

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/01/2012 04:59 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania Charter School (U282B120050)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	13
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	12
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	10
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	13
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	85

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania Charter School (U282B120050)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes its targeted student population (e17). It served 134 K-5 students in its inaugural year and plans to add more grades which will eventually serve grades K-8. The educational program utilizes a research-based model that is directly connected to a rigorous academic curriculum for mastery of state standards that will result in students who are conversant in three languages, understand the interdependence of the worlds peoples, and are adept at moving between cultures (e18). The applicant will ensure all Pennsylvania Academic Standards are addressed and that the unifying process of language acquisition serves as a critical factor for academic achievement and the development of social skills (e19). To further support the model, the school has low teacher to student ratios and provides an after-school program which requires each student to play an active role in their education (e19). The applicant utilized a variety of instruments to evaluate individual and collective learning needs (e20). The integration of world language into the daily schedule is well explained and research supported (e24). The curriculum and instructional practices are well described throughout the proposal.

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates it will teach multiple world languages to English speakers (e18, e22) and includes as a goal that students access three languages during the day (e58), however the world language hour (e24) is for a chosen language. It is unclear if two additional languages will be taught within a world language hour. Research identifying specific gains related to the use of the educational design would have been more comprehensive.

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:

The applicant employs the use W-APT as a language proficiency screener to assist with programmatic placement decisions such as identification and placement of linguistically diverse students (e21). Teachers adapt courses of study to meet student needs (e25) through differentiated instruction designed to support access to content standards (e37). The applicant utilizes Response to Intervention (e28, e32) to provide structured support for students who are not achieving grade level expectations. Through data and classroom assessment and observation, efforts to improve student outcomes

are designed and an individual learning plan for each student is developed (e37). Students identified at risk are referred to the student assistance committee which recommends additions to student plans beyond Response to Intervention (RTI) which incorporate a variety of appropriate support mechanisms (e38). The low class size is conducive to differentiating instruction for disadvantaged students (e39).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

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

Strengths:

The school's objectives are comprehensive and are inclusive of financial, operational, and community involvement (e57-e60). Mechanisms to monitor academic achievement are well described. The applicant's educational design includes interim assessments to evaluate and refocus the educational program (e20-e21). The applicant has identified additional interim assessments to be incorporated in the subsequent years, i.e., STAR Reading and Math, to drive a more finely tuned personalized effort to individual student academic achievement (e37). The school also seeks to improve faculty use of data driven instruction to improve student outcomes (e13). The Advisory Board will contribute to the execution of the school's academic and non-academic objectives (e43).

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicates it will use the indicators, measures and metrics of the Building Charter School Quality Consortium but do not provide those for review (e57). It is unclear if the consortium instruments will be utilized for all objectives, some, or one.

Reader's Score: 12

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 met initial enrollment targets and is fully enrolled for the upcoming year. Its waitlist for next year exceeds 400 applications (e42). Because the applicant's initial charter was denied, it garnered over 1300 signatures for the appeal with the charter school appeal board (e42). Information about the school and the admissions process is disseminated via flyers, bulletins, media, and mailings. Its use of multiple languages in marketing is consistent with its educational program and target student body (e44). The applicant conducts open houses which provide interactive sessions for interested families. Teachers fluent in multiple languages serve as translators (e45). Staff is available to assist parents completing the application (e46). The applicant provided three letters of support. Two of them, however, were from its Advisory Board members.

Weaknesses:

None found.

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 solicited input from parents to determine which language(s) were going to be offered (e21, e75-e75). The applicants Advisory Board consists of highly distinguished educators from local universities (e43). The applicant has identified various outlets for parental engagement and projected improvement. Its Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) serves as the primary conduit for formal interaction between school leadership, teachers, and parents. Varying committees of the PTO are identified. To ensure participation in governance, at least one parent serves on the Board of Trustees. Additionally, a parent serves on the Advisory Board. Parents can also participate on subcommittees of the board (e62). Other mechanisms to be involved include frequent interaction with staff, either at school or at home (e63), and participation of parent satisfaction surveys and teacher satisfaction surveys (e64).

Weaknesses:

None found.

