

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/23/2014 04:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: First Place Scholars (U282B140033)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Curriculum	15	15
Significance		
1. Achievement Standards	5	5
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Community Support	10	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	22	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Improving Achievement and High School Graduation		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP 1	4	4
Support for Military Families		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	107	93

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 6: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: First Place Scholars (U282B140033)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices. (15 points)

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 and content 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 proposed a clearly defined comprehensive educational program which includes how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards, along with reasonable instructional practices.

The applicant plans to implement the Blended Literates Concept. This concept relates to the ability to make meaning out of information in context. It is the application of language skills across multiple cognitive, social and academic domains. The school will offer an extended day schedule to implement multiple approaches for students to learn in a variety of modes every day. Page 16

The curriculum includes vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum based on core contents. The curriculum also includes the implementation of a Coordination of Services Team (COST) model to address social, emotional, and behavioral challenges coupled with a Positive Behavioral Intervention Support component. Page 15

The applicant will implement: the Response to Intervention model to personalized the student's educational plan. The project will focus on the following strategies which are listed in a chart, it includes: Onsite mentoring by volunteers, a rigorous focus on mastery of basic learning skills and core subjects aligned with Common core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. The curriculum will also execute Whole Group Instructions, multiple contexts of literacy, along with the Coordination of Services Team (COST) Page 3

The applicant has a sound innovative pilot program set to begin in September 2014, called Prime Parent Workshops, which will be a yearlong series of workshops available to all First Place families, both from Family Support Services and First Place Scholars. The goal of these workshops is to give tangible, ready to use skills that will support the students in school and help the family as they move towards self-sufficiency. This pilot program is a partnership with Antioch University Seattle (AUS)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. (5 points)

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a thorough strong project to assist educationally disadvantaged high-risk students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic.

The applicant has a 25-year record of teaching traumatized children who live in extreme poverty. These children are high risk of failing to graduate from high school. The focus of the project will develop integrated systems of education, mental health, and family support to collaborate with universities and non-profit agencies to develop and enhance mental health housing, and academic programs. Page 14

The applicant's long-range goals are to join a network of schools using innovative methods to educate students living in extreme poverty. The plan is to educate students in a holistic approach that recognizes student trauma may be a key reason for academic failure. The school will execute sound strategies to address issues of trauma along with academic deficits. Page 13

One of the goals of the school is to join a network of school using innovative methods to educate students living in extreme poverty. The school will exchange ideas and opportunities to test various approaches to research. Page 15. The curriculum will align with Common Core State Standards in math, English Language Arts, Next Generation Science Standards. The curriculum will also include the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies and 21st Century skills. The project details the implementation of year-round workshops based and embedded professional development for teachers and the newly hired School Leader using internal and external resources. Page 15

The applicant states their goal is to use special education services when they are absolutely necessary and for only as long as they are absolutely necessary. The proposed plan will use a procedure for working with students with existing IEP's and 504 plans for identifying specialized services. There will be a thorough review of each student's records and an interview with the parents and students by the case manager. During the summer orientation week, staff will assess students' reading and math skills. Page 24

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school s objectives. (15 points)

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school 's objectives, including developing of performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the Performance Measures section of the notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the Performance Measures

requirements when addressing this criterion.

Strengths:

The applicant has included a plan to implement the required state summative Smarter Balance Assessment.

The applicant states the students are assessed during the enrollment period and periodically throughout their educational career at First Place Scholars. The applicant will link academic competency based performance assessment, and social-Emotional assessment into their partnership relationships which are Technology Access Foundation, STEAM advisors, fields based projects, and other extended learning opportunities Page 32

The applicant will also implement all required state testing including the summative Smarter Balanced Assessment. In addition the school will use interim assessments in reading and math. Page 31-32

The applicant plans to implement an extended day program to focus on accelerating learning using blended learning resources and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. (STEAM) Page 32

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school's objectives, including developing performance measures and performance targets for student achievement.

The applicant does not include performance measures for the STEAM curriculum or the Smarter Balance Assessment.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. 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:**

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of 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.

(10 points total)

General:

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant has documented the extent of community support for the application based on the schools partnerships with the community and several parent team building workshops.

