

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/15/2013 10:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282B130006)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	14
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	14
4. Community Support	8	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	21
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	15
2. Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	2
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	2
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282B130006)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. I. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

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

Strengths:

The applicant has clearly identified the grade levels to be served and the educational approach at the school, specifically its commitment to implement the IB approach while pursuing recognition as an "IB World School." The applicant convincingly articulates how the school integrates PA State standards with the curricular principals and guidelines of the International Baccalaureate Organization. The IB program provides the school with a strong framework of curricular principals and instructional practices. The applicant has specifically identified inquiry as the leading pedagogical approach, and has provided a thorough, albeit broad, set of description of how that plays out at the school and supports students to achieve standards.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant provides a thorough discussion of the school's approach, no concrete examples are provided which clearly outline how the approach is experienced by students and staff on a daily basis.

Reader's Score: 14

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 clearly addressed this question, providing the historical context for the creation of the school and its clear focus on assisting educationally disadvantaged students to meet standards. The school grew out of the YorkCounts initiative that focused on creating a school that serves at-risk students but in a way that reduces urban isolation, drawing students from multiple districts. The applicant provides clear information on the nature of the students who are enrolled and systems in place to support those learners, including implementation of team teaching models and extensive support staff.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive response to this question, providing not only the school's overall evaluation framework, but also the strategic plan with specific objectives and strategies for assessing the progress towards achieving those objectives. The applicant effectively explains the PA system of school accountability, which will be one major element of its assessment framework. The other framework is related to the IB program and the rigors associated with achieving recognition as an IB school. The school has articulated a rich tapestry of assessment tools from state exams to student-centered tools, from standardized tests to teacher observations, from formative assessments to summative assessments, from rubrics to exemplars of student work. The strategic plan outlines additional objectives beyond student achievement. The applicant provides reasonable and appropriate strategies for assessing the achievement of these objectives.

Weaknesses:

In a number of areas, the applicant indicates that the school's leadership team will develop an assessment system. It is not clear when these will be done.

Reader's Score: 14

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 has provided a convincing portrayal of historical and present community and parent support for this school along with demonstrated community and parent engagement in the development and ongoing operation 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 effectively outlines the historical context through which the school was developed, and this identifies strong community support from a variety of stakeholders. The current board of the school continues to include a variety of parents and community members, and the school has ongoing relationships (including having received ongoing donations) from a number of community organizations and businesses. The school has reached enrollment targets in its first 2 years, indicating parental support for the program.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent of community support for the application.

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

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

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

Strengths:

The applicant provides convincing information regarding the level of community and parent engagement in the development and implementation of the school. The school has effectively publicized information about the school throughout three school districts and it has a strong plan in place for parental engagement, that begins from enrollment. The school provides a diverse number of options for parents to participate in the school, including helping from home, should parents have challenges arriving to the school. The school also has strong systems for providing feedback to and receiving feedback from parents regarding students' progress. Finally the school has an Parent Advisory Council that give more systematic feedback and input to the school.

Weaknesses:

None identified

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 provided a convincing response regarding the quality of the project personnel including the school's commitment to attract a diverse staff.

Reader's Score: 21

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 directly addressed this question and articulated a strong commitment to seek out application for employment from individuals who reflect its school population. The applicant provided a number of examples of outlets where it has posted open positions at the school, including at historically black colleges such as Howard and Lincoln.

Weaknesses:

None 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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant provides a complete narrative supported by resumes of key leadership staff. The applicant directly addresses the current reality of leadership transition at the school, and this discussion reinforces the strong capacity of the team. The new chief academic officer has experience in the start up of an international school, including leading a school's implementation of new IB program. The school's business manager has a strong track record of managing the business aspects of projects such as this. The applicant points to the experience the school leaders and board members have developed over the course of the first two years of school implementation, and the board brings a wealth of experience in non-profit management, fiscal management, and board governance and curriculum development. The applicant provided board bios as evidence to support the applicant's assertions.

Weaknesses:

Resumes are not provided for board members.

Reader's Score: 19

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan.

