

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/18/2012 03:40 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Urban Prep Academies (U282B120035)

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	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	6
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	2
Quality of the Personnel		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	21
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	16
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	10
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	2
Total	100	87

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Urban Prep Academies (U282B120035)

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 strength of this section is the applicant's structural response to the unique social, emotional and academic issues that face African American males. Based on research from the Center for Disease Control and the Schott Foundation, a significant need was identified and an educational program constructed to meet that need. The Bronzeville Campus is the 3rd site to employ the Arc Curriculum (p.5) which has an academic, service, activity and professional component. These arcs address the total student in an effort to retool personal perspective in respect to self, others and academics.

The additional time (72,000 minutes over four years) should prove to be another strength of the program allowing for intensive study.

Finally, the Freshman Academy, (p.9) for entering 9th graders will set the tone for the school year.

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes a rigorous course of study (p.6) yet there is little evidence of what constitutes that rigor. The additional time on task is a positive factor, but in and of itself, does not create rigor. There is a subject overview provided, but although it references ACT alignment, with the exception of Social Studies, does not appear to address traditional course work that is needed to attend college. In fact, the topics under the math section (p.14) mention only a connection to algebra and geometry topics. Real rigor must exemplify the highest bar among the standards.

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:

Significant data is presented on the educationally disadvantaged students in Chicago and those who are admitted to the three Urban Prep locations. The applicant recognizes these disadvantages and has a number of interventions that should assist the at risk population in achieving their goals. The program provides Saturday school programs and tutoring (p.19). The student inclusion in Prides, as one of the ARCs, should also serve to support students emotionally so that they are

prepared to function academically.

The applicant recognizes the needs of LEP students and has a protocol in place that includes dual language core instructional materials (p.20). Further, the needs of IEP students are addressed through an RTI protocol that is tracked through regular progress monitoring.

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:

Valid assessment can only occur in relation to well written and measurable goals. The applicant has provided such goals and identified evaluative tools to determine success. Using standardized tests to determine a baseline (p.42) and then ongoing monitoring will be a critical piece in the assessment protocol. Additionally, teachers will use formal and informal assessments to gain a complete profile of knowledge acquisition.

Another strength in this section is the transparency that is evident through the access Urban Prep gives to outside institutions to conduct research (p.30).

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:

The community at large is informed about the charter school through information sessions, school visits, city-wide fairs and the school website (p.46). The fact that this is the 3rd site for Urban Prep speaks to its support among parents and the community.

Weaknesses:

While the school's focus is on African American males, as a public school it is open to all races and ethnic persuasions. Further within the African American community, there exists cultural segments that are not native speakers. The reader did not see any evidence that marketing outreach was anything other than monolingual.

Reader's Score: 6

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:

Urban Prep recognizes the role that the community and parents play in supporting the school. They have established a Family Council for parents to provide input on the school's growth and development (p. 44). The school has also established a Community Transition Advisory Council to provide support to new charters that are being considered in the surrounding community.

Weaknesses:

While this site is a replication of the two other Urban Prep sites, the applicant has revealed that the schools in Chicago are segregated by neighborhood and reflect the demographic of the communities in which they operate (p.e18). Based on that information, it is incumbent upon the applicant to include parents in the planning and implementation of the Bronzeville Campus. The reader did not find any evidence that that had occurred.

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 applicant does a masterful job not only of identifying personnel in terms of job descriptions, but also included leadership staff summaries (p.35-38). Additionally, the attached resumes support an array of personnel with the requisite skill set to carry out the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

None noted

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

Due to the school's unique focus on African American males, Urban Prep has moved to a reach in rather than out reach for applicants for employment. The school has an established hiring protocol (p.29). Recruitment emanates from the school's website and maintains a data base that can be shared among the three schools.

Weaknesses:

Given the focus and mission of the school, the reader would have expected to find outreach to underrepresented members that would parallel the unique curricular focus. The applicant mentions a national recruitment effort (p. 29), but the evidence of that effort is absent from this criteria.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The applicant does a masterful job not only of identifying personnel in terms of job descriptions, but also including leadership staff summaries (p.35-38). Additionally, the attached resumes support an array of personnel with the requisite skill set to carry out the proposed project.

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:

Urban Prep is managed through a CMO. The organizational chart (p.24) provides significant oversight of the program both vertically and horizontally. Roles are clearly defined as are the areas that are not under the purview of each tier, particularly in the case of the Board of Directors. The roles of CAO, CFO and Project leaders among others are clearly defined and biographical summaries of key administrators (p.37-39) reveal a well qualified team. Objectives are measurable and demonstrate milestones.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Charter or Performance Contract

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

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

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

Strengths:

The abstract indicates that Urban Prep-Bronzeville received a Federal CSP grant in March 2010 (p.e14). The reader has made the assumption that while a performance contract may not have been evident at that time, in the two year interim, a performance contract was signed as the school continues to operate free from breach.