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 of Trustees, Advisory Board, and School Leadership reflect diversity that is consistent with the educational program (e54).

All board members come from international backgrounds and have an intimate understanding of the value multiple language fluency brings to a college and workforce experience (e46). Over 41% of the faculty are minorities and multilingual (e54). Board members have close relationships with the refugee communities, giving the leadership unique insight into community needs of the targeted student population (e42-e43). The Board of Trustees governs all operations of the school, delegating day-to-day management functions to the administrative staff (e47). An organizational chart was provided for review (e54). The applicant identifies staff selection criteria (e55).

Weaknesses:

The practice of hiring young, motivated and successful new teachers appears discriminatory (e56). A GEPA statement with equitable access provisions was not found.

It is unclear that the identified project director (e11) has grant administration experience.

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 Board of Trustees, Advisory Board, and School Leadership reflect diversity that is consistent with the educational program (e54).

Weaknesses:

The practice of hiring young, motivated and successful new teachers appears discriminatory (e56). A GEPA statement with equitable access provisions was not found.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

All board members come from international backgrounds and have an intimate understanding of the value multiple language fluency brings to a college and workforce experience (e46). Over 41% of the faculty are minorities and multilingual (e54). Board members have close relationships with the refugee communities, giving the leadership unique insight into community needs of the targeted student population (e42-e43). The Board of Trustees governs all operations of the school, delegating day-to-day management functions to the administrative staff (e47). An organizational chart was provided for review (e54). The applicant identifies staff selection criteria (e55).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear that the identified project director (e11) has grant administration experience.

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 leadership and staff of the school is highly experienced in working in the charter school environment. The schools governing and advisory board includes education experts and community members with the strengths needed to govern and support a large public non-profit organization (e13, e16). The advisory board will support resource development to

assist the applicant in carrying out the schools academic and non-academic objectives (e43). The responsibilities of the school leadership are summarized (e51-e53).

Weaknesses:

A well-defined management plan with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks was not found.

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:

The applicant is authorized by the Baldwin-Whitehall School District. The applicant describes mechanisms of communication between itself and its authorizer. There is an expectation that representatives from the authorizer will visit the school (e60). The objectives include academic achievement specific to and participation with the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (e57-e58).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear if the school objectives provided (e57-e59) are those objectives which were mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the authorizer. A copy of the charter or more specific language would have been helpful.

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:

The applicant describes its exception to state and local rules in a number of areas including flexibility in charter school operations and delivery. It exercises this flexibility by extending the school day and providing additional learning opportunities for its students. The applicant also has full autonomy over budgeting, facility, and personnel matters. The applicant compares flexibility provided by its state which is not provided in nearby states (e61).

Weaknesses:

None found.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania Charter School (U282B120050)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	14
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	12
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	18
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	84

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania Charter School (U282B120050)

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:

Young Scholars is a multilingual K -5 school that seeks grant funding for their curriculum and staff development. The applicant demonstrated methods to ensure that assessment is used as a program quality-monitoring tool. The assessments notated have been the Terra Nova, 4Sight Benchmark Assessment, Full Length PSSA, Diebels, W-Apt., ACCESS, YSWP and Language Choice Survey. The school demonstrates a clear curriculum delivery method and supports their focus of Language acquisition and Math/Science with applicable research. The applicant utilizes data to present an argument for their curriculum delivery pg. 13 and exhibits very detailed curriculum summaries outlining all of the courses of study at the school and the instructional methods employed.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Assisting Disadvantaged Students

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

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates in the said application that the program by design is constructed to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of RTI, procedures and strategies in providing appropriate support methods for disadvantaged students. Pgs. 23 - 28

Weaknesses:

None seen

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly identifies goals that are applicable to a variety of areas within the school including parent involvement, governance and academic achievement. The applicant details clear measures to demonstrate success pg 44.

Weaknesses:

Applicant fails to address growth or soft measurements.