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a clear timeline including the outcomes, milestones and individuals responsible to carry out elements of the project. The job descriptions provided underscore the strength of the plan. This is a one year project for purposes of this grant, and the plan provided to execute and the budget provided is complete and appropriate. One example relates to the goal of adding grades 4 and 5. Key responsibilities such as hiring new staff, training staff in IB, and ordering appropriate equipment and curriculum are clearly laid out along with related timelines and specific milestones. Three additional project goal areas are outlined in a similar fashion.

Weaknesses:

None identified

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 has included a copy of the signed charter and the charter school application that outlines performance expectations. The applicant has provided a clear narrative that articulates the expectation of the charter, including directing the reader to the appropriate attachment and section of the charter application.

Weaknesses:

The signed charter is a one page document that provides little information. The charter school application becomes the key guiding document. This is a unique contractual approach given what this reviewer has seen, particularly given that three school districts are party to the contract. It is not clear how this contract will be evaluated and by whom.

Reader's Score: 15

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a complete response to this question, outlining the state's charter school law and the relevant elements that ensure the authority and flexibility of the charter school. PA law appears to provide significant flexibility to charter schools based on what the applicant has provided.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant directly indicates its commitment to improving achievement and graduation rates for students with disabilities and English Learners. The school has been in operation for 2 years and currently documents that 11% of its students have IEPs and 6.3% of its students are ELs. The school provides a convincing discussion in its curriculum and instructional plan to accelerate learning of these students, including providing appropriate supports and fully integrating these students into the IB program.

Weaknesses:

The school provided minimal data of the increased achievement of these students that has been accomplished in its first 2 years.

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:

The school has clearly articulated in its strategic plan a specific emphasis on this priority. The current enrollment of the school documents a high degree of diversity, and the applicant has provided some research that shows the academic benefits of having this diversity, particularly economic diversity, in a school. In addition, the IB program, which builds what students know and can do, is likely to tap into the diverse experiences of students, expanding learning of all students.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 3

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

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

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

Strengths:

This priority area was not addressed.

Weaknesses:

This priority area was not addressed.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/15/2013 10:31 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/28/2013 04:10 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282B130006)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	15
4. Community Support	8	6
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	14
2. Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	4
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	1
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282B130006)

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 operates as an International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program utilizing the guidelines of the IB Organization that it has aligned its state curriculum to maintain fidelity of the program and meet state academic requirements for all students to be served. The newly adopted state Common Core Standards will also be aligned with the IB program as the school moves forward in operation and continue to implement an academically rigorous curriculum. All teachers must be familiar with the instructional strategies of the program so that they may fully support all students to become independent thinkers and meet other learning objectives of the IB program. The program will deploy various activities that support students moving beyond what they learn in a unit to a full inquiry-based learning. The program currently serve kindergarten to grade three students and will be enrolling students in grade four in the coming year with plans to add a grade level each year until it is a full K-12 program (pp. 8-10).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

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 is aware of the special needs of it student population and is prepared to ensure adequate services are available through contracts with other educational staff such as reading specialists, guidance counselors, school psychologist, speech therapist or nurses. Staff may utilize the team-teaching model if needed to render services to students receiving special education services and being served via inclusion (pp. 13-14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant is a public school governed by state and federal requirements and an IB Candidate School with other requirements to maintain fidelity of the program; therefore extensive/detailed objectives with some assessments that overlap to ensure students progress and meet state and program standards are included. For example as an IB Candidate the school must implement all three levels of the IB program which it plans to do by adding a grade level each year until it is a kindergarten to grade twelve entity. The state administered assessments for math and language arts results would satisfy requirements of providing a high quality educational experience for all students since the applicant added grade three last year and those students were administered the state assessment, results pending. The applicant would ensure and provide time for teachers to collaboratively review academic data of special needs students and determine appropriate interventions to be implemented to prevent failure whether it was a student with an Individualized Education Plan or English language learner. IB principles are interwoven in the objectives to support and assess enrichment activities such as art education project, organized sports activities, or participation in interest clubs. Staff and/or Leadership would assess these objectives through observations, rubrics, checklists or performance assessments to name a few tools but would be able to collect and analyze data to ensure objectives are met (pp. 16-30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

The extent of community support for the application.

