

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/16/2013 01:47 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cornville Regional Charter School (U282B130004)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	7
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	1
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	15
4. Community Support	8	6
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	22
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	16
2. Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	4
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	2
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Cornville Regional Charter School (U282B130004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. I. 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 provides practical information about the educational approach that the charter school will implement. The charter school will emphasize Place-Based/Project-Based Education (page e22), Personal Learning Plans (page e24), Place-Based Education (page e25), Project-Based Learning (page e26), Service Learning (page e27), and several other approaches (pages e28 to e39) describe a variety of instructional practices and information that describes several programs that are designed to meet achievement standards.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides limited information about the curriculum that the charter school will implement. The description of the curriculum is disjointed and the applicant describes that curriculum as "left behind" (page e30). However, students attending the charter school will be expected to master the same academic standards as all other students attending public schools. The applicant does not clearly explain how the curriculum will be delivered using multi-age grouping (page e24 and pages e34 to e37) and result in all students meeting the challenging State student academic achievement standards.

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides acceptable information about how the charter school will meet individual student needs. The applicant plans to implement principles of Response to Intervention and expert consultation services to assist teachers (page e39).

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides limited information about meeting State academic content standards and State student achievement standards. The applicant's discussion about the philosophy of the proposed program, assessment practices, and professional development are not fully developed (pages e36 to e 38).

Reader's Score: 1

3. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.**Strengths:**

The applicant provides adequate information about School Objectives and Student Objectives (pages e41 to e45). The applicant provides a reasonable explanation of how each of the six school objectives will be assessed (page e42) as well as the five student objectives (pages e44 and e45). The applicant provides an adequate discussion about assessing student achievement through the use of continuous assessment concepts. Use of the North West Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessment tool three times a year, specific English/language arts assessments, and the use of informal and formal communication between the teachers and parents indicate a very reasonable approach to assess achievement of the charter school's objective (pages e43 to e45).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

- (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 4 points); and**
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 4 points).**

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community

involvement in the charter school, 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.

General:

Overall comments are not provided.

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

1. The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

(i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 4 points)

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

Strengths:

(i) The applicant provides an adequate explanation of the events that led to the closing of the traditional elementary school in the community (in 2010) and support for a charter school (page e45) emerged from the grass roots. Since the state did not have a charter school law until 2012 a group of concerned community members went to the State legislature and provided support that facilitated the write and passage of the State charter school law (page e46). Through a show of support, the applicant indicates that the Cornville School Building was donated to the Cornville Regional Charter School Committee (page e46). The extent of parent and community support for the application is exceptional.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 4 points).

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant provides adequate information that describes the initial stages of the charter school's development. Public forums were held to determine community support, formulate the mission, purpose and goals of the proposed school (page e47).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide sufficient information that explains the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school. The applicant's response would have been stronger if the applicant had used the parent and community development team (page e47) to become a voice in the actual work that resulted in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school. For instance, the team could have worked as a committee to make recommendations or served in an advisory capacity to the key administrators and the board of directors.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project 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--

- (i) 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 (up to 2 points); and**
- (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).**

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

General:

Overall comments are not provided.

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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--

- (i) 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 (up to 2 points); and**

Sub Question

Strengths:

(i) The applicant provides sufficient information about its plan to recruit and encourage applications to fill new openings by placing advertisements in publications that focus on underrepresented groups, visits to job fairs and visits to institutions of higher learning with high percentages of underrepresented groups (page e48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

2. 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--

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides adequate information about the relevant training and experience of the Chief Administrator. The Administrator's educational preparation and related work experiences appear to be appropriate . Specifically, the Chief administrator has experience as an administrator with a background in curriculum development, managerial skills, and school finance. The Chief Administrator holds advanced degrees (Ed.D.) is certified as a principal and superintendent of schools by the State (page e50 and e51). The Project/Executive Director has experience in business organization and management, personnel, finance, budget development, and other areas (page e52).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant provides adequate information about the management plan for the proposed project. Specifically, the Project Director will implement and manage activities that interface with specific goals and objectives. Each activity is