Reader's Score: 12

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 sufficiently identifies how community partners will be used to increase and gauge parental involvement (p. 50). The applicant clearly identifies how the vision of strong community and parent support is embedded in their school.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not demonstrated partnerships with businesses as a means of leveraging resources in this project.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Parental and Community Involvement

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly identifies strategies intentionally implemented to enhance parental involvement and engagement. Applicant exhibits passion when discussing how large of a role families have played in the development of their charter. Applicant speaks clearly of measurement tools, and partnerships to enhance this engagement.

Weaknesses:

Applicant lacks details on how school data will be communicated to the parents, community and broader audiences.

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 has submitted titles of their school visionaries, whom are highly qualified. The applicant has discussed the support mechanisms in place for the school employees as well as a vision of collaboration with the community. The applicant clearly identifies supportive governance measures that are key pieces for a successful organization including the establishment of the advisory board. P 29

Weaknesses:

The application loosely contains information on talent acquisition. The applicant does not discuss data on faculty satisfaction, retention etc. It is unclear if hiring practices are legal, with regard to teacher age pg. 42. Applicant discusses age ?legal?

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

Strengths:

The applicant has submitted titles of their school visionaries, whom are highly qualified. The applicant has discussed the support mechanisms in place for the school employees as well as a vision of collaboration with the community. The applicant clearly identifies supportive governance measures that are key pieces for a successful organization including the establishment of the advisory board. P 29

Weaknesses:

The application loosely contains information on talent acquisition. The applicant does not discuss data on faculty satisfaction, retention etc. It is unclear if hiring practices are legal, with regard to teacher age pg. 42. Applicant discusses age ?legal?

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The applicant has submitted titles of their school visionaries, whom are highly qualified. The applicant has discussed the support mechanisms in place for the school employees as well as a vision of collaboration with the community. The applicant clearly identifies supportive governance measures that are key pieces for a successful

Sub Question

organization including the establishment of the advisory board. P 29

Weaknesses:

The application loosely contains information on talent acquisition. The applicant does not discuss data on faculty satisfaction, retention etc. It is unclear if hiring practices are legal, with regard to teacher age pg. 42. Applicant discusses age ?legal?

Reader's Score: 16

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 explained what items were outstanding and in process relative to the project. The applicant identified what parties were working on various pieces of the school. P 34

Weaknesses:

The application lacked a timeline, with outputs, tasks and assigned employees.

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:

Applicant has clearly identified the language in the establishment of district approved charter schools and the guidelines of operation therein.

Weaknesses:

Applicant lacks clear language as to how the autonomy benefits the students that are served.

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:

The charter contract was provided in the appendix.

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 3

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/27/2012 03:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania Charter School (U282B120050)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	11
Assisting Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
Assessing Achievement		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	7
Community Support		
1. Community Support	8	8
Parental and Community Involvement		
1. Parental Involvement	3	3
Quality of the Personnel		
1. Quality of the Personnel	22	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	16	12
Charter or Performance Contract		
1. Performance Contract	15	10
Degree of Flexibility		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Total	100	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania Charter School (U282B120050)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes several programs that will help struggling students meet the state academic standards RTI, Saturday Academy and after school tutoring. These opportunities will not only support the student toward attainment of the state standards, but will provide the large English Language Learners (ELL) population to have more exposure to English. Pg 5

Project Based Learning (PBL) will be utilized as much as possible throughout the charter school. Given the fact that the charter school has a focus on language acquisition for all students and specifically for the large ELL population, PBL is a good tool for helping all students acquire language through small and large group academic activities. Pg. 21

The applicant began serving students in K 5 during the 2011-2012 school year and plans to expand the coverage to K 8. Pg. 3

Weaknesses:

Much more specificity should have been provided regarding the curriculum that will be used especially in the lower grade levels. There is no mention of specific materials that will be used to teach the basic skills in reading. Given that this is the building block of all knowledge, it should have been given much more attention in the narrative.