(A)The applicant has a new and existing partnership agreement with local non-profit government agencies and universities to deliver needed services to students at First Place Scholars. Page 6

(A) The applicant has implemented community building and parenting workshops. Each workshop will feature a team-building exercise and parenting strategy techniques. Workshop topics will have general parenting themes which will start with the basics, laying a foundation and build upon previously taught skills. Page 10

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

2. (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 5 points).

Strengths:

The applicant has strategies to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement

(B) The applicant has been working with a core parent group in the tribal communities. The cadres of parents have been actively involved in their children’s education in the Head Start Model and plan to keep their children together as a community. Page 9

(B) The applicant has listed several partnerships and a brief description of the services, which include: Antioch University, Technology Access Foundations, The A Plus Youth Program, and Washington State Charter School Association. Page 8

Weaknesses:

(B) The applicant did not include information regarding parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the school.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel' s skills, experience, and success in the following areas: launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; managing or leading a non-profit organization; establishing or maintaining

school governance by board of trustees; developing and implementing an effective curriculum; recruiting and evaluating effective educators; and strengthening fiscal management.

(22 points total)

General:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

1. (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).

Strengths:

None found

Weaknesses:

(A) The applicant did not include evidence, which shows strategies of hiring persons who are members of groups that have traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

The applicant has adequate documentation of the key personnel for this project, along with a sufficient summary of the qualifications, training, and experiences for each position.

(B) The applicant has included a list of key personnel and their qualifications. The list includes the Principal, Project Management Consultant, Board President, School Leader, Executive Director, and a Teacher. Page 41-42

The applicant has also provided a list of the members of the project team which includes the Board President, Chairperson of the Fund Development Committee, members of the Education Excellence and Program Committee, Co Directors of MSSP Inc, the Interim Executive Director of First Place Scholar Support Services and the newly hired School Leader. Page 41

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. 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. (15 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides a sound Management Plan based on some of the required components for a Quality Management Plan.

The applicant has provided a capacity graph which includes a list of the Instructional staff, along with the responsibilities of the Board members and the School Leader. Page 24

The project will monitor growth of the organization capacity, capacity development, personal evaluation, program evaluation, and reporting systems. Page 37

The applicant has listed members of the Project Management Team along with the skills and experiences for their positions. The positions include the Executive Director at Partnerships for Learning, a former First Place elementary school teacher, a past President of the Board of First Place Family Services, a retired Principal from the Settle Public Schools, the Project Management Consultant, the First Place Board President, and the School Leader. Page 41-42

The applicant states the management team has established a timeline that includes building the capacity of the school as an organization to achieve its performance goals. Page 40

The applicant plans to implement an initial startup period in the Spring of 2014. The project will focus on developing performance management systems that will have clearly defined job descriptions for each and every specific position in the organization. Page 36

The applicant has a Start Up Plan and timeline, which includes: Staffing, Curriculum and Instructions, Parent Operations, Finance Compliance, and Professional Development Appendix J Page e144

Weaknesses:

The Management Plan does not include clearly defined timelines, and milestones for this project task.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school 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. (15 points)

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 application before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a written performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.

The applicant has a performance contract with the Washington State Charter School Commission, which is its authorized public chartering agency. The performance contract describes how student performance will be measured. It contains a detailed business plan, with a description of the system, policies and procedures that First Place Scholars will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing and payroll. The contract has a component for regular audits, procedures for adequate insurance, projection and plans for growth relating to the five-year contract period and beyond. The contract details specific educational goals and academic targets, for each contract year. The contract also identifies performance measures for a percentage of First Place 3rd graders to meet or exceed proficiency standards on State standardized tests for reading and math, including disaggregated targets for identified demographic groups. Page 45- 46

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school. (3 points)

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, curriculum, and personnel in accordance with its State s charter school law.

Strengths:

The applicant has clearly described the degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and the authorized public chartering agency.

