

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/28/2013 05:02 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: THRIVE Baton Rouge (U282B130052)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	13
4. Community Support	8	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	16
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	0
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: THRIVE Baton Rouge (U282B130052)

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 states the grade levels of the students to be served (p. 7).

The applicant describes how its educational program addresses below-grade level students. Students receive two hours of intervention each day and teachers use a number of assessments to individualize instruction for student mastery of the material. (p10-11)

The school also provides a residential program that it states is uniquely tailored to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. The program includes a complete student evaluation, safe shelter, meals, access to healthcare and emotional support. (p11)

The applicant includes detailed information regarding student gains in the first year of the school's operations. The information shows gains of between 42 and 66 percentage points over the students' previous performance in State iLEAP tests from their 5th grade year. (p12)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide full detail on the instructional practice and strategies that have been or will be implemented across all subjects.

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 details previous success and the strategies to be used to enable students to close the achievement gap and meet state standards. The applicant also details the efforts the school is taking to move to Common Core State Standards.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides measurable and robust methods of measurements to assess the school's objectives. (p22-23)

The objectives and their assessments cover a variety of critical areas of importance to the school's success including attendance, student retention, academic achievement, graduation, college matriculation, parent involvement, and student discipline. The applicant has set high goals for objectives around student achievement (p22-23).

Weaknesses:

Some of these objectives will only be measurable after the grant period has been completed and the applicant does not include any operational objectives or methods of assessing those objectives.

Reader's Score: 13

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, the applicant has ensured that there is significant parental and community support during the planning, design, and implementation phases of the school.

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)**

Sub Question

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 describe community support and advisory during the planning, design, and implementation stages of the school. (p. 27-29) Community organizations provided input to the school about how the school could effectively meet the educational and emotional needs of the students.

During implementation (p30) organizations partner will with the school to provide support services including tutoring, individual counseling, extracurricular activities, Americorps volunteers for students during the day, mentors, and transportation. The applicant provides a list of 12 community organizations who will be be partners.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses.

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 applicant conferred with families regarding their needs from the school during the design and planning process. (p27-28)

During the implementation of the school, the applicant has undertaken parent communication that is followed up upon by the school leader or Executive Director and made adjustments accordingly, monthly parent nights that include academic and social components, encourages staff to build relationships with parents, and plan to add a parental advisory council. (p29-30)

The applicant describes in detail how it recruits students and attracts students to the school. These efforts include holding information sessions, mailing out information, working with local elementary schools and community stakeholders to identify students, and participating in community events. (p34-36)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were found.

Sub Question

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:

Generally, the school is dedicated to finding the appropriate, high-achieving teachers to fulfill its mission. The youth and inexperience of the school's founder and principal, and lack of charter school start up consultants to assist in the process, call into question the ability of those leaders to successfully implement the school on their own.

Reader's Score: 16

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 briefly notes that the school makes a specific effort to target a diverse applicant pool.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not describe what strategies or tactics are used to target or recruit from a diverse applicant pool.

Reader's Score: 1

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).

Sub Question

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 notes the school principal's experience and expertise in the Common Core as well as the experience and student achievement records of their teachers (all in the top 10% of teachers in the state). (p 20-21)

The executive director's education had focused on non-profit management. (resume in appendix)

The applicant describes the board chair's non-profit management and experience at another public boarding school serving high-poverty students. (p13)

Weaknesses:

Neither school leader has much experience (or any experience at all) with launching a high-quality charter school. This is their first school that they are opening. Furthermore, neither the executive director nor the school principal have much experience teaching, having only participated for a few years as a Teach for America corps member.

The applicant also fails to provide any information about the other members of the board aside from the board chair so it is difficult to evaluate the applicant's assurance that the nine members of the board represent a variety of skill sets and backgrounds.