Reader's Score: 11

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 charter school has implemented a curriculum support tool that will help identify student deficits in reading and math. Each student will have the benefit of an individualized program to help close the gap on these deficiencies. This will be especially beneficial to students who are educationally disadvantaged. Pg. 23

There is a well thought out time line within the charter schools RTI model that will allow students to demonstrate progress before they are referred for further testing. Pg. 24

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:

Some of the stated objectives have clear cut targets and measurements included that may be easily monitored and assessed. i.e. pg. 46 #6

Weaknesses:

While the applicant has provided a well thought out set of school objectives with several measurable criteria in each objective, the applicant needs to include specific methods in which each of these objectives and criteria will be evaluated. A full definition of evaluation methods and data collection materials should be included.

Reader's Score: 7

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:

Through printed media, website information and school workshops, parents have been flooded with information about the new charter school. These printed materials are provided in many languages and have been targeted to neighborhoods with diverse populations. Pg. 30

Letters of support are provided by one state representative and two university professors that serve on the Advisory Board. Appendix

The narrative states all students will have an equal opportunity to attend the charter school regardless of ethnicity or disability.

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 founding Board of Directors included some parents. These parents, along with other Board members, were the planning team that had the vision for the charter school and saw that vision to fruition when the charter school opened in 2011. Pg. 476

According to the narrative, the Governing Board will always have at least one parent as a voting member of the board.

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:

Current makeup of the charter school staff indicates a high percentage of minorities. This employment practice will continue throughout the term of the charter. Pg. 40 41

Current Governing Board members have significant experience in project management, and finance and funding management. The Governing Board members transitioned from the founding board after much governance training to assure they had the skills and knowledge necessary to run a charter school. Pg. 32 33

The school leader has not only many years of educational experience, but has three years experience on the leadership team of another charter school. He has also taught in several other countries so he has the experience of working with language acquisition and different cultures. These experiences will help him have a good understanding of how to relate to parents of the charter schools students. Pg. 37 38

Other members of the school leadership team bring much needed expertise in business management, special education

and technology. Each of these positions and areas of expertise are vital to the successful operation of the organization.
Pg. 38 - 39

Weaknesses:

There is not an individual involved in the project that has experience in the non-profit sector. Having this time of individual would perhaps, open doors to non-traditional funding opportunities for the charter school.

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability**

Strengths:

Current makeup of the charter school staff indicates a high percentage of minorities. This employment practice will continue throughout the term of the charter. Pg. 40 41

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Current Governing Board members have significant experience in project management, and finance and funding management. The Governing Board members transitioned from the founding board after much governance training to assure they had the skills and knowledge necessary to run a charter school. Pg. 32 33

The school leader has not only many years of educational experience, but has three years experience on the leadership team of another charter school. He has also taught in several other countries so he has the experience of working with language acquisition and different cultures. These experiences will help him have a good understanding of how to relate to parents of the charter schools students. Pg. 37 38

Other members of the school leadership team bring much needed expertise in business management, special education and technology. Each of these positions and areas of expertise are vital to the successful operation of the organization. Pg. 38 - 39

Weaknesses:

There is not an individual involved in the project that has experience in the non-profit sector. Having this time of individual would perhaps, open doors to non-traditional funding opportunities for the charter school.

Reader's Score: 17

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 document is provided that outlines several focus areas for the proposed project. Each strategy within the focus area is broken down to a list of tasks, listing the responsible party and the timeframe for implementation. Some tasks are multilevel and are broken down into small pieces with target completion dates for each individual piece. Appendix

Weaknesses:

The budget indicates a significant amount of money will be spent on travel. That activity is not confirmed in the implementation tracker provided in the application. More information should be provided about what type of activities the charter school leaders will attend.

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:

The applicant has included a copy of the charter agreement. Appendix

The narrative indicates that the charter was originally denied by the district but that decision was overturned by the state appeals board. Presently, the charter school and the district have a good working relationship despite the rocky start. Pg. 28 and 46

Weaknesses:

There is not enough information given relative to the measurement of student achievement as required by the charter authorizer. While the applicant discusses many types of testing program that will be used, there is not an indication that these are requirements of the charter agreement.

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 charter school has complete autonomy over personnel, budget and facility decisions as well as the daily operations of the charter school. The narrative also indicates that charter schools in the state have been granted exception to the laws in several areas. Pg. 47

In addition, charter schools are allowed flexibility in the length of the school day. This is especially beneficial to the program the charter school wants to implement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

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