts from which the students come have poverty rates from between 21.1% to 36.75 as compared to the state average of 17.5%. (pg 2) The school will emphasize college as a long term goal with this population.  
Programs will be conducted with other districts that have populations ethnically distinct from those of the school (pg 3) in order to gain experiences with other ethnicities and cultures.  
A literacy specialist, on-site licensed psychologists and licensed social workers (pg 11-12) and the services of contracted providers are provided to assist disadvantaged students. (pg 12)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement**

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

**Strengths:**

Multiple data driven assessments including: PSSA, other standardized tests including MAP, student classroom performance measures (pg7-10), DIBELS, and The Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation will be used to regularly assess student progress. (pg 16-18)  
Specific measureable goals are set for growth in reading and math, student and staff retention and attendance, and family and staff satisfaction, staff certification. Pg 14-15)  
Data is disaggregated by age/grade, gender, race, poverty, SPED and ELL status. (pg 26)  
Teachers will be able to put assessment scores into an on line software system and share results to inform improvement efforts. (pg 19)  
The evaluation process for the on line curriculum is comprehensive. The school was evaluated by outside Core knowledge specialists after its first seven months and received exemplary scores in 11 of 14 analytic categories. (pg 7)  
The schools goal is to achieve Visitation Site status. (pg 7)  
An annual report card is generated for the school. (pg 14) Components include: student achievement data; comparison of school to district and state measures; internal operational processes; growth; financial performance; and staff, parent, community and student satisfaction. (pg 12) A comprehensive evaluation method, the Balanced Score Card, is used by the board to evaluate over all school performance. (pg 12)  
The school will adapt the format of the existing middle schools annual report to serve as a framework for their annual report.  
A comprehensive teacher evaluation system is in place. (pg 20)  
Specific people are identified as responsible for data collection and for monthly meeting to: discuss assessments, set time tables, determine needed changes, publicize results, draft policies and develop improvement plans related to assessment. This team also secures and works with contracted agencies and develops and publishes the annual accountability report card. (pg 12-13)  
Bi weekly grade level committees will monitor and report on preparation and practice opportunities for PSSA exams. First year student scores show growth of a full year or more for all students. (pg 19)

**Weaknesses:**

An explanation of how authentic assessments will be used and measured in this traditional Core Knowledge/Direct instruction environment was needed.

A considerable amount of student and staff time appears to be spent on test preparation.

Little or no information is provided about assessment of teacher designed projects, or student presentations, demonstrations, performances and exhibitions. (pg 17)

**Reader's Score: 13**

**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 comprehensive marketing plan has been developed which is appropriate to reach the target population and community. (pg 25) The plan includes outreach to special education, English Language Learners, and students eligible through Child Find. (pg 26)

Application and admission policies are in place and a lottery process is used when more applications are received than seats are available. (pg 26)

Parent demand was evidenced by the fact that 200 applications were received for 160 openings during the first year of the school. (pg21)

**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:**

Community involvement was demonstrated through a survey of community members conducted to determine the need for and potential components of the school and program. (pg 21)

A Parent Advisory Committee will be formed to provide input on the Code of Conduct, Strategic Plan, Curriculum Plan, Assessments and safety issues. (pg 28)

The school is designed as a hub offering a variety of health, social service, recreational, adult education and other on-site programs and support services. (pg 21) A list of seventeen partnerships and a description of what each partner has provided to the school gives evidence of community support and access for students and families to needed support

services. The partnerships include service providers, universities, community non-profits and a major foundation. (pg 21-25) Many of these partnerships are innovative such as the partnership with the child care provider related to pre and early literacy efforts.

**Weaknesses:**

Parental input appears to have been limited thus far to meetings concerning student performance, signing and meeting for infractions to the code of conduct, phone calls related to student progress from teachers, conferences and field trips. (pg 28)

Parental participation in the planning and development to this point in time appears to be minimal. Community input into the planning and development is not well explained.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**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 current board has experience successfully managing a middle/high school. The experience of the board members includes school design, non-profit management, board governance, curriculum development, charter school management.

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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:**

Their current staff is 20% African American and demonstrates a commitment to diversity. The school has set a goal of increasing staff diversity. (pg 42)

**Weaknesses:**

This issue was only vaguely addressed in the narrative section. How this was or will be accomplished in the future was not defined. A description of a recruitment strategy was needed.

## Sub Question

Reader's Score: 1

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

#### Strengths:

The current board has opened and run a highly successful middle/high school charter.

100% of staff are certified, highly qualified and experienced. (pg 35)

A comprehensive list of qualifications is provided on pages 36-37. Direct observation of the classroom teaching of applicants and completion of the Activity Vector Analysis personality inventory are part of the hiring process.