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

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

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

General:

Comments made.

Reader's Score: 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:

The applicant drew support from the community via the Educational Opportunities Committee that is comprised of school personnel, local government officials, religious institutions, higher education, and local businesses. Over approximately a two year period, the committee conducted monthly meetings to develop the charter then inclusion of three school districts in meetings that became the charting authority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent of community support for the application.

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

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

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

Strengths:

The charter school was created by the local community over a two year period of planning, public meetings, data gathering, and researching of charter schools to develop a better learning experience for students. The board of trustees and the Educational Opportunities Committee of YorkCounts supported the coordination of the three school districts in obtaining non-profit tax-exempt status and applying to become a charter along with other local organizations providing financial support. The charter is locally funded. Parents are encouraged to get involved in the parent advisory committee that meets on a regular basis and provides school improvement input to the board of trustees.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Parents of students enrolled in either of the three schools were not specifically mentioned as having input on the planning, design, and implementation of the charter/project beyond receiving information about the process and intent to open a school and the enrollment process. The members of the parent advisory committee may provide school improvement suggestions to the management team but it is unclear how that input would be collected and when incorporated into the program.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Quality of project personnel.

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

- (i) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (up to 2 points); and**
- (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).**

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

General:

Comments made.

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 applicant plans to enhance it efforts recruiting and hiring person who are traditionally underrepresented based upon race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability especially since after two years of operation and preparing to go into its third year, its instructional and support staff is not reflective of the student population being served. The applicant plans to advertise vacant positions within and beyond the local community in efforts to employ a diverse staff such as advertising in traditionally-black college, with the National Charter School organization, and with other colleges and universities that include Penn State, Columbia, and York College of Pennsylvania (pp. 41-42).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 project has three key positions but only one will be funded by the grant and continued support of the body of the board of trustees in the growth and sustainability of the charter. The chief academic officer has experience implementing IB programs. The business manager has been with the applicant since 2011 will serve as the project director ensuring the fiscal aspects of the project are aligned and reasonable. She has an extensive background in fund management, fiscal reporting, and budgeting; resume was included. The background and experiences of the board of trustee members will be utilized to ensure the project meets objectives. A full-time primary years program coordinator will be hired and funded by the grant with primary responsibilities that focus on the instructional aspects of the project. The job description included requires the person for this position to hold a bachelor's degree in education and state teaching certification as well as other relevant knowledge and skill set aligned with the project.

Weaknesses:

The resume of the chief academic officer was not attached to provide a clear picture of the number of years of experience relating to IB program implementation and only a brief highlight of experience was discussed. The resumes of board members were not included.

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 management plan has four distinct goals for the project aligned with clear responsibilities/tasks, timelines, and milestones that would produce a high retention rate of current student enrollment, add fourth and fifth grade, enable students to meet performance standards through a quality instructional delivery, progress monitoring, targeted interventions, and frequent data collection and review; and complete requirements of the IB program. Appropriate staff as well as the responsibilities of the board of trustees is also clearly described to ensure objectives/activities are implemented in a timely manner to meet project goals such as implementation of the marketing and recruitment plan in spring 2014 that would provide reports at monthly committee meetings and the testing coordinator, project coordinator, and CAO would ensure end-of-year assessments are administered and data is appropriately shared (pp. 42-47).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter schools and its 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 is a regional charter school approved by three school districts supporting the charter City of York, Central York, and York Suburban. A copy of the charter application is attached that indicates state assessments to be used to measure student performance (p. 48, appendix). The program would utilize the state assessments for English language arts and math for grades 3 through 5, science assessment for grade 4, and writing for grade 5. These assessments would also be used to the No Child Left Behind accountability plan for adequate yearly progress (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

The charter applicant did not include specific targets by grade and subject area to determine progress based upon assessment results.