The applicant states operational autonomies are important to charter school innovation and their ability to customized operations, staffing, scheduling, and programs to best meet the needs of their school environment, and mission. The applicant states flexibilities are evidence in Washington's 2012 law, which include exemptions from all laws, except those covering health, safety, civil rights, student accountability, employee and criminal history check. Flexibility allows for fiscally autonomous, legally autonomous, and governing boards to govern charter schools without regulations from district collective bargaining agreements. Page 46

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Improving Achievement and High School Graduation - Competitive Preference 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 the 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: The Department encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this Competitive Preference Priority.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates a thorough plan to address the Absolute Priority based on the proposed project to educate students living in poverty to achieve success in high school and beyond. The project clearly addresses English Learners, and Special Needs students in extreme poverty.

The applicant plans to service children with Special Needs and English Language Learners. The target population for First Place Scholars is k-5 children which includes: children who experience trauma as a result of extreme poverty, students living in transition, students who are becoming homeless, and/or students who are performing below grade level. Abstract

The school's mission is to educate and support k-5 students who are living in poverty and experiencing multiple traumas. The applicant will help students to rise above their personal circumstances, accelerate academically, commit to continuous learning, display strength of character, and prepare for college and career readiness. Abstract

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 4

Support for Military Families - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Support for Military Families.

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

Note: To receive points under this priority, an applicant's project must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policies and practices must comply with the State's 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:

None found

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include information regarding recruiting military students.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/23/2014 04:01 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/22/2014 05:34 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: First Place Scholars (U282B140033)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Curriculum	15	14
Significance		
1. Achievement Standards	5	4
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	9
Quality of Project Design		
1. Community Support	10	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	22	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Improving Achievement and High School Graduation		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP 1	4	4
Support for Military Families		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	107	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 6: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: First Place Scholars (U282B140033)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices. (15 points)

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 and content 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:

- This proposed charter school has met the Absolute Priority by providing evidence of how the program will accelerate learning and help to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high-poverty schools.
- The project design is comprehensive and clearly indicates how the educational program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement standards. Additionally, the application provided detail regarding how First Place Scholars Charter School will accelerate learning and help to improve high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates in high poverty schools (p. 1 and p. 11). First Place Scholars Charter School will serve 98 K-5 students in the 2014-2015 year, and expects to grow to serve at least 196 students within five years (p. 4). Applicant states that enrolling students are in a socio-economic class that is directly correlated with high dropout rates (p. 11) and that 26% of children who are 'poor for at least one year'... fail to graduate on time. In the 2012-2013 year, 97% of First Place elementary students received free lunches and 67% were homeless (p. 12). Additionally, 54% were African-American, 28% multiracial and 25% received Title I tutoring services (p. 13).
- Applicant has provided a comprehensive overview of vertically and horizontally aligned (p. 5) curricular components (p. 16) that are designed to enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards. First Place Scholars Charter School will implement a multi-faceted approach, including blended literacies (p. 16), the Lexia Core 5, ST Math, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) projects (p. 17).
- The environment of First Place Scholars Charter School will be technology enhanced, student-centered and culturally relevant (p. 3) to enable students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards (p. 3).

Weaknesses:

- First Place Scholars Charter School states that they are undergoing a shift in instructional programming (p. 16) and that staff will implement a multi-faceted approach to provide students with options to expand skills. The applicant, however, did not provide specific details about the instructional practices that would be used, and how the implementation of those practices would enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards. [-1]

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. (5 points)

Strengths:

- The significance of the proposed project is clearly delineated to assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic and achievement standards.

- The application has provided detail regarding how First Place Scholars Charter School will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content and achievement standards. Applicant states that enrolling students are in a socio-economic class that is directly correlated with high dropout rates (p. 11) and that 26% of children who are 'poor for at least one year'... fail to graduate on time. In the 2012-2013 year, 97% of First Place elementary students received free lunches and 67% were homeless (p. 12). First Place Scholars Charter School (the First Place organization) has a 25-year record of teaching traumatized children who live in extreme poverty (p. 14). The First Place Scholars Charter School will focus on educating the poorest students (p. 13) with a holistic educational approach.

- Applicant has provided information regarding curricular components (p. 16) that are designed to enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards. First Place Scholars Charter School will implement a multi-faceted approach, including blended literacies (p. 16), the Lexia Core 5, ST Math, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) projects (p. 17).