Reader's Score: 15

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 detailed milestones and timelines that the school will follow in the implementation stage. These milestones cover a wide range of topics including the educational program, the residential program, business and legal operations, community development, staffing, board governance, and facilities. The applicant includes clearly defined responsibilities to meet those milestones. (p15-19)

The applicant has a plan for the continued sustainability of the school after the CSP funding would end. (p31-32)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 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's charter was approved by the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board on February 16, 2012. The applicant describes how the charter agreement includes detailed information on the performance measures for student performance that the school must meet (the iLEAP, LEAP, and EOC tests). The measures are comprehensive and include gradually increasing goals for each year of operation. (p25-26) The applicant notes that the charter authorizer and the school have also agreed to hold the school accountable to the objectives the applicant lists in a prior section of the narrative.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 applicant demonstrates a keen understanding of the degree of flexibility afforded to the school under Louisiana law. Furthermore, the applicant indicates that state laws provide a high degree of flexibility and autonomy to the charter school operator (p. 26-27).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 describes how its individualized program provides for the needs of students with disabilities and provides student achievement numbers to attest to the school's efforts in accelerating learning among this group. (p5-6)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address how it will increase college enrollment rates for this group.

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:

No strengths were noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this priority in the application.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this priority in the application.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/31/2013 02:03 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: THRIVE Baton Rouge (U282B130052)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	9
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	1
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	13
4. Community Support	8	7
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	18
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	0
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: THRIVE Baton Rouge (U282B130052)

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 will serve 6th grade students in 2013-2014, 6th and 7th in 2014 and eventually serve 6-12 grade students. The applicant has the only boarding school in the state. The philosophy is that if disadvantage students are removed from the negative influences from their high-poverty homes, they are able to focus on learning. The students reside in the boarding school 5 days of the weeks and are provided additional instructional time and individualized tutoring as needed. The applicant provides pre and post assessments which indicated a large gain in learning with the focused instruction, while living in a safe environment. (6-11)

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a clear description of the "highly vigorous" curriculum. It was difficult to assess the quality of the curriculum and instruction without information such as instruction time spent on each curriculum, was the curriculum based on a model, what are the observed instructional practices seen within the classroom. The section focuses on the assessment changes taking place within the state and modifying curriculum to meet the needs of the change.

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 states that 100 % of the enrolled students are on free and reduced lunch. They are expecting to eventually have at least 90% free and reduced lunch. The model for this project is: "to demonstrate what is possible for high-poverty and educationally disadvantaged students when they are provided a stable and nurturing environment"(p. e13).

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide more details on what might be considered a "controversial" approach to education disadvantaged school. The boarding school model does not have the popularity and/or support as seen in other countries. The lack of information on the boarding school model makes assessment difficult.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The applicant is in a transition period as the state moves to using the Common Core State Standards and State assessment. Curriculum changes are taking place within this school as a means of preparing students for a more rigorous assessment covering additional material. The applicant provides an illustration of individual or group instruction for students who are having particular difficulties mastering specific skills.

Weaknesses:

The applicant mentioned giving weekly assessments, however research indicates that daily forms of assessment should also take place with educationally disadvantaged students. It would be useful to see a detailed schedule of all assessments and if they are given outside of the weekly assessment.

Reader's Score: 13

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 applicant ensured all stakeholders had an opportunity to become involved 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

Sub Question

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 indicates a strong commitment to community support providing a list of partnerships and the support they have provided for the school (p,30)

Weaknesses:

There were no letters of support from any community partners.

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 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 applicant ensures that parents were involved in the planning, design and implementation phases of the project. There were many changes in the school based on parent feedback. Parents and extended family are considered vital and the applicant provides weekly communication to parents. A parent advisory group has been created to provide additional partnerships. There are monthly family nights and the parents play an integral part in the students lives.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses found in this section.

Reader's Score: 4

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 applicant has a reasonable personnel plan in place.

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 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:

There were no strengths found in this criteria.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not fully address this question. There applicant indicates making and effort to recruit underrepresented groups, but provided no strategic efforts towards the initiative.

Reader's Score: 0

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 provided resumes and biographies on three of the administrators. The Executive Director has a strong charter school background. The principal and Director of Residential Director have appropriate skills and background. The applicant provided information on the teachers who were identified as top teachers.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not indicate that the teachers had a background in charter schools. It was unclear if the principal has an administration licensure.

Sub Question

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 provided a management plan which identified duties and timelines which were reasonable (15-18). The sequence of activities were logical and fit the needs for meeting objectives and milestones.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses found in this section.

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 provided a contract which detailed the expectations between the school and the authorized chartering agency. The contract requires that all identified students who are academically low-achieving and at-risk students must have a educational program to best serve their needs. Additionally, the school must comply with the No Child Left Behind requirements.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses found in this section.