Reader's Score: 14

- 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 board of trustees for the charter is afforded flexibility based upon state law to operate a charter. As its governing body, it is the policy maker for the school regarding budgets, daily operations, personnel, etc. It has autonomy in choosing the curriculum and instructional delivery methods to ensure students meet state standards (p. 49).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 1

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

This unique collaboration of three school districts to provide services through a charter school setting allows the applicant to focus on at-risk students with its educational program. Since the charter school has been operational for two years and has the support and cooperation of the three districts where 6.3% of the students are English language learners and 11% receive special education services, the applicant is aware of the percentages of students it expects to enroll when the next grade level is added and is prepared to continue services as they enroll in the charter (p. 6). The program components focus on the IB model which is designed to ensure students advance from one grade to the next at or above grade level which would continue as this model moves beyond middle school. In moving beyond middle school, the graduation rates would increase for the students served.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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:

Since the project has a minority-majority student population being served from the three school districts, the applicant will focus its attention of the economical diversity of students instead of racial. Student and family recruitment efforts would be target white middle-class families to enroll their students in the charter since the school is not limited by boundaries (p. 4, 6).

Weaknesses:

The applicant indicated that research experts determined that students with high achievement levels can be "depressed or boosted depending upon the composition of his/her peer group in school" followed with the indication that schools with students from low-income families with a poverty level higher the 40% do not have a chance of success but did not substantiate this statement with cited research or supporting data such as studies and therefore will focus on attracting white middle class students to enroll in the charter. (p. 4)

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 3

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

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

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

Strengths:

Applicant did not address.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not address.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/28/2013 04:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/16/2013 01:38 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282B130006)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
2. Disadvantaged Students	3	3
3. Strategy for Achievement	15	15
4. Community Support	8	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Quality of Personnel	22	22
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	18	18
Quality of Project Design		
1. Performance Contract	16	16
2. Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 1		
1. Rural/SPED/ELL	4	1
Competitive Priority		
Competitive Priority 2		
1. Promoting Diversity	2	1
Competitive Priority 3		
1. Military Families	3	0
Total	109	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282B130006)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. I. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear and logical explanation about the curriculum of the proposed project. The application reflects a continuation of the existing program in the current charter school that has operated since 2011 – 2012 school year. The charter school addresses both the standards-based curriculum of the State and the curriculum based on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years program. The curriculum is designed in accord with specifications for an IB Primary Years Program (pages e22 and e23). The applicant provides comprehensive information about the aims of the IB program and information that indicates that the core subjects and other educational areas are all in alignment with State academic standards (pages e23 and e24). The applicant provides a clear discussion about the inquiry and the transdisciplinary approaches as instructional practices based on the International Baccalaureate Charter School model (pages e24 and e25). The applicant provides a clear account of other teaching methods (page e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a convincing discussion about the extent to which the proposed project assists educationally disadvantaged students. The applicant discusses the significant results of fostering economic integration among the charter school's population. The applicant provides information about the three challenges that face educationally disadvantaged or at-risk students in predominantly one of the attendance areas enrolled in the charter school. The

applicant contends that despite their challenges, the IB curriculum and delivery model lends itself to differentiation of each learning activity to accommodate the needs of all students (pages e27 and e28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive explanation of the strategy the proposed proposal uses for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives. The applicant provides the twelve goals and twenty-five objectives that are a compilation of the charter school operating in the State and as a school pursuing authorization and recognition as an International Baccalaureate school (page e29). The applicant clearly presents each goal, an elaborating objective, and a unambiguous explanation of how each objective will be assessed (page e31 to e41).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 15

The extent of community support for the application.

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

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

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

General:

Overall comments are not provided

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

1. The extent of community support for the application.

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

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

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

Strengths:

(i) The applicant indicates that three years before students began their first year at the charter school the planning process began with the Educational Opportunities Committee monthly meetings to develop the charter school concept. The committee included members from public education, local government, local business, religious institutions, higher education, and other community members. After nearly two years charters were gained from the three school districts (page e47 and e48).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 4

2. The extent of community support for the application.

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

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

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

Strengths:

(ii) The applicant provides an excellent explanation about the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the charter school. The applicant provides adequate information that describes the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement. The applicant discusses tactics such as developing marketing information brochures, holding public forums, communicating with community-based organizations, and reaching out to churches and other religious organizations (page e48). The applicant states that when students are recruited or choose enrollment, parental involvement begins then. The applicant lists a broad range of communication activities that inform the community about the charter school. Those activities

Sub Question

included the distribution of posters and flyers, door-to-door contacts, responses to word-of-mouth referrals, and telephone solicitations (Page e48). The applicant provides a description of the process used to ensure that students are given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school. Specifically, the applicant states that the law requires any child in the State is qualified for admission in the charter school. Consequently, the applicant describes the priority order, first siblings in the school, then residency in one of the three counties, etc. (pages e49).