Weaknesses:

- Applicant did not provide adequate detail regarding how educationally disadvantaged students would receive individualized services to address student needs in both content and delivery options. [-1]

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school s objectives. (15 points)

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school 's objectives, including developing of performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the Performance Measures section of the notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the Performance Measures requirements when addressing this criterion.

Strengths:

- The applicant identified goals, and presented corresponding short-, medium- and long-term results (p. 29) with aligned strategies (p. 3). Additionally, First Place Scholars Charter School has plans to include social-emotional, academic and other organizational indicators to monitor and improve student and organizational performance (p. 30).

- First Place Scholars Charter School notes the importance of technology to define and refine data and accountability systems (p. 35), and will begin utilizing Smarter Balanced online assessments (p. 35) in the 2014-2015 year.

Weaknesses:

- The First Place Scholars Charter School states three overarching goals on page 29. These include the goal to increase students skills, accelerate academic performance and demonstrate grade-level proficiency. Applicant does not address, however, who will be primarily responsible for assuring the implementation of strategies to assess achievement of school objectives. [-2]

- The project evaluation was not comprehensive and did not include specific performance targets aligned with program objectives. It was unclear how the performance measures provided would accurately measure project performance. [-2]
- Only vague information was provided regarding the utilization of baseline data and applicant states that students' achievement will be measured against their own progress (p. 31). [-2]

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. 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:**

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of 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.

(10 points total)

General:

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points).**

Strengths:

- Applicant states that the existing First Place organization has built a strong base of community support (p. 3), and that the existing organization has deployed at least 115 volunteers who will continue to be involved in the new public charter school (p. 3). Additionally, First Place Scholars Charter School has developed new and existing partnerships with other nonprofits, including Antioch University, A Plus Youth Program and the Inspire Youth Project (p. 6).

Weaknesses:

- No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 2. (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 5 points).**

Strengths:

- Applicant has demonstrated that staff will create an environment to encourage parental and community involvement for First Place Scholars Charter School and will institute a pilot program in partnership with Antioch University Seattle entitled Prime Parent Workshops (pp. 9-10). These monthly workshops will include themes including 'Student Success in Education' and 'Managing the Home' (p. 10).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient information was provided regarding how community members and parents would be engaged in school operations or provided with opportunities to assist the First Place Scholars Charter School with implementation practices. [-2]

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel' s skills, experience, and success in the following areas: launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; managing or leading a non-profit organization; establishing or maintaining school governance by board of trustees; developing and implementing an effective curriculum; recruiting and evaluating effective educators; and strengthening fiscal management.

(22 points total)

General:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

- 1. (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).**

Strengths:

- No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant neglected to include a description of how the First Place Scholars Charter School would encourage employment applications from persons traditionally underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. No GEPA statement (p. e10) was attached to support this criterion. [-2]

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

- Applicant states that the staff is comprised of a diverse group of professionals (p. 36) who possess the qualifications and training to enable all students to meet content standards (p. 38). Resumes and biographical descriptions were included (pp. e121-143) to support that key personnel's experience included school design, nonprofit management, school governance, fiscal management and curriculum development.

- The management team for First Place Scholars Charter School includes a School Leader (p. 39) who will report to the diverse Board of Directors. Future positions include a Director of Fund Development, Director of

Sub Question

Communications and Volunteer Services Manager (pp. 39-40).

Weaknesses:

- No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. 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. (15 points)**

Strengths:

- Applicant has provided key grant activities (p. 49), with corresponding start- and end-dates, and aligned these activities with budget items (pp. 48-49). Applicant has indicated how grant funds would be used to fulfill project tasks and in support of the First Place Scholars Charter Schools goals and objectives.

- First Place Scholars Charter School has provided an overview of capacity development needs related to objective achievement (p. 34) and provided a comprehensive overview of facility and fiscal sustainability (pp. 42-43) items. Additionally, applicant has clearly defined the responsibilities of the Board of Directors (p. 38) and included a detailed business plan with their Washington State Charter School's application (p. 45).

Weaknesses:

- Applicant did not clearly delineate all the benchmarks and milestones needed to successfully attain project objectives within the established timeline. Additionally, it was unclear which individuals would be responsible for accomplishing project tasks, and how these were aligned with project objectives as Appendix J was difficult to read. [-2]

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school 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. (15 points)

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 application before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.

