

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/19/2013 03:53 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Madison-Tallulah Education Center (U282B130012)

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

|                                       | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Questions</b>                      |                 |               |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>             |                 |               |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>      |                 |               |
| 1. Quality of Curriculum              | 15              | 11            |
| 2. Disadvantaged Students             | 3               | 1             |
| 3. Strategy for Achievement           | 15              | 10            |
| 4. Community Support                  | 8               | 6             |
| <b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. Quality of Personnel               | 22              | 18            |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan                    | 18              | 12            |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>      |                 |               |
| 1. Performance Contract               | 16              | 16            |
| 2. Flexibility                        | 3               | 3             |
| <b>Priority Questions</b>             |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority</b>           |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority 1</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Rural/SPED/ELL                     | 4               | 3             |
| <b>Competitive Priority</b>           |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority 2</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Promoting Diversity                | 2               | 1             |
| <b>Competitive Priority 3</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Military Families                  | 3               | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>109</b>      | <b>81</b>     |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Madison-Tallulah Education Center (U282B130012)

## 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:

[Pages e17-33] The applicant proposes to use curriculum that have been successfully implemented in similar schools (e17, detailed on e159).

The proposed curriculum will follow state standards and will integrate the arts, technology and literature (e21).

The applicant's proposed instructional practices allow for extended time in math and ELA as well as science and social studies.

The applicant has set instructional goals with achievement targets that increase year-over-year (e24).

The applicant has a reasonable plan for integrating technology in the classroom to assist with core curricula content delivery as well as for remediation and language acquisition.

The applicant proposes to implement a gifted and talented program (e30-31).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant did not specifically state what assessment instruments will be used to collect, analyze, and use baseline student achievement data which will aid in progress monitoring; though on e24 it states that benchmark data will be collected from previous schools but the rationale for this is not stated.

The applicant does mention the use of DIBELS (e26) but provides no additional information on how and when the assessment will be used to achieve students goals described on e24.

Also, the applicant suggests (e25) that students will take the iLEAP/LEAP assessments several times during the year; it appears that this is a state summative assessment so it appears that the school will be teaching to the test. The school may want to consider other formative assessments aligned to common core standards.

The applicant indicates that the school will have students in grades 1-11 (e24) but has not set high school graduation goals or provided the high school graduation requirements along with the high school curriculum.

The applicant has set their academic achievement goals to max out at 90% and this assumes that the school will have 10% of its student population failing math, ELA/reading, science and social studies.

The applicant has not selected an assessment system for collecting and analyzing student data that will be used specifically to inform and drive individualized student instruction (e32).

The applicant failed to describe Arts Integration program.

**Reader's Score: 11**

**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:**

Overall the applicant proposes to use a rigorous curriculum and research-based proven strategies for increasing student achievement with interventions and individualized learning program (e29-34).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide a clearly articulated intervention program for disadvantaged students.

While the applicant outlined some High School graduation requirements (e39) and objectives, a complete academic program for the high school was not provided.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

**Strengths:**

[Page e37-42] Overall the applicant proposes to use a rigorous curriculum and research-based proved strategies for increasing student achievement such as project based learning, arts integration, Junior Great Books, service learning projects, professional development for teachers, college prep course, school wide PBS, family involvement, etc.

**Weaknesses:**

There is no clear program articulated for the proposed High School, the High School graduation requirements (e39) with objectives identified but no academic programing is outlined.

The applicant has set their academic achievement goals to max out at 90% and this assumes that the school will have 10% of its student population failing math, ELA/reading, science and social studies.

The applicant does not specify goals for years 4 and 5 of the charter term.

The applicant did not articulate any goals for the governing board, administrators/teachers/staff, organization/operations, and fiscal responsibilities.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**4. 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 comments for this criteria are in the below subsections.

**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:**

[Page e42-48] The applicant appears to have completed extensive community engagement effort as evidenced by the Letters of Support.

The applicant also appears to have significant support from parents for the school (letters of support and completed intent to enroll forms).

The applicant provided a detailed student recruitment plan and timeline (e43).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not specifically show how parents were involved in the development of the petition and academic program of the school.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**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

**Sub Question**

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:**

Parents in the community were directly involved in the start-up of the school (e46) and the school has proposed plans to continue to keep parents involved in the school once it is opened (e47-48) using traditional and non-traditional techniques.