Job descriptions of the key personnel (CEO, Director of Finance, Principal, Director of Curriculum and Assessment and Director of Special Education) are detailed and appropriate for the position and tasks to be accomplished.

#### Weaknesses:

None

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:

The school will be an expansion of the applicants successful 6-12 Pathways Charter School. (pg e17) The founders have experience opening another charter school. (pg 11)

A school improvement plan will be developed based on feedback from the outside evaluation team, students, staff and families. (pg 16-17)

Professional development time, activities, requirements and opportunities are expansive, (pg 37-38) and a pay for performance model is in place.

Multiple sample policies are provided which demonstrate the ability of the management team and board to develop sound policy through which to manage the school.

Planning was comprehensive and covered the main components need to operate a school efficiently. Plans have been made for transportation, food, health and facility maintenance services. Plans are also in place related to attendance, student behavior, suspension/expulsion, crime, child abuse, safety, liability and insurance risk management. (pg 47)

A well developed budget process, audit process and fundraising process are in place. (pg 44-46)

Appropriate school improvement milestones (goals) for succeeding years have been established, the responsible person identified and the time frame determined. (pg 42)

#### Weaknesses:

The amounts provided in pay for performance are relatively small compared to the private sector.

A more detailed plan for management of the grant was needed. Exactly how will the various elements of the plan be combined into a comprehensive whole?

The shared management model didnt clearly state how the added responsibilities will be filled without impacting either

school.

**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:**

A charter was granted on February 16, 2011. A copy is attached.

A 300+ page application was submitted to the Pittsburgh Public school district and the charter was granted.

The grant narrative and supporting documents describe student performance measures in detail. Names of instruments to be used and measures of success are described.

#### **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:**

The school is exempt from the majority of the states Public School Code, and a representative list of those exemptions is provided. (pg 66)

The applicant states that the school has a high degree of autonomy over budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel. (pg 48)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**Reader's Score:** 3

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 07/21/2012 08:35 PM

Status: Submitted

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

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (U282B120063)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
<b>Assisting Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	2
<b>Assessing Achievement</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
<b>Community Support</b>		
1. Community Support	8	8
<b>Parental and Community Involvement</b>		
1. Parental Involvement	3	2
<b>Quality of the Personnel</b>		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	16	10
<b>Charter or Performance Contract</b>		
1. Performance Contract	15	15
<b>Degree of Flexibility</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Total</b>	100	88

# Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - Panel - 7: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School (U282B120063)

## 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 school served 160 students in grades K-3 during the 2011-2012 school year. Grade 4 will be added during the 2012-2013 school year and grade 5 will be added during the 2013-2014 school year for a total of 240 students (abstract).

B) Applicant states that it implements the Core Knowledge Program (developed by E.D. Hirsch) is aligned with the Common Core Standards. The Core Knowledge Program outlines the content taught in history, geography, visual arts, mathematics, science, and language arts/English. Applicant provides an outlined of the K-5 sequence (p. 6 and appendix).

C) Applicant states that students will engage in project-based learning combining thematic units of learning, small group projects, and community based learning experiences in a small class setting (p. 6).

D) Applicant provides evidence from Johns Hopkins University and Oklahoma City Public Schools to support the Core Knowledge Curriculum (p. 6-7).

E) Applicant states that after its first seven months of implementing the K-5 sequence of Core Knowledge it was evaluated by Core knowledge specialists who found the school to be exemplary in 11 of 14 analytic categories. Additionally, applicant has the goal of becoming a Core Knowledge Visitation Site (p. 7).

F) Applicant identifies Covey Leader in Me Character Education, Keystones to Opportunity to Literacy Grant, McGraw-Hill SRA Open Court Reading Program, Harcourt Achieve Saxon Math Program, ASSET, Pearson Learning Group Core Knowledge History and Geography Program, Citizenship Program, and Specials Physical Education, Yoga, Music, Spanish, Art, and Cultural Exposure as additional aspects of the schools curriculum (p. 8-10).

#### Weaknesses:

A) Applicant does not adequately and specifically address how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards.

B) Applicant does not adequately explain how it will incorporate the additional elements of the curriculum with the Core Knowledge Program.

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:**

A) Applicant provides examples of additional assistance to help educationally disadvantaged students outside of the classroom so that students can succeed academically (p. 11).

B) Teachers are supportive of all students and provide a Wall of Fame in the hallways (p.11).

**Weaknesses:**

A) Applicant does not indicate how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State content and achievement standards.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement**

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

**Strengths:**

A) Applicant states that the schools effectiveness will be determined by analyzing variables such as student achievement data, comparisons to district and state measures, internal processes, organizational learning and growth, financial performance, and student, parent, staff, and community satisfaction (p. 12-20). Additionally, applicant provided an example of its charter annual report for its upper school. This report will also be done for the K-5 school (appendix).