Weaknesses:

The performance contract was not included therefore the reader was unable to determine how student performance would be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of public schools.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of the flexibility afforded under its State's law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and in terms of whether charter schools are exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

Strengths:

The applicant has a clear understanding of what is permitted under the Illinois Charter School law (p.48). The applicant identifies school calendar, work requirements, daily operations and expenditures among other flexible parameters.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not detail how that flexibility has been utilized in the planning and implementation of Urban Prep's specific charter, nor in the daily operations thereof. Knowledge of the flexibility is one component, but how that flexibility has been applied to the school speaks to the uniqueness of the charter and should be included.

Reader's Score: 2

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Urban Prep Academies (U282B120035)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	7
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	2
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	7
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	2
Total	100	85

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Urban Prep Academies (U282B120035)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards, the grade levels or ages of students to be served, and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.

Strengths:

The application shows clear evidence of a program designed to meet the needs of at-risk students of high school age, with "arcs" creating the context of all the school's efforts: academic, service, activity, professional/collegiate. e21-24.

The data provided by the applicant shows that the program has been successfully used in the school applying for the grant and other schools operated by the applicant. e17, 18, 35-37.

The applicant explains why each arc is used, what results are expected and achieved, and how the other three arcs all contribute to success within the academic arc. e21-24.

Specific application of education jargon like "rigor" and "relevance" provides evidence of thoughtful and effective application of educational philosophies to help the applicant's students succeed. e23.

Examples of specific tailoring of pedagogical methods are provided (e.g., using relevant nonfiction to spark interest in a related fictional work that may not have been initially interesting to students). e25.

Detailed descriptions of subject area plans are provided, e25-29, an explanation of the school culture's affect on academic achievement is included, e29-30, and practical management plans for meeting the needs of students with disabilities, English language or other challenges are described. e31-35.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses in this section.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Disadvantaged Students

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

Strengths:

The application makes clear that the absolute focus of the applicant's current program is to assist educationally disadvantaged students. e17.

Practical management plans for meeting the needs of students with disabilities, English language or other challenges are described. e31-35.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses in this section.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

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

Strengths:

Adequate goals, objectives and performance measures are provided for all elements of school success: student achievement, operational capacity, and teacher capacity. e55-58. The measures include informal and formal assessments, audits, evaluations, attendance measures, and reporting and assessment by school and network leadership. e55-58, and roles of financial, operational and advancement executives on e45-47.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses in this section.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community Support

1. The extent of community support for the application.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

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

Strengths:

The application details community engagement through an advisory council focused on giving the applicant ideas for meeting the needs of student in the community. e45.

An advancement officer is employed specifically to develop relationships with civic, political and business members. e45.

Weaknesses:

No specific evidence of community support is provided.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Parental and Community Involvement

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school.

Strengths:

The application details community engagement through an advisory council focused on giving the applicant ideas for meeting the needs of student in the community. e45.

Weaknesses:

The applicant shows that parents have many means to participate in understanding their children's own work, but not how parents can contribute to the actual implementation of the school.

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:

Strengths and weaknesses are listed in the subsections.

Weaknesses:

Strengths and weaknesses are listed in the subsections.

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 applicant's key personnel, including board members, include people from underrepresented groups. e49-54.

Weaknesses:

GEPA statement talks about non-discrimination for students, but does not mention hiring practices. e10.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The applicant's key personnel, including board members, have extensive relevant experience for this school, including overseeing efforts at this and other schools. e49-54. School, business, and community leadership are highlighted on their resumes. e75-91.

Weaknesses:

The organization chart on e39 shows many proposed openings for expansion. The plan for recruiting talented individuals to fill those positions is missing. Filling the chief operating officer position promptly would help.

Reader's Score: 19

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 applicant outlines and then details the proposed management plan, including the roles of individuals within that plan. e39-50.

Because part of the proposed project funds will be used for initial implementation activities led by those individuals (see the project budget narrative on e94-95), the responsibilities outlined are tied to some of those individuals.

A line item budget is included. e96.

Weaknesses:

Not all of the proposed activities (e94-95) are tied to a particular individual or position.

The timeline for each objective could be more specific. e54. Without more detail, it is unclear if the applicant will be able to complete all tasks on time.

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:

The applicant has an agreement in place with the authorizer. e14.

Weaknesses:

The applicant refers to measures the authorizer will review, e59, but does not clarify what is likely to result in renewal and what would lead to revocation or non-renewal.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school.