**Weaknesses:**

The parents and community involvement plan did not address how parents will become part of the decision making process at the school and the school will educate parents to be the best supporters of their student's education.

The applicant had not indicated how parents will be involved in the decisions affections policy, governance, operations/finances at the school.

**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:**

The comments for this criteria are in the below subsections.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Sub Question**

**1. Quality of project personnel.**

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In

**Sub Question**

**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:**

[e48-49] The applicant proposes to implement a teacher recruitment plan to attract minority teachers to the school.

**Weaknesses:**

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weaknesses.

**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:**

[e49-54] The applicant has a governing board in place to oversee the administration and operations of the school.

The applicant has provided job descriptions for key positions at the school including the role and function of the leadership team.

The applicant has identified Patricia B. Candler as the school's project director; Keith Wolfe as the school project coordinator; Kathy Hughes as the school's business manager; and Beverly Ross as the Parent Community Coordinator.

The applicant has listed specific teacher qualifications and provided job descriptions (e53).

**Weaknesses:**

Overall, the academic program was not differentiated with staffing was appropriately assigned.

**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:**

[Pages e54-61] The applicant has a governing board in place with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and board training is provided throughout the year as well as a means for recruiting and developing new board members.

The applicant has provided job descriptions for key positions at the school including the role and function of the leadership team.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not define the governing board's operating structure for carrying out its responsibilities; nor explained how the board will be supported in carrying out their work. Resumes of board members were not provided.

While the applicant identified an individual for the business manager position, it did not provide details related to the finance and accounting portion of the management plan for the proposed CSP project and school.

The applicant did not provide a proposed timeline and budget for implementing the CSP project with clear responsibilities for members of the leadership team and the governing board.

The organizational chart provided by the applicant represents the major school functions in silos (e61).

The entity (MTEC) operating the school was not clearly defined and the relationship MTEC will have with the governing board and the school was not clearly defined

**Reader's Score: 12**

**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 has provided a copy of the charter agreement (e97) with its authorizer as well as outlined the academic goals for the school in the application narrative.

**Weaknesses:**

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weaknesses.

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:**

[Pages e83-86] The applicant states that it will be responsible for the implementation of the curriculum and schedule design; and the management and operations of the school; and also outlined the responsibilities the authorizer as well as the areas in which the school will maintain flexibility.

**Weaknesses:**

This criterion was thoroughly discussed and I did not find any weaknesses.

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:**

[Page e69-76] Overall the applicant proposes to use a rigorous curriculum with research-based proven strategies for increasing student achievement such as project based learning, arts integration, Junior Great Books, service learning projects, professional development for teachers, college prep course, school-wide PBS, family involvement, etc.

The applicant proposes to work closely with students with disabilities to by ensuring access to the curriculum and teachers; the applicant acknowledges that there is a wide range of exceptionalities and fostering collaboration between special education and general education teachers (e72-75) is essential for student success.

The applicant proposes to use tools and strategies that promote language acquisition (e75-76).

**Weaknesses:**

Overall, the application lacks instructional program coherence, in other words, the applicant has not fully described how the educational program, interventions, instructional methods, etc. will be combined to meet the needs of disadvantaged students.

**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:**

[Pages e76-83] The applicant proposes to use research-based strategies to promote diversity in the school such as: heterogeneous grouping, cooperating learning, multi-racial curriculum, etc. to develop students' cultural competency.

The applicant also proposes to offer professional development to teachers to also build their cultural competency to work with and teach their students.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant provided limited discussion on marketing the school to promote diversity.

The applicant also provided a limited description on the socioeconomic make-up of the school and the area or areas that students will be drawn from.