Strengths:

- First Place Scholars Charter School has a contract with the Washington State Charter School Commission, with the contract period commencing September 1, 2014 (p. 45). This performance contract contains a detailed business plan,

growth projections, educational goals and targets and the provision for regular audits.

- Applicant provided a copy of the 'Charter School Contract between Washington State charter School Commission and First Place Scholars Charters School' (p. e66-e70). This included information regarding assessment of student performance pursuant to State assessments or other mutually agreeable assessments.

Weaknesses:

- No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school. (3 points)

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, curriculum, and personnel in accordance with its State s charter school law.

Strengths:

- Applicant notes that Washington's charter law is new and the State has only just (February 2014) authorized its first set of eight charter schools (p. 46). Additionally, applicant stated that Washington's law has been ranked as among the best in the country exemplifying current thinking on quality, accountability and flexibility (p. 46).

- Applicant has clearly described the degree of autonomy First Place Scholars Charter School will have over the school's budget, expenditures, daily operations and personnel (pp. 48-49).

Weaknesses:

- No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Improving Achievement and High School Graduation - Competitive Preference 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 the 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: The Department encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this Competitive Preference Priority.

Strengths:

- The proposed charter school project fully met competitive preference priority 1 for proposing to improve achievement and high school graduation rates for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The mission of the First Place Scholars Charter School is to educate and support K-5 students who are living in poverty and with multiple traumas and to accelerate them academically, commit to continuous learning, and prepare students for college and career readiness (p. 3).
- Strategies that the applicant will utilize include small class sizes, a rigorous focus on mastery of basic learning skills and core subjects aligned with Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards through the integration of blended learning and whole group instruction (p. 3). Personalized student and family case management processes will utilize Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies and onsite mentoring will be provided to students by volunteers (p. 3).
- Applicant has demonstrated specific strategies for 'students with disabilities' (p. 23) and 'English learners' (p. 25) including the implementation of a Least Restrictive Environment (p. 24) and individualized Student Learning Plans (p. 26).

Weaknesses:

- No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

Support for Military Families - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Support for Military Families.

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

Note: To receive points under this priority, an applicant's project must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policies and practices must comply with the State's 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 fully address competitive preference priority 2 to support military families.
- The charter school design did not address the needs of military-connected students in that the proposed project did not

target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. Evidence was not provided on the recruitment and admissions policy related to charter school enrollment of military students. [-3]

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/22/2014 05:34 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 11:44 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: First Place Scholars (U282B140033)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Curriculum	15	15
Significance		
1. Achievement Standards	5	5
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	10
Quality of Project Design		
1. Community Support	10	8
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	22	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Priority Questions		
Improving Achievement and High School Graduation		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP 1	4	4
Support for Military Families		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	107	95

Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 6: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: First Place Scholars (U282B140033)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices. (15 points)

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 and content 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:

Overall, the project proposal addresses the absolute priority of improving achievement and high school graduation rates for a planning, program design and initial implementation grant ((84.282B). This proposal meets the criteria for this priority with its focus on improving student achievement and graduation rates as well as serving a population living in high poverty by the fact that the most closely comparable Seattle school with a comparable poverty rate to First Place is Bailey Gatzert Elementary School, having more than 90% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch (92.2%).

The proposal provided a high quality and comprehensive project design. The table on page 3 of the proposal makes explicit links between the mission of the charter school, the commitments and strategies that will constitute their school-based learning experiences and the high level goals they anticipate to achieve. For example, small class size and the RTI model of instruction serve as strategies for their mission to serve students K-5 who are living in poverty. (p. 3).

The proposal asserts that First Place is focused on specific grade levels and anticipates how many students they aim to serve. For example, the proposal states in year one, they will educate a maximum of 14 students per classroom with the support of a teacher supplemented with instructional aide support; and admit 98 Kindergarten-Grade 5 students (up from 43 during the 2013/14 school year in the former non-tuition based private school) and grow to serve at least 196 students in between years three and five.

The proposal claims that First Place is dedicated to the wrap around service model. For example, will pilot Prime Parent Workshops. The goal of these workshops is to give parents tangible, ready to use skills that will support their children in school and help the family as they move towards self-sufficiency. (p. 10).