established within a timeframe that shows the start and ending dates. Participants other than the Project Director are accounted for (page e53 to e64). The administration of funds will be under the direction of the Governing Board. A computerized timeline and check-off rubric software will be used to benchmark each objective weekly (page e52). The applicant has developed a management plan that is comprehensive in that it will provide for monitoring the project objectives to keep them on time and within budget. The responsibilities are defined adequately. The plan to adhere to timelines and the performance of weekly checks indicate that the management plan is likely to be effective.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter schools and its authorized public chartering agency. The existence of a written 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 other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. Note: The applicant is encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter or performance contract. If the applicant has had an application for a charter denied, the applicant should describe the circumstances surrounding such denial and how it plans to revise the charter applicant before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides sufficient documentation to demonstrate that a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists. The applicant provided a copy of the contract that was executed July 2012 by the Maine Charter School Commission. The document contains the appropriate signatures (pages e83 to e111). The contract provides ample evidence that describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school as they are required of other schools. Specifically, the contract states that the evaluation of the charter schools will be based on state and federal law and achievement on the Performance Indicators (page e90).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 16

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the flexibility afforded under its State's charter school law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency, and 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 operations, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

Strengths:

The applicant provides adequate information that documents the high degree of flexibility afforded by the State charter school commission, which is the chartering entity. The contract between the commission and the charter school gives complete autonomy to charter schools. The charter school is exempt from all other laws except those that deal with safety, health, Federal Laws, Charter School Law, etc. (pages e65 and e66). The applicant cites the state code which shows that the charter school has complete autonomy over matters such as the charter school's budget, expenditures, daily operations, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1--Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates [Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners]

This priority is for projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for English Learners.

Note: This competitive preference priority encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants will receive up to four points for how well they address priority areas (a) through (c). Applicants may choose to respond to one, two, or three of the priority areas but, in order to receive the maximum available points, it is not necessary for applicants to respond to more than one priority area.

Strengths:

(a) The applicant provides an adequate discussion about the approach it will use to address the issue of improving high school graduation rates. The applicant's argument that addressing poor academic performance and negative academic/social behaviors will identify potential dropout students in elementary school is convincing (e18). The applicant's list of nine priority areas (page e18 and e19) that will be implemented to address the high dropout rate and improve the graduation rate and college enrollment rates (page e18 and e19) is comprehensive. The applicant's discussion of

preventive practices (page e19 and e20) that it will implement indicates a thoughtful approach to increasing graduation and college enrollment rates.

(b) The applicant provides adequate information that the proposed project is a charter school is a high poverty, rural kindergarten to grade 8 charter school (page e18). The applicant's plan includes the strategy of monitoring students closely in their early years for indicators that could predict risks of students likely to drop out of school. The applicant reasons that the elements of the charter school program (increased engagement, targeted early intervention, Placed Based/Project Education, etc.) will benefit all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (pages e19 and e20).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity.

Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.

Note: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project would help bring together students from different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body, or to avoid racial isolation.

Note: For information on permissible ways to address this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice entitled, *Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools* at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>.

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequate discussion about the proposed project's plan to promote diversity. The implementation of targeted outreach (page e21) is promising because it is likely to generate a positive impact by personalizing the invitation to attend the charter school. Targeted outreach permits the charter school to reach out to specific geographic areas where more diverse minority populations reside and aggressively recruit for the purpose of promoting diversity (pages e20 and e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 3

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3--Support for Military Families.

This priority is for projects that are designed to address the needs of military-connected students (as defined in this notice).

Note: For purposes of this program, projects meeting this priority must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policy must comply with its State charter school law and CSP program requirements (for information on admissions and the lottery under the CSP, see [Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html) at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>).

Strengths:

The applicant does not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cornville Regional Charter School (U282B130004)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	2
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	15
4. Community Support	8	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	16
2. Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	3
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	1
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	93

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Cornville Regional Charter School (U282B130004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. I. 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 has been operational for approximately one year since the closing of the only elementary school for students in its boundaries with limited resources. The curriculum would highlight various areas of the educational spectrum for students that include being rigorous, comprehensive, hands-on, and personalized that would support each student receiving a high quality education in the project. The place-based curriculum to be developed and purchased would align with Common Core Standards in language arts and mathematics. Partnerships would be formed to support project-based learning for independent project that connect the classroom to real-life with entities such as the University of Maine and Kennebec Valley Community College. The incorporation of the National Education Technology Standards is a key component of the project for it will allow students to have access to various learning opportunities outside of the classroom and state to connect with other students working on similar projects (pp. 10-13). All activities would be grade-level appropriate such as K-2 curriculum focusing on phonic awareness, phonics, spelling, etc. in Word Work or grades 3-8 that would focus on literature and writing literacy. Where common core standards have not been adopted as in social studies the applicant proposes to ensure the curriculum reflects similar standards such as language arts common core standards for literacy in History/Social Studies and the National Social Studies Standards (pp. 14-15).