**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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**Status:**              Submitted

**Last Updated:**    08/19/2013 03:53 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/16/2013 11:34 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Madison-Tallulah Education Center (U282B130012)

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

|                                       | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Questions</b>                      |                 |               |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>             |                 |               |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>      |                 |               |
| 1. Quality of Curriculum              | 15              | 11            |
| 2. Disadvantaged Students             | 3               | 2             |
| 3. Strategy for Achievement           | 15              | 12            |
| 4. Community Support                  | 8               | 7             |
| <b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. Quality of Personnel               | 22              | 19            |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan                    | 18              | 15            |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>      |                 |               |
| 1. Performance Contract               | 16              | 16            |
| 2. Flexibility                        | 3               | 3             |
| <b>Priority Questions</b>             |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority</b>           |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority 1</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Rural/SPED/ELL                     | 4               | 4             |
| <b>Competitive Priority</b>           |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority 2</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Promoting Diversity                | 2               | 1             |
| <b>Competitive Priority 3</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Military Families                  | 3               | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                          | 109             | 90            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Madison-Tallulah Education Center (U282B130012)

## 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 early grades will use curriculum designed to serve the priority groups through the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum, successfully implemented in high poverty schools in LA (e17).
- The school incorporates successful programming from other charters, supported by data (e17).
- The applicant clearly states the priorities of the schools instructional program (e19).
- The program is aligned with State achievement goals and standards (e21).
- The applicant proposes a balanced approach to annual and formative assessments, with strong plans to incorporate data into instructional practice (e25).

#### Weaknesses:

- The applicant fails to fully describe the arts infused programming (e21).
- The applicant describes a core belief of "all children can learn" and yet only seeks 90% success rate by grant's end (e24).
- The application does not sufficiently differentiate between elementary and secondary programming (e24).

Reader's Score: 11

#### 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 application describes specific strategies for supporting students with educational disadvantages (e29).
- The application describes non-academic supports that address educationally disadvantaged students (e33).

#### Weaknesses:

- The applicant does not sufficiently differentiate between elementary and high school programming.

Reader's Score: 2

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

**Strengths:**

- The application describes multiple avenues of reporting, from the Board to the classroom to families(e37).
- The applicant proposes to use multiple means of assessment, including portfolio and other qualitative measures (e38).
- The applicant describes a continuous improvement model that uses student data to inform instruction (e 41).
- The applicant includes an external evaluation of the program (e53).

**Weaknesses:**

- Objective 3 seeks to meet scores that were described as insufficient earlier in the application (e39).

Reader's Score: 12

**4. 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 are found in the subsections.

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.**

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

- The application contains numerous letters of support from a variety of constituents (e42).
- The proposed program includes community representation on the Board of Directors (e46).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were observed for this criterion.

**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:**

- Second objective is to involve parents (e14-abstract).
- The applicant provides evidence of extensive collaboration with parents and other community groups (e42).
- The applicant describes plans for targeting educationally disadvantaged and ELL students and families with specific strategies (e43).
- The proposed staffing model includes a parent Community Coordinator (e52).

**Weaknesses:**

- The application describes many opportunities for community groups to be informed, but not as many opportunities to engage in the development and implementation of the school (e43).

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**Quality of project personnel.**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers--**

**(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:**

Specific comments are found in the criterion.

**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 describes specific strategies for recruiting underrepresented groups (e48).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses observed for this criterion.

**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 Board of Directors demonstrates a wide range of experience, including members of the community (e50).
- The key leadership demonstrates experience in managing schools, including charter schools (e52).

**Weaknesses:**

- The proposal does not differentiate between elementary and secondary programming and the expertise needed in each area.

Sub Question

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 proposal outlines clear responsibilities for the Board and Staff, with defined outcomes for each (e54).
- The proposal describes specific professional development and training for both staff and Board (e57).
- The application includes a clearly articulated timeline with milestones and responsible parties (e58).

**Weaknesses:**

- Organization chart creates silos and does not have the director in charge of the principal or business manager.
- There are resumes missing from key positions.

Reader's Score: 15

**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 has a signed charter agreement with the authorizer (e 61).
- The charter contains specific outcomes related to student performance (e62).

**Weaknesses:**

- There was no weakness identified for this criterion.

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 application describes a high level of autonomy from state and local requirements (e65).
- The application describes the specific autonomies permitted in budgeting, procurement, operations, and personnel (e66).

**Weaknesses:**

- There was no weakness identified for this criterion.

**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 a rural low income school as certified by the RLIS program (e17).
- The application describes specific programming to address rural, gifted, ELL and students with disabilities (e29).
- The application describes specific professional development that supports the priority (e71).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were observed for this criterion.

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 uses multiple avenues to inform parents (e17).
- The applicant's school design is purposeful in promoting diversity (e29, e77).
- The applicant incorporates UDL in its design (e36).