The proposal lists elements of its academic model including curriculum, alignment to standards and instructional practices and approach to school culture on pages 15-24. Specifically, they emphasize curriculum consisting of STEAM learning domains (17-18), and blended literacies or the ability to make meaning of information and language in multiple contexts (16-17). Moreover, the proposal elaborates on a blended learning rotational model as a means of integrating face to face and online learning modalities (18-19), the RTI instructional model (19-20) and the use of individualized student plans (20-21). Finally, the proposal discusses the role of Coordination of Services Team to support students' social and emotional growth (22-23) and the Positive Behavioral Intervention Services model of school cultural management (26-28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. (5 points)

Strengths:

The proposal provided extensive evidence that the proposed project will academically assist educationally disadvantaged students. The target population for First Place Scholars is primarily elementary school children living within the City of Seattle who have experienced trauma as a result of extreme poverty, homelessness or the danger of becoming homeless, and who, in most cases, are performing below grade level. (p. 1).

The proposal states that the curriculum and instructional design choices employ the former non-tuition based private First Place elementary school's experience in developing and delivering an integrated system of education, mental health, and family support to best meet the needs of elementary school children who have experienced trauma as a result of extreme poverty, living in crisis or are in danger of becoming homeless, and who may be performing below grade level. (p. 2).

The proposal states that the elementary school with the closest socio-economic demographic makeup has 92.2% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch and 47.8% of its third graders passing the MSP reading test.

The proposal includes an education logic model in appendix h as well as a table that hypothesizes their students' results in short, medium and long-term results (p. 29). These ultimately convey accelerated learning and the achievement of grade level learning for all students will be addressed through this proposed school.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school s objectives. (15 points)

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school 's objectives, including developing of performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the Performance Measures section of the notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the Performance Measures requirements when addressing this criterion.

Strengths:

The proposal provided much evidence that a plan for a high quality project evaluation would be in place. The proposal states that the education logic model in appendix h and the table of short, medium and long term results will guide the annual assessment of the school. (p. 29-30). The proposal adds that the school leaders will be responsible for the managing the data, assisting with interpreting it for classroom teachers and all First Place Scholars' staff, as well as leading and coordinating professional development to improve student achievement. (p. 30).

The proposal also added that the school performance measures that will be included in the Washington State Charter School Commission's School Performance Framework (still under development), our plans include using social-emotional, academic, and organizational indicators to monitor and improve student and organizational performance. (p. 30-31). The proposal also adds how the additional indicators will be tracked. For example, teachers will be responsible for constructing a social emotional report for students representing 3-6 behaviors that can contribute to positive develop. (p. 31). These examples all constitute elements of a high quality project evaluation.

Weaknesses:

There are some weaknesses within the project evaluation plan.

The project evaluation plan did not include baseline data in the proposal. This would be important to ascertain the extent to which a change has been observed and whether or not the targets are appropriately ambitious and realistic. In addition, the proposal does not state who the dedicated person will be to carry out aspects of the evaluation plan, such as collecting the data, interpreting the data and reporting back the interpreted data.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. 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:**

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of 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.

(10 points total)

General:

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points).**

Strengths:

The proposal demonstrates extensive community support. The existing First Place organization has built a strong base of community support—partnering with a myriad of non-profits, governmental agencies, and universities to deliver services including housing, mental health, health, and wrap-around, supplementary, and summer education. (p. 3).

The existing organization has deployed at least 115 volunteers including mentors – who will continue to be involved in the new public charter school – and who have, in past academic years, contributed 3,400 hours per year. (p. 3).

In addition, on page 6 there is a listing of additional partnerships and the services that the listed partners provide.

For example, Antioch University provides doctoral student whom the school utilizes as mental health professionals.

The table on page 7 documents the amount of volunteering the school has received and in what capacity volunteers

Sub Question

have served. The proposal states that this program will continue and this provides further evidence of community support.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

2. (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 5 points).

Strengths:

The proposal overall provided some evidence of parent and community involvement in the implementation of the program. A goals assessment and survey will be used to help create the Parent Prime Workshop, a workshop directed toward how parents can support their children’s learning and development (p. 10).