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicated that a language barrier may prevent English language learners from being successful and it did not address ways to eliminate this barrier. For example, home language surveys could be used to determine the languages spoken in the home or English proficiency testing for students. The applicant provided conflicting statements regarding curriculum, one says it is in place while another says the grant would be used to purchase/develop curriculum. There is a variety of approaches discussed but it is unclear how they will be organized to connect and provide intended benefits to the students to be served (pp. 23-24).

Reader's Score: 12

2. 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 indicated that over 60% of its students qualified for free or reduced lunch which meets the definition of educationally disadvantaged while serving an estimated 60 students in year one and 90 for year two while proposing to develop personal learning plans for every student incorporation assessments for progress monitoring and interventions. Parents will be included in the development of the plans and a consultant would be contracted to assist staff in developing appropriate response to intervention model interventions to ensure all students meet standards. Personal learning plans would also include goals and self-monitoring activities (pp. 9, 22, p. 6 contract).

Weaknesses:

The applicant underdeveloped the discussion in addressing how it would ensure educationally disadvantaged students would meet state standards beyond its statement to not refer English language learners for special education.

Reader's Score: 2

3. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.**Strengths:**

The applicant indicated that the objectives for the overall charter are different from the proposed project but are aligned since the objectives for the school would put in place needed resources, programs, and assessments that would support the success of all students in the project such as an ongoing professional development plan for staff that would be reviewed annually. The project utilizes other programs such as website development and enhancement that would support outreach not only to the community but for students as they complete project-based assignments. The project proposes the use of various assessment tools for both formative and summative evaluations that would diagnose, monitor progress, and evaluate reading skills such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) as well as assessments in the math curriculum, local benchmark tools, and teacher created exams (pp. 24-27). Students would also be administered the state assessment by appropriate grade level to measure proficiency in meeting standards.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

- (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 4 points); and**
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 4 points).**

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

General:

Comments made.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

1. The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

(i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 4 points)

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

Strengths:

The community supported the creation of state charter school legislation through the holding of various informal and formal meetings. Later, stakeholders discussed the conversion of the elementary school closed by the district to a regional charter school. The Board of Selectman transferred the facility that would house the school to the charter and provided additional support through agreeing to cover utilities for two years. The charter used a lottery system to fill its 45 slots the first year and will continue with this system of enrolling students as a grade level is added each year. Information would be distributed about the charter and services through multi-media that includes the distribution of flyers and materials at local businesses, agencies, and churches; website; Facebook account, local newspaper to name a few.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 4 points).

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

Strengths:

The creation of the charter was due to the high volume of input from the community to have another educational alternative for their children after the school district's decision to close the Cornville Elementary School in their neighborhood. There is strong evidence of parent and community support that include letters of support as well as involvement in the development of the mission, vision, and application for charter. The applicant has parent and

Sub Question

community representation on the governing board including a mentoring component of the project and a parent council (pp. 29-30, attachments).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project 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--

- (i) 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 (up to 2 points); and
- (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

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

General:

Comments made.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

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--

- (i) 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 (up to 2 points); and

Strengths:

The applicant will adhere to non-discriminatory laws and plans to advertise job vacancies in publications and venues that focus on personnel who have been underrepresented based upon race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability that include job fairs, ads with postsecondary institutions, and in larger cities with more diverse populations (p. 31).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Sub Question

2. 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--

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

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

Strengths:

The executive/project director has an extensive background in managing community and government organizations and ties to the community. He holds a bachelors degree in biology and minor in philosophy. The principal for the school/project holds a doctorate degree in Education as well as an administrator and superintendent certification. He also has experience with managing a non-profit and as a consultant. Both staff members also are non-voting members of the Advisory Board that governs the charter.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a clear distinction between charter school staff and project staff. The applicant has several consultants and two staff members that will receive laptops included in the budget, that are paid from the grant with little to no discussion as to their qualifications or roles to support objectives of the project. For example there is a graphic artist to develop brochures and a consultant to evaluation school site. Salaries are not included in the grant but a \$30,000 per year stipend does appear in the budget for a project director to oversee the project (budget).