#### Weaknesses:

- The application provides only limited discussion of how they will market the school to promote diversity.

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:

This priority was not addressed.

#### Weaknesses:

This priority was not addressed.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/16/2013 11:34 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/16/2013 09:34 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Madison-Tallulah Education Center (U282B130012)

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

|                                       | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Questions</b>                      |                 |               |
| <b>Selection Criteria</b>             |                 |               |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>      |                 |               |
| 1. Quality of Curriculum              | 15              | 9             |
| 2. Disadvantaged Students             | 3               | 1             |
| 3. Strategy for Achievement           | 15              | 9             |
| 4. Community Support                  | 8               | 7             |
| <b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>   |                 |               |
| 1. Quality of Personnel               | 22              | 20            |
| <b>Quality of the Management Plan</b> |                 |               |
| 1. Management Plan                    | 18              | 12            |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>      |                 |               |
| 1. Performance Contract               | 16              | 16            |
| 2. Flexibility                        | 3               | 3             |
| <b>Priority Questions</b>             |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority</b>           |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority 1</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Rural/SPED/ELL                     | 4               | 3             |
| <b>Competitive Priority</b>           |                 |               |
| <b>Competitive Priority 2</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Promoting Diversity                | 2               | 1             |
| <b>Competitive Priority 3</b>         |                 |               |
| 1. Military Families                  | 3               | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                          | 109             | 81            |

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Panel - 5: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Madison-Tallulah Education Center (U282B130012)

## 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 indicates the school's curriculum will be the state curriculum, which is aligned with the Common Core and state standards and which has been successful with other schools serving rural, low-income students. Examples of these schools are cited along with their resultant test scores and Web site references to them (p. e17). The application points out that the curriculum will employ other well-known, research proven programs as supplements to the main curriculum and include arts and humanities as well as providing students with technology-aided open educational resources (pp. e18-19; e21-22). Among those listed are FOSS science, Core Knowledge, Kahn Academy, and Singapore Math (p. e18). The application states that instruction will be driven by the data gleaned from interim the state assessments (p. e20) and provides descriptions of the curriculum programs, instructional delivery models, and technology applications the school expects to use (pp. e23-29). An appendix further describes several of the supplemental programs the school expects to use and provides a Grade 1 overview of their scope and sequence (pp. e162-186).

#### Weaknesses:

The application's description of the curriculum and expected instructional practices does not clearly show how all the pieces fit together in a coherent educational program that is driven by a coordinated set of objectives and expected outcomes (pp. e18-29; e162-186). There is no concise description of how instruction -- and the myriad of curriculum programs -- is to be enacted on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Although the application presents a brief description of the importance to the school of data driven instruction (pp. e20; e25), there is no clear detail as to exactly how the data will be summarized, arrayed for use, or in fact used to guide instruction and make curricular adjustments.

Reader's Score: 9

#### 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 noted in an earlier section that the expectation is that the majority of the students attending the school will be educationally disadvantaged to some extent (p. e17). With this expectation, the application indicates that the school will diagnose all incoming students to gauge their learning readiness as a first step in meeting their needs. The application lists a number of the diagnostic assessments it plans to use for both diagnostic and benchmark evaluation (pp. e29; e33). It goes on to say that those lacking in the skills they need will participate in a program of remediation where they will receive differentiated instruction and be placed in heterogeneous groups as a way to address their needs (pp. e29; e34). In addition, the application outlines how a variety of staff (teachers, paraprofessionals, interventionists) will use student test results to develop Individual Learning Contracts designed to assist students. The application notes that students who are especially in need may be assessed and an IEP created for them (pp. e34-e35). Finally, the application says the school will provide resources and assistance for ELL students (pp. e35-36).

**Weaknesses:**

The application presents a wide array of tests it says will identify the needs of disadvantaged students and also a variety of approaches and strategies to meet those needs. However, the application does not include clear detailed descriptions of exactly how the tests will be administered or how the results will be used to make instructional decisions. It does not describe how the staff will sort through and select the exact right mix from the various programs named to ensure that they develop Individual Learning Contracts that are appropriate for the students (pp. e33-36). Moreover, there is no description of how -- and when and by whom -- these Contracts are themselves assessed and revised to meet changes in student growth or shifts in their needs.