The proposal mentions that First Place will meet with families to discuss their child’s transition to middle school. This is an opportunity for First Place to be informed how they may aid in this transition as well as First Place connecting families to support services to aid in the transition.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not specifically make clear the ways in which the community and parents have been involved in the overall planning, and program design of the school.

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel' s skills, experience, and success in the following areas: launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; managing or leading a non-profit organization; establishing or maintaining school governance by board of trustees; developing and implementing an effective curriculum; recruiting and evaluating effective educators; and strengthening fiscal management.

(22 points total)

General:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

1. (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).

Sub Question

Strengths:

The proposal did not address this criterion.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not make clear the ways in which the project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

The proposal provides extensive evidence for the relevant training and experience of the project personnel. Appendix I provides the resumes and biographical descriptions of the qualified staff and leadership team. Their experience suggests that they have the relevant experience needed to achieve the project's goals. The Co-directors were selected due to their commitment to the students and community of First Place. (p. 40).

The project management teams and the EdModel teams have been meeting weekly since February 2014. This is evidence of direct experience and creation of the school model and program design. (p. 40). Members of these teams are listed on pages 41-42 as well as a brief professional description and they are accomplished in the field of education.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. 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. (15 points)

Strengths:

The proposal provided extensive evidence of a high quality management plan. The table on page 34 represents the capacity building tasks that will be accomplished by the instructional staff, the board and the school leadership. These tasks contribute to the school's vision of supporting high quality instruction as represented in the diagram on page 34.

In appendix J, the proposal includes a planning and implementation plan. For this, the category of work is identified, the objectives, the activity, milestones and timelines are provided as well.

A start up plan is also provided that tracks the categories of work, like staffing or curriculum and instruction, how long the work has occurred for that particular category as well as the percent of the work complete. This is evidence of a high quality plan.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school 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. (15 points)

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 application before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.

Strengths:

The proposal meets this criterion for the quality of project design.

First Place Scholars Charter School's charter contract with the Washington State Charter School Commission is effective starting September 1, 2014. (p. 1).

The elements of the performance contract are listed on pages 45-46. The bullet points from this contract consist of elements such as a detailed business plan, with a description of the systems, policies, and procedures that First Place will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing and payroll, and specific educational goals and targets, including for each contract year, the specific percentage of First Place students 3rd grade or above who meet or exceed proficiency standards on state standardized tests for reading and math, including disaggregated targets for identified demographic groups.(p. 45).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school. (3 points)**

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, curriculum, and personnel in accordance with its State s charter school law.

Strengths:

The proposal describes the extent to which the school's charter will afford flexibility for managing the school. First Place Scholars is accountable for meeting the targets established as part of its School Performance Framework and charter contract objectives (Appendix A) for Social-Emotional Growth, Academic Growth, and Organizational Growth. (p. 1).

Washington's charter school statute defines a charter contract to be a fixed term, renewable contract between a charter school board and an authorizer that outlines the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations for each party. It also requires such contracts to contain a performance framework that details the academic and operational performance indicators, including all those included in the model law. (p. 46).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions**Improving Achievement and High School Graduation - Competitive Preference 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 the 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: The Department encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this Competitive Preference Priority.

Strengths:

The applicant provided convincing evidence that the project is designed to accelerate learning and help to improve high school graduation rates* and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.

Within the City of Seattle, First Place Scholars fulfills an unmet need for students of color, students living in poverty, and students experiencing multiple traumas. (P. 1)

The target population for First Place Scholars is primarily elementary school children living within the City of Seattle, who have experienced trauma as a result of extreme poverty, homelessness or the danger of becoming homeless, and who, in most cases, are performing below grade level. (p. 1) However, participating student will continue to take part in support groups, summer camp, and mentoring through their transition to middle school, high

school, and high school graduation.

The school that is being proposed has a history as a private school serving disadvantaged students. The teachers developed specialized knowledge in the needs of traumatized children and deliver culturally-responsive curriculum to support children with disabilities and English language learners along with a diverse array of youth struggling with various individual traumas.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

Support for Military Families - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Support for Military Families.

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

Note: To receive points under this priority, an applicant's project must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policies and practices must comply with the State's 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 proposal does not address this criterion.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not specifically address how the school will offer support for Military Families.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 11:44 AM