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 has autonomy and flexibility for its school. The authorizing agency Eastern Baton Rouge Parish School System administrates and monitors federal programs. The charter school is has control over the school budget, purchases, operations and personnel.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses found in this section.

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 indicates that there is a large student population with disabilities. They approach to accelerating learning is individualized instructions. The applicant provided information on the academic performance pre and post for students with disabilities. The gains were large and demonstrated accelerated learning (6).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address the college enrollments rates for students with disabilities.

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 applicant did not address this criteria.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this criteria.

Reader's Score: 0

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 identify this as a priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify this as a priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/31/2013 02:03 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2013 05:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: THRIVE Baton Rouge (U282B130052)

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	12
4. Community Support	8	7
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	18
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	16
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	13
2. Flexibility	3	1
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	2
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	0
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	83

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Panel - 2: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: THRIVE Baton Rouge (U282B130052)

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 school's assessment results provide evidence of the effectiveness of the chosen curriculum and instructional practices employed by the school. (e20 and e26)
Grade levels and growth projections are clearly defined, (e21) and the small class sizes of 15 or fewer students supported by a teacher and teacher's aide add additional support to the curricular model and for the students of the school. (e23)
The school is thoughtfully planning its curriculum to navigate the changing education landscape. The school is in the middle of a required transition to the Common Core Standards and assessments. The shift is in process to the Louisiana Transitional Curriculum for Math and English. Their goal of serving as a model for this transition positions them well for the coming assessments. (e22-e23) The Common Core coach who is working with the school enhances further the chance of a successful implementation. The school also uses the Next Generation Science Standards which have not yet been adopted by the state, but adoption is expected in the near future.

Weaknesses:

More detail is needed to fully understand the curriculum model and its components. Curriculum samples or a more specific description of the components of the curriculum would have strengthened this section. (e21)

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 residential nature, strong emphasis on academics and strong student and family support mechanisms utilized by the school provide an extremely high level of assistance to the disadvantaged students served by the school. (e17)
The 100% free and reduced lunch eligibility of the school's first students and the goal of serving 90% free and reduced students in subsequent years indicates that future students will also be economically disadvantaged. (e19)
Despite the severe academic problems presented by the first incoming class (e24), first year assessment results for special education students were impressive and speak to the quality of the curriculum, staff and support services provided by the school. (e20)

The innovative boarding school design is costly, but less expensive than behavioral residential placements and the long term societal costs of dropping out. (e25)

Weaknesses:

The statement on page e49 that students will need to successfully complete their current grade to be admitted to the school raises a red flag concerning the admission's policy and appears inconsistent with the mission and goals of the school.

The description of the admission's process is inconsistent on one point. The narrative states no priority is given to siblings (e49) and on page e51 it states that they do allow that priority.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Several strategies have been implemented to address the fact that passing rates for the prior year of incoming 6th grade students were very low. (e24) These strategies included an initial assessment process to determine gaps in learning, frequent data driven interventions to fill those gaps and high level of academic support.

Significant improvement by the school's students on the state iLEAP fifth grade test provides evidence of the curriculum, support and assessment strategies. (e26)

Clear objectives and specific measurable criteria for success are components of the assessment process for both the student's and the school as a whole. (e36-e37) The fact that measures have been included for grade levels to be added in the future provides evidence of the thorough nature of the planning that has been accomplished to date. (e37)

The school is required through its charter to participate in the state tests. The school has set high goal for student performance on those tests. (e 39-e40)

Weaknesses:

A more detailed description or samples of the non-state required assessments would have strengthened this section significantly.

High retention goals; low suspension and expulsion goals; and high graduation rate, attendance and promotion goals will drive staff and student performance, but these goals may also be over ambitious and create an opportunity for the authorizer to close the school. (e36-e37)

Reader's Score: 12

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:

Numerous high quality community partnerships have been established. Parents and community members have participated in the planning and implementation phases of 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:

Community support is evidenced by the twelve partnerships with community agencies. (e44) These partnerships will provide a variety of services to support the students in terms of academics and behavior.

Weaknesses:

Letters of support from the various partners were not provided.