**Reader's Score:** 1

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

The application states that the school's first objective is aimed at increasing student test scores and its second is involving parents (Abstract). Later on the application says that each October, the school's principal will issue a school accountability performance report to stakeholders. This report will address both the school's academic goals (e.g., student outcomes, AYP progress, and such) and its organizational goals, for example finances (p. e37). The application presents a set of student academic objectives, the metrics to be used for assessing them, and the sources of the data to be collected (pp. e38-40). In addition, the application notes there will be an assessment of all school personnel and the Board will be responsible for overseeing that the school is managed efficiently and effectively (p. e41).

**Weaknesses:**

The application's discussion of the school's objectives is almost exclusively focused on student achievement objectives and how these will be assessed. When it talks about assessing non-student objectives such as the school's management objectives it does so in very broad, non-specific terms, "efficient, effective, and fiscally prudent" (p. e41). In addition, the applicant does not include any discussion of assessing objectives that are reflective of school organizational operations or school quality such as satisfaction of staff, students, and parents, level and nature of parent and community engagement, yearly levels of enrollment, attrition, expulsion, and the like (pp. e38-42).

**Reader's Score:** 9

#### 4. 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 application presents a robust description -- with backup support -- that the school provided the community and prospective parents a great deal of information about and many opportunities for input during the development phase of the school. The applicant offers a less robust, less detailed description as to how the school will continue involving parents and community once the school is opened and operating.

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 application describes a robust communications and marketing campaign to inform parents and community members about the intention to start a school and to gain support and initiate partnerships. The campaign included traditional marketing techniques (meetings, open houses, and flyers, for example) and newer social media techniques like Facebook and Twitter (pp. e42-43). This campaign also included a community survey intended to help the school understand how potential parents and the community felt about existing schools and what they would like to change about them (pp. e43-45; e213-262). The result the applicant indicates was both input by and support from the community and a number of active partnerships and sponsorships. In addition to listing the supporters and partners, the application provides letters of support and commitment (p. e42; e188-211). The application goes on to explain that the school's inception was triggered by a group of community members who circulated a petition to gauge the level of interest in opening a charter school (p.e46). Once a decision to open was reached, the application notes that parents and community members became part of the planning process and then the design process, serving as Board members and advisors contributing substantively to school policies and to its governance (pp. e46-47).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are 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 application stresses that these outreach activities will continue after the school is established and identifies a number of ways community and parent involvement will be promoted in the future including continued representation on the Board, participation on a Principal's Advisory Board, and joint activities with students (pp. e46-47).

**Weaknesses:**

Even though the applicant describes a number of communication strategies to be employed moving forward after the school is established there is not enough detail about how those strategies will lead to continued and substantive parent and community involvement in decision-making, policy setting, or the like (pp. e 45-47). Likewise, there are no examples provided of the areas where the school will solicit substantive parent and community input.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**Quality of project personnel.**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers--**

**(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:**

The application offers a thorough description of the efforts it will take to recruit members of underrepresented groups. The strategies described for doing this show some creativity and sincerity. Also the application provides information about those individuals who are expected to manage the grant project -- all of whom seem qualified and some of whom also will be school staff. In addition, the application includes a set of position descriptions for school staff yet to be hired. However, the applicant does not distinguish between the elementary management tasks and personnel and the secondary management tasks and personnel.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**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 application indicates the school will target its staff recruitment efforts at local educator preparation colleges enrolling mostly members of underrepresented groups and in publications and social media outlets that are themselves targeted at this same demographic. It also makes a point that the recruitment and hiring processes will conform to all Federal and state laws and regulations guiding equal opportunity employment (p. e48).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are identified.

**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 application provides a list of personnel responsible for grant management with brief summaries of their qualifications and responsibilities. It indicates that these individuals also will be school staff members (pp. e49-54). Resumes of school and project management staff also are included as are position descriptions for vacant school positions and specifications for an external evaluator (pp. e265-295; e159-161; e53). The individuals identified for the key leadership roles in school and grant management have the background and qualifications necessary for

**Sub Question**

effective conduct of their responsibilities.

**Weaknesses:**

In its presentation of the staff positions, the application does not indicate which are elementary and which are secondary management tasks or identify. It does not indicate whether there will be separate personnel for these two managerial levels (pp. 49-54).