Reader's Score: 13

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:

Even though the applicant has been in operation for one year it will use the first year of the grant as its planning year and has outlined clear project tasks, timelines, responsible contact to complete this phase with three goals accompanied by objectives. Project funds will not be used to meet objective 1 which is the evaluation of the facilities to meet ADA and safety codes. The plan has objectives beyond the two years of grant funding that is allowed since the school has been operational for one year as a charter, the grant will support the next two years of operation therefore adjustments to the plan may be needed or another funding source will be used (p. 36, budget).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter schools and its uauthorized public chartering agency. The existence of a written 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 other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. Note: The applicant is encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter or performance contract. If the applicant has had an application for a charter denied, the applicant should describe the circumstances surrounding such denial and how it plans to revise the charter applicant before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.**

Strengths:

The applicant included a copy of its approved charter contract with the Maine Charter School Commission approved July 31, 2012. There are clear and distinct student performance indicators, measures, metrics, and contract evaluation criteria discussed in Exhibit B. The management plan has specific objectives that target the development of assessments, purchase of tracking software, professional development for staff on implementation and analysis that focus on student achievement (pp.27-39).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 16

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the flexibility afforded under its State's charter school law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency, and 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 operations, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

Strengths:

The charting entity provides for full autonomy as it relates to the management, legal, and fiscal components of the charter. The applicant provided supporting documentation that it is a non-profit entity and that its state has exempted it from laws and statues that traditional public schools must comply but must comply with federal regulations relating to areas such as criminal background checks on all staff, Special Education rules, cannot charge students tuition to attend, and discrimination laws (pp. 48-49).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 1

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1--Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates [Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners]

This priority is for projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for English Learners.

Note: This competitive preference priority encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants will receive up to four points for how well they address priority areas (a) through (c). Applicants may choose to respond to one, two, or three of the priority areas but, in order to receive the maximum available points, it is not necessary for applicants to respond to more than one priority area.

Strengths:

The applicant cited research in support of focusing on the early grade levels, kindergarten to grade 8 to propose an educational project that would provide positive influences that would ultimately increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment for students with disabilities and English language learners. The applicant is also located in a rural area of the state. The place-based and project-based educational approaches would incorporate the mentoring, technology, and the local community as a learning platform for all students. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will partner with the applicant to provide hands on projects for students such as testing water quality for science class or combination of classes (p. 9).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's largest minority population is Native American students however, there was not any discussion regarding languages other than English being spoken by the students to be served in support of services or what type of services that would be available to address language barriers (pp. 1-3).

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity.

Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid

racial isolation.

Note: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project would help bring together students from different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body, or to avoid racial isolation.

Note: For information on permissible ways to address this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice entitled, **Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools** at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>.

Strengths:

The creation of sister schools in Africa, Australia, Japan, Normandy, France, and Mexico will be implemented to increase student interaction with diverse groups of students such as collaboration on similar projects (pp. 3-4).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not discuss the other racial groups to be served in the school beyond the 4% Native American population; therefore it is unclear if the measures being taken to support diversity are adequate. Diversity may also be promoted in the form of socioeconomic status which was not discussed. (pp. 3-4).

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 3

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3--Support for Military Families.

This priority is for projects that are designed to address the needs of military-connected students (as defined in this notice).

Note: For purposes of this program, projects meeting this priority must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policy must comply with its State charter school law and CSP program requirements (for information on admissions and the lottery under the CSP, see **Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance** at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>).