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 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 involvement of parents, community members and service providers in the planning and first year of the school was described as critical to its success. (e41-e42)

Community partnerships are strong and partners contribute substantially to the school. (e 44)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

The current leadership of the school has experience and expertise specifically relevant to the project but lacks experience opening a charter school. Significant efforts have been made to hire a diverse faculty and staff. The hiring process has secured teachers who have experience and were able to deliver results the first year of the school's operation.

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 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 fact that the school targets a diverse applicant pool (e35) to fill positions at the school and uses multiple means of recruitment ensures that underrepresented groups will be encouraged to apply for positions at the school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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 Leader of the school, Ms. Moore, has significant expertise in the Common Core through her prior work with America Achieves and Student Achievement Partners. (e28)

The leader of the residential has the experience necessary to develop this aspect of the program. (e28)

The quality of the initial four teachers is attested to by the facts that each teacher came to the school with a minimum of 5 years of experience, and all four have a student achievement record that places them in the top 10% of teachers in the state. (e35)

The extensive hiring process which includes engagement with staff and student and a decision making process which involves current staff increase the likelihood of quality hires in the future. (e35-e36)

Weaknesses:

The school leadership does not have prior experience opening or managing a charter school.

More information about individual board members was needed to evaluate the qualifications of the board members.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan.

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

Strengths:

The board has authority to serve as the decision making body of the school and is composed of people with the needed skill sets including: education, finance and school start-up, legal, health care and non-profit board experience to make the school successful. (e27)

Over \$1,000,000 has been raised to date by the Executive director to support the school, and a fundraising position will be added year two to ensure the continued financial viability of the school. (e28 –e32)

The milestones already achieved by the school during summer start up and the school's first year of operation provide evidence that the school has the managerial skills and teachers needed to achieve the mission and objectives of the schools and its founders. (e29-e32)

Detailed time lines detailing the work still to be completed are provided. (e29e32)

The budget of the school has been planned to ensure sustainability. The school will not use the requested grant funds for

operational costs. The charter school grant funds will be used to purchase computers. The computers will be replaced, when necessary, using Title I funds.

The fact that the school delivered high academic and behavioral results its first year and came in 10% under budget provides evidence of the high quality of the management team and board. (e34)

The school has a three year charter and if successful can apply for a ten year renewal. (e61-e62)

The budget appears to be consistent with the needs expressed in the narrative.

Weaknesses:

The lack of computer access and skills of the students puts the students at a disadvantage in terms of technology knowledge and their ability to perform on the new Common Core assessments. Without start up funding for technology, the academic gains students make could be difficult to prove. (e45-e46) The continued success of the school appears to be heavily dependent on securing these or other grant funds to cover that cost.

Reader's Score: 16

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 charter has been approved by the East Baton Rouge School Board and a copy of the charter is attached. (e39 and e55-e68)

The relationship between the authorizer and the school is described as strong.

Individualized students assessments will be conducted at the beginning of the year to help determine strengths and areas in need of remediation. An individual plan will be developed for each student to meet his/her needs. (e 25-e26)

Section 1.2.4 of the charter (e57) indicates that the evaluation measures defined in the approved charter application will be used to meet state and federal requirements related to testing and to the measurement of student performance, (e39 e57)

Weaknesses:

The charter refers frequently to the application as containing pertinent information. Providing a copy of that application would have significantly strengthened this section.

Reader's Score: 13

- 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 nine member 501c 3 non-profit corporation board has the authority to hire, set and manage the budget, set policy, determine the curriculum, (e27 and e56).

The state's charter law allows significant flexibility for the charter school.

The charter is detailed and appeared to contain the state required elements.

Weaknesses:

The application document is referenced multiple times in the contract. It would have strengthened the proposal if the application document had been attached. The application document could have clarified the degree of authority of the board over policy, budget, hiring, evaluation of the administrator and school and the relationship of the school to the authorizer.

The authorizer can cancel the contract at will for any reason and all assets purchased with public funds revert to the district. (e62) This makes the school vulnerable to closure if a change in the composition of district's board or superintendent occurs.

Reader's Score: 1

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 had success during the 2012-2013 school year serving students with disabilities. Passing rates for 5th and 6th grade disabled students increased significantly.

Weaknesses:

More details were needed to directly address the issue of how specifically disabled students will be assisted.

Reader's Score: 2

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not directly address this issue.

Reader's Score: 0

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:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this issue.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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