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:

Overall comments are not provided.

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

1. Quality of project personnel.

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

- (i) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (up to 2 points); and

Sub Question

Strengths:

(i) The applicant provides adequate information about the extent to which applicants from traditionally underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply for employment. The applicant discusses efforts such as sending notices regarding available positions to many colleges and universities, including institutions of higher education that are among the nation's traditionally-black colleges, and the National Charter School organization (page e57).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 2

2. Quality of project personnel.

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

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

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

Strengths:

(ii) The applicant provides extensive documentation concerning the qualifications, educational preparation, and relevant experience of person holding key project personnel (page e51 to e56). In particular, the principal has experience in small International Schools including experience in Latin America, as well as experience in a nearby urban public school district. Additionally, the principal has experience in several International Baccalaureate programs (page e51 and e52). The Business Manager, who will serve as Project Director, has strong credentials as well (page e52).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Quality of the management plan.

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a management plan that adequately supports objectives for the 2013-2014 grant years. The applicant develops the management plan within the framework of the Grant-Year Objectives. The applicant lists the four objectives and provides a clear statement indicating who will be responsible for performing the task. For example the Chief Academic Officer will continue progress towards IB Primary Year Programme authorization. One Responsibility is to make a key hire, by August 2013, and the milestone is the Board takes action on the recommendation (page e61). The 25 responsibilities/activities are clearly presented and indicate the person responsible, the activity, timeline, and milestones (pages e57 to e62). The management plan is clearly presented.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence of a written charter between the three authorizing school districts and the charter school. The charter contains stipulations regarding student performance as assessed by the State's annual assessments and other school and classroom-based assessments (page e63). Specifically, student performance will be assessed in accordance with the overall learning outcomes tied to the State Standards and the subject specific expectations (page e117 and e118).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 16

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides sufficient information about the degree of flexibility granted under the State's charter school law. The charter school's accountability for student achievement is defined. Otherwise, the charter school has complete authority over curriculum and instruction, budget and expenditures, personnel decisions and daily operations (page e63 and e64). Exemption of the charter school from a number of program-specific prescriptive regulations and enables the charter school to maintain a sharp focus on the proposed program vision (page e64).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides useful information about improving achievement (page e21). The applicant provides enrollment statistics regarding students with special education Individualized Plans and students identified as English Language Learners. An examination of the students who have Individualized Educational Programs is 11% of the school's enrollment, and 6.3% of the students are English Language Learners. The applicant recognizes that there is a significant proportion of students whose academic achievement and graduation rates are likely to require additional support.

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to present a well developed discussion about improving achievement and high school graduation rates of students that may require additional support. For instance, students who may need more time to learn or to be taught differently are not addressed by the applicant. The applicant does not describe what extra efforts and/or programs will be implemented to ensure that all students achieve at high academic levels.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Priority - Competitive Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--Promoting Diversity.

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides useful information about the proposed project's commitment to promoting student diversity (page e21). The applicant's description of the impact that the charter school may have on reducing the isolation of racial groups and economic statuses is one of the outcomes the proposed project plans on accomplishing. The applicant discusses plans to actively recruit students from the three school districts to address the growing impact of poverty in one of the three school districts (pages e21 and e26). The applicant states that the charter school offers hope to lessen the impact that concentrated poverty has on academic progress for students (page e27).

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to present a well developed discussion about promoting student diversity that demonstrates that there will be innovative approaches other than the strengths of the academic program described in the proposed project.

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

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/16/2013 01:38 PM