Strengths:

Applicant did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/28/2013 04:08 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2013 10:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cornville Regional Charter School (U282B130004)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	2
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	14
4. Community Support	8	7
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	17
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	16
2. Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	3
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	1
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Cornville Regional Charter School (U282B130004)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. I. 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 has provided a comprehensive narrative of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices at the school. At the core of the plan is personalized learning, which is guided by Personal Learning Plans. In addition, the applicant provides information on other key approaches that will be used by the school including place-based education, project-based learning, mentoring, thematic instruction, direct instruction, and National Education Technology Standards, as well as stressing agriculture. The applicant has indicated that the Common Core Standards in language arts and math, and National Standards in other content areas are the foundation of the program. Throughout the narrative, the applicant provides examples of how these instructional approaches will look at the school, including potential projects, examples of student groupings, partnerships with community organizations, and sample schedules. This helps provide a compelling narrative for the strength of the school's program. The applicant has also provided a summary of the current curriculum materials used at the school, supplemented by teacher generated curriculum, as well as hopes for additional curricula should this grant be awarded to the school.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has provided a number of approaches that, while mostly complimentary, could become difficult to keep track of. The applicant mentions that direct instruction will have an important place in the "toolbox" but does little to explain what this approach means for the school. At times the narrative is confusing or contradictory in the sense that the school narrates a clear focused approach and a strong curriculum framework, but then indicates that with grant funds the school will develop a curriculum framework that better fits the vision and mission of the school. In some respects the applicant has given the impression that it cannot provide a strong educational program without the grant funds, however, it has already been operational for one year. The school will implement PLPs with all students, however, no clear discussion is provided as to how these will be implemented.

Reader's Score: 12

2. 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 has provided a compelling narrative outlining the school's approach to identifying students who are behind, including special education students, and implementing interventions to support those students in improving achievement. The school also indicates a clear commitment to equitable funding of programs that serve students with special needs. Finally, the applicant indicates that ELs will not be served in special education classes, a practice which would indicate little understanding of ELs unique learning needs.

Weaknesses:

The school indicates a commitment to serving English Learners, however, in doing so, refers to the need to help students "overcome language barriers" and to "rectify the language deficiency." This is a deficit-based approach that fails to recognize the assets that these students bring in terms of their first language. Additionally, and as in other parts of this application, the applicant provides no evidence that that the school does or will serve ELs given the nature of the population surrounding the school.

Reader's Score: 2

3. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.**Strengths:**

The school has developed a number of broad-based objectives related to overall school operations along with simple and appropriate metrics to track performance in these areas. In terms of assessing student achievement objectives, the school has outlined a comprehensive assessment plan that utilizes a number of tools including state assessments, NWEA-MAP tests, other standardized assessments as well as a number of formative and authentic assessment tools. These are administered both at the classroom level by teachers and at the school level. These assessments will be effective both in tracking achievement of the school's objectives, and assessing individual student growth and adjusting instruction to better meet students' needs.

Weaknesses:

Given the extensive number and variety of assessments the school has indicated in this narrative, it will be essential that these be coordinated so that students are not overwhelmed with assessments. The applicant provides no concrete discussion of that coordination.

Reader's Score: 14

The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

- (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 4 points); and**
- (ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 4 points).**

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

General:

The applicant provides compelling evidence of the community's and parent's past, present and likely future support for and engagement in the school.

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

1. The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

(i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 4 points)

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a compelling narrative outlining the origins of the school and the demonstrated community support for the school, including this community's role in helping Maine to develop and pass charter school legislation. The applicant indicates that in the school's first year, it had 90 student applications for 45 openings, and moving forward, the school will continue to reach out to families in the region in a variety of ways that help ensure equal opportunity. The school has a clear and equitable lottery policy in place that it implemented in year 1.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent of community support for the application.

The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers--

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 4 points).

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, 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.

Strengths:

The school held public forums to get input on the mission and vision of the school. In addition, the applicant indicates that parents and community members took a direct role in developing the school's framework and charter application, and will continue to give input on the implementation of the school. Parents and community will be informed about the program through a variety of means that is likely to help ensure all are updated. The applicant indicates that parents will continue to be involved by having a role in governance, and other areas, and that parent/community involvement is part of the fabric of the school.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to indicate the strategies for engaging parents in the education of their children. In addition, it is unclear if a parent is currently on the board, or how a parent would later come to serve on the board.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project 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--

- (i) 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 (up to 2 points); and
- (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

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

General:

Overall, the applicant has provided compelling evidence that the school has quality personnel in place who will carry out the project.

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

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--

- (i) 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 (up to 2 points); and

Strengths:

The applicant has indicated a clear commitment to encouraging applications for employment from members of underrepresented groups, and has included some specifics on how it plans to do so, including posting in publications focused on underrepresented communities, and in larger urban centers.