**Reader's Score:** 18

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan****1. Quality of the management plan.**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant indicates a legal entity, Madison-Tallulah Education Center or M-TEC is to manage and operate the school. The applicant's description of this entity indicates it is comprised of a Board of Directors who also hold Board positions for the school. The application lists them and provides an overview of their areas of expertise (Abstract, pp. e54-58). In addition, the application presents a "start-up" chart showing project implementation milestones, responsibilities, and time frames (pp. e58-60). These are reasonable and show clearly what the applicant expects to do and accomplish over the first six months of the project. Lastly, the applicant presents a school organizational chart showing the chain of accountabilities and responsibilities according to position (p. e61).

**Weaknesses:**

The management structure of the school versus the project is not described adequately. It seems a complicated one with what appears to be two overlapping Boards (School and M-TEC) whose responsibilities are not clearly defined. It is not clear what M-TEC does other than operate this school, whether M-TEC is responsible for other projects besides this school's management, or if there are other employees of M-TEC besides the Board members listed. In short, the application does not explain M-TEC or its relationship to the school and to this project. The applicant does not explain why this arrangement was adopted and does not explain the role of M-TEC in the management of the grant (pp. e54-58). Furthermore, the application indicates that there is an intention to name additional Board members and advisors (p. e56) but the application does not clearly state whether these individuals will be M-TEC Board members and advisors or the school's. Additionally, it is not clear either from the narrative (p. 58) or the organizational chart (p. 61) whether the director will supervise and evaluate the principal. Both suggest that the principal will be supervised and evaluated by the Board without reference to the role of the director in this process.

**Reader's Score:** 12

**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 has obtained a charter from the state authorizer, the terms of which are summarized on pp. e61-63). A copy of the contract, spelling out in great detail the terms of charter, and the requisite signature pages are also provided (pp. 112-138). The charter contract is effective for five years and it thoroughly describes the proposed design, management, personnel, and operation of the school as well as the methods and metrics the school will employ for measuring student performance.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are 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 application outlines its relationship with the authorizer describing the areas of flexibility allowed and noting points of exemption as well as points where the school is still governed by Federal and state law (e.g., testing and academic accountability) (pp. e64-65). The application also describes the areas where it will exercise the allowed degree of flexibility with brief explanations as to how that flexibility will manifest itself in the school's daily operations, its budgetary and personnel decision making, and general governance of the overall enterprise (pp. 65-66).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are 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 application indicates the school is in a rural community and references its inclusion in the Rural and Low-income School program and goes on to note it will serve the community's low income rural students with an expected 12% of them being eligible for special education (SPED) and 1% being ELL students (pp. e17; e70; e72; e75). The applicant notes that there will be targeted marketing to inform the community and parents that the school will serve SPED and ELL students (p.e17). The application states that the school's curriculum and its instructional approaches are "well-suited" for "high needs students." As an example, it cites a study showing that some students in schools with arts programs -- such as the one planned for this school -- have better grades and are less inclined to drop out (pp. e69-70). It also notes that the school will install special instructional and non-instructional support systems, structures, and personnel for the at-risk rural students, the SPED students, and the ELL students (pp. e70-76).

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant describes how the community is rural and the students to be enrolled will probably include high percentages of SPED and some ELL students -- and provides district-wide percentages as illustrative of these descriptions -- the application addresses this priority with very general statements about how the educational program and attendant personnel, systems, and structures will improve achievement and high school graduation among these students. In short it does not clearly show exactly how the specific aspects of this school's educational program will improve these students' achievement and graduation rates (pp. e17-29).

**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 application describes its heterogeneous grouping and cooperative learning strategies and states it will increase interactions among different racial, economic, and social backgrounds (pp. e76-78). Similarly it posits that the by having a multicultural curriculum and a "transformational approach" to instruction the school will reduce "minority group isolation" (pp. e79-80). It also offers brief overviews of additional strategies and approaches the school expects to use to promote diversity (pp. e80-83).

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not describe the ethnic and racial composition of the community or of the school. It also does not describe the level of economic diversity in the community and school. Therefore, it is unclear how many majority, middle and upper class students will attend the school to insure that the different strategies and approaches outlined will not be academic exercises.

**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 application does not address this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not address this priority.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/16/2013 09:34 AM