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to include a description of the flexibility afforded under its State's law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency and in terms of whether charter schools are exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operation, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly describes the flexibility provided through state law, including flexibility in operations, staffing, and academic program design.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not explain how it specifically uses or plans to use that flexibility to achieve the results it aims for.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/13/2012 02:41 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/23/2012 09:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Urban Prep Academies (U282B120035)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	8
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	2
Quality of the Personnel		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	21
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	16
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	8
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	2
Total	100	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel - 4: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Urban Prep Academies (U282B120035)

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 Preps Arc Curriculum not only appears to rigorous but only differentiatly relevant to the life experiences and learning modalities of the vast majority of the enrolled students: black males. While merely having students in school longer is not necessity a positive, if true, the statement on page 6 that Urban Preps students receive an entire additional year of instructional is striking and supports the out-sized results that the school is achieving.

The three-week transition program called Freshman Academy merits special mention since Urban Prep enrolls many young men would are cognitively several grade levels behind their chronological grade. Freshman Academy aids Urban Prep with acculturating new students into the culture and preserves the cultural strength of high expectations and encourages peer policing of those expectations.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Disadvantaged Students

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

Strengths:

Urban Prep Academies has a proven track record of transforming learning outcomes for black males in Chicago, IL. Support for this track record can be found on page 3 of the application where Urban Preps performance relative to other Chicago schools and the Chicago Public Schools with regard to black males is presented in addition to similar support contained in other areas of the applicants response, e.g., pages 21-22.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

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

Strengths:

It is clear that the Urban Prep team has spent considerable time and thought on developing its monitoring regime with regard to academics. Beginning on page 40 and continuing for several pages, the presented assessment regime included goals, performance measures and objectives that evaluated all aspects of a school from instructional efficacy to financial stewardship and governance.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

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:

Community support is a part of the Urban Prep school design process. As discussed on page 45, through the creation of the Community Transition Advisory Council, Urban Prep has created a mechanism to ensure that the community has a real voice in shaping the customizable aspects of the Urban Prep school design. Additionally, over eight million dollars in philanthropic support is a powerful indication of Chicago's receptivity to the results that Urban Prep obtains.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

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:

Urban Prep has established a Family Council to provide opportunities for family members and community residents to have a voice in guiding Urban Preps development.

Weaknesses:

Relative to other parts of the application, this section was not as strong. The reviewer believes that Urban Prep has an almost in loco parentis model of schooling that hopes that the Urban Prep community becomes the students family.

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:

Please see the preceding discussion of this reviewers evaluation of this criterion.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

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:

On applicant page 29, this reviewer found the discussion of the coordinated national teacher recruitment compelling especially combined with the applicant team's strategies of attracting teachers able to relate to Urban Prep's student population.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

This is an exemplary team with alumni of KIPP, a partner at the Charter School Growth Fund and Urban Preps CEO among those involved in the preparation of this application. For this reviewer, the desire for continuous improvement is not only the hallmark of lifelong learning but also the fuel for high performing organizations. On applicant page 25, the Urban Prep has begun to rethink the size and effectiveness of its current board structure as part of its effort to deliver more rigorous and culturally relevant learning opportunities to its young charges.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

This reviewer found only a minor weakness in this section of the application: the long unfilled Chief Operating Officer position. This opening suggests that the applicant will need to balance maintenance of a strong culture with ensuring staffing is appropriate to support the continued progress that Urban Prep has demonstrated.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan.

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

Strengths:

The management plan included (i) an organizational chart, (ii) current and anticipated reporting relationships for C-level executives within the organization, (iii) job descriptions for each C-level position and (iv) biographical narratives of the current grant application team and other key executives. The quality of the grant team and key executives was evident not only in pedigree but also in actual experience in moving the needle positively for student outcomes.

On page 39, the timeline for implementation activities underscored the teams familiarity and preparedness to execute successfully its vision.

Weaknesses:

This reviewer noted no weaknesses for this criterion.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Charter or Performance Contract

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

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

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

Strengths:

From the included print clippings and in the application narrative, namely, the fact that the school for which the grant is sought is opened and operational is indicative that a performance contract exists between Urban Prep and its authorizer, Chicago Public Schools.

Weaknesses:

The absence of an example of a performance contract between Urban Prep and the Chicago Public Schools, especially since Urban Prep operates schools on multiple campuses throughout Chicago is a noteworthy oversight in an otherwise very strong submission.

Reader's Score: 8

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 upon the narrative beginning on applicant page 48 and concluding onto the top of page 50, not only has Urban Prep identified the statutory flexibility afforded Illinois public charter schools but also have given consideration to how best to operationalize the afforded flexibility under Illinois law.

Weaknesses:

There was an absence of specific examples of how possible flexibility would be enacted on a daily basis.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/23/2012 09:03 PM