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 2

2. Quality of project personnel.

Sub Question

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--

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a complete narrative, supported by resumes of key individuals, that outlines the skills and experience of key project personnel. The school leaders (principal and executive director) along with the board members have a diverse set of skills that include significant experience in education, including innovative school design, non-profit management, curriculum development and fiscal management. In addition, the school has identified consultants who will provide additional support in fiscal management, curriculum design and leadership.

Weaknesses:

While project personnel have extensive skills and experience in education, none have experience working in charter schools or launching a high-quality charter school. This is not surprising given that Maine has only recently passed charter school legislation, however, the school has apparently not gone outside its state's borders to recruit someone with that background.

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:

The applicant has provided a comprehensive management plan for carrying out the proposed project, including specific goals, objectives, tasks, timelines and individuals responsible. Each goal is fully described, such as the development of community partnerships/mentorships, including parent participation, followed by specific tasks related to the goal, such as develop a community outreach plan. The management plan is reasonable and aligned to the budget presented in the application.

Weaknesses:

While the plan is comprehensive, the presentation of the plan in paragraph form is cumbersome to follow and could be cumbersome to track. The plan is somewhat confusing in that it includes a planning year, though the school has already been open for one year.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. **Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter schools and its authorized public chartering agency. The existence of a written 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 other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. Note: The applicant is encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter or performance contract. If the applicant has had an application for a charter denied, the applicant should describe the circumstances surrounding such denial and how it plans to revise the charter applicant before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear narrative describing the contract and how performance will be measured. This is supported by the contract itself which is included in the application along with the original approved charter. The contract appears to include a number of quality elements for a performance contract.

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 16

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the flexibility afforded under its State's charter school law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency, and 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 operations, and personnel in accordance with its State's charter school law.

Strengths:

The applicant provides clear and specific information regarding the autonomy and flexibility afforded to charter school in the state, including citing state statute. Charter schools in Maine have a high degree of flexibility from many laws and significant autonomy to operate. The applicant indicates that statute states that charters are "exempt from all statutes and rules that apply to other schools," except typical relevant state and federal public school laws such as open meeting laws, civil rights laws, assessment and accountability laws, funding laws, etc.

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 1

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1--Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates [Rural**

Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners]

This priority is for projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

- (a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice).
- (b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.
- (c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for English Learners.

Note: This competitive preference priority encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants will receive up to four points for how well they address priority areas (a) through (c). Applicants may choose to respond to one, two, or three of the priority areas but, in order to receive the maximum available points, it is not necessary for applicants to respond to more than one priority area.

Strengths:

The school is located in a small town in a rural area of Maine and indicates that the school will have a high percentage of special education students (20%). The applicant indicates a commitment to increasing the high school graduation rates of students who attend the school from the local rate of 77.8%. The applicant provides a summary of a set of strategies that are likely to increase achievement and connectedness of students, and which research shows can increase high school graduation rates and college attendance rates.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not fully describe how the students served meet the criteria. While it is clear that the school is located in a rural town, the applicant indicates that the school will also outreach to students in close by urban areas. It is not totally clear where the majority of students will come from. Given that the school is already open, the applicant could have provided specific data on this. Additionally, beyond indicating that 20% of the students have IEPs, the applicant did little more to describe these students, and the applicant provided no evidence that the school serves ELs.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity.

Projects that are designed to promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation.

Note: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project would help bring together students from different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body, or to avoid racial isolation.

Note: For information on permissible ways to address this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice entitled, **Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools** at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>.

Strengths:

The school has indicated a clear commitment to reaching out to families from diverse backgrounds, in addition to promoting a culture that is respectful of diversity. In addition, the school has a goal to establish “sister” schools across the globe that will expose its students to and create projects with students from different ethnicities around the world.

Weaknesses:

The school is located in an area that is predominantly White, so attracting diverse students in terms of racial and ethnic backgrounds will be a significant challenge. Even if the school demonstrates some success in this area, it is unlikely to substantially “bring together students from different backgrounds” as articulated in this priority area.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 3

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3--Support for Military Families.

This priority is for projects that are designed to address the needs of military-connected students (as defined in this notice).

Note: For purposes of this program, projects meeting this priority must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant s recruitment and admissions policy must comply with its State charter school law and CSP program requirements (for information on admissions and the lottery under the CSP, see Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>).

Strengths:

The applicant did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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