**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 has strong parent and community support. Partnerships have been developed with a variety of organizations such as supportive services, universities, community educators, teacher trainers, cultural organizations, and urban networks. Parents have been eager for the applicant to create an elementary school and immediately received 200 applications for 160 spots (p. 21).

B) Applicant developed the following community partnerships by the end of its first year of operation Center for Family Excellence, Wesley Spectrum, Urban Pathways Ministry Program, California University of Pennsylvania,

Duquesne University, Point Park University, University of Pittsburgh, Heinz Endowments, African-American Chamber of Commerce, Executive Womens Council, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Pittsburgh Downtown Rotary, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, Phi Delta Kappa, Education Partnership, Small World Early Learning and Development Center, Verve, and Classrooms without Borders (p. 23-25).

C) Applicant provides a variety of letters of support for the school (appendix).

D) Applicant provides adequate evidence regarding how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the school (p. 26 and appendix).

E) Applicant will continue to inform parents and community through a marketing plan that includes direct mailings to potential applicants, website with registration capabilities, open houses, and participation in community events.

**Weaknesses:**

A) No weaknesses are 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:**

A) Applicant states that it will involve parents through informing them via four report cards per year, teacher contact regarding student success, progress, and areas of need (all contacts are logged into a database), the MMS data system, hosting evening programs, hosting a Leadership Day, and conducting parent conferences (p. 27-28)

B) Parents signed a Code of Conduct, and provided input to the Board of Trustees and administration to help craft the grant proposal. Additionally, parents can get involved with the Parent Advisory Committee (p. 28).

**Weaknesses:**

A) Applicant does not adequately explain how parents and community members/organizations were/are involved with the planning, program design, and implementation of the school. Applicant needs to provide specific information regarding the roles of parents and community members in this process.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**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:**

- A) Applicant states that 20% of the first-year teachers are African-American and so are 20% of the Trustees. Additionally, applicant identifies the CEO as female along with the majority of the Trustees.
- B) Applicant demonstrates the ability launch a public charter school. The school will be entering its second year of operation. Applicant currently operates a middle school and high school that share the same management team (p. 30).
- C) Applicant provides significant evidence regarding developing an innovative school design, relevant non-profit organization management and leadership experience, sound board governance, effective curriculum development and implementation, and strong fiscal management (p. 30-31 and appendix).

**Weaknesses:**

- A) Applicant does not provide a recruitment strategy for underrepresented groups.

**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:**

- A) Applicant states that 20% of the first-year teachers are African-American and so are 20% of the Trustees. Additionally, applicant identifies the CEO as female along with the majority of the Trustees.

**Weaknesses:**

- A) Applicant does not provide a recruitment strategy for underrepresented groups.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

**Strengths:**

- A) Applicant demonstrates the ability launch a public charter school. The school will be entering its second year of operation. Applicant currently operates a middle school and high school that share the same management team (p. 30).
- B) Applicant provides significant evidence regarding developing an innovative school design, relevant non-profit organization management and leadership experience, sound board governance, effective curriculum development and implementation, and strong fiscal management (p. 30-31 and appendix).

**Weaknesses:**

- A) No weaknesses are identified.

**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 (p. 41-42 and appendix).
- B) Applicant provides a reasonable budget and budget narrative (appendix). Applicant demonstrates an understanding of project costs associated with opening a public charter school.

**Weaknesses:**

- A) Although applicant provided milestones, timeline, and persons responsible, applicant does not provide an adequate management plan related to the grant. Applicant discusses creating an accountability plan and identifies the following three core domains: student and school academic performance, student and school non-academic performance, and organizational and management performance. Additionally, applicant provides a copy of its annual report to the State which includes all required elements. The lack of a clearly identified accountability plan is problematic because measuring student, school, and operational success are critical to success under this grant.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**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 (appendix).
- B) Applicant identifies specific sections within the attached charter agreement that specify how student performance will be measured pursuant to State assessments and other mutually agreed upon assessments between the authorized public chartering agency and the school (p. 47 and appendix).

**Weaknesses:**

- A) No weaknesses are 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:

- A) Applicant cites State law regarding autonomy. Additionally, applicant identifies specific sections of State law that apply to traditional public school districts but not to public charter schools such as collective bargaining, number of hours and days in a school year, and certain public bidding requirements (p. 48).
- B) Applicant identifies its pay for performance structure for teachers as one area of autonomy that leads to innovation (appendix).

#### Weaknesses:

- A) No weaknesses are identified.

Reader's Score: 3

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