

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2014 11:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Great Lakes Academy (U282B140046)

Reader #1: *****

	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	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Community Support	10	10
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	22	22
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	14
Quality of Project Design		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
Adequacy of Resources		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	2
Priority Questions		
Improving Achievement and High School Graduation		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP 1	4	2
Support for Military Families		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	107	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 2: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Great Lakes Academy (U282B140046)

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 curriculum is well thought out and focuses on literacy development (pp13-16). This strategy is essential for students who come to the school behind their peers. The applicant also describes the selection of a proven math program and social studies program (pp18-19).

The applicant proposes an extended day which has a high impact on achievement for low income students. (p21)

Weaknesses:

There is no detailed description of how the curriculum will benefit SPED students. A more thorough description about how this sub-group would be served would have strengthened the application.

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:

They will serve a population of 95% FRL. This clearly is serving students in need.

They have an extended day and tutoring time which have been shown to result in academic benefits for low income students. (p24)

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide examples of specific actions plans (p7), instructional strategies (p21-23), or remediation measures (p24) that are unique to SPED students. It is important that charter schools provide a quality education to SPED students. There is a national discussion focused on the struggles of other charter schools with this issue. This application would have been strengthened with a clear focus on this topic.

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 lists specific assessments (STEP, NWEA MAP, PARCC). These are endorsed by many education experts. (pp26-28)

The applicant lists quantitative targets for proficiency. This makes it easier to determine if the school is successful or not.

The goal is set very high: students should be 90% proficient in writing and math after four years at the school. (pp26-28)
High expectations are essential to a school serving disadvantaged students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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: 10

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant garnered 1,600 signatures. (p31)

The applicant has met with numerous groups to provide feedback on the school's plans. (p32)

The applicant added an arts program and an after school program with the local YMCA in response to community feedback. (p34)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

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 met with numerous groups to provide feedback on the school's plans. (p32)

The applicant added an arts program and an after school program with the local YMCA in response to community feedback. (p34)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 5

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: 22

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:

The founding school staff is half African American. This shows that underrepresented groups have been a focus in recruiting (p35, abstract)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

Seven of nine teachers have taught in urban environments. (p35)

The Executive Director was part of Firstline in NOLA. (p36) The Operations staff was at LEARN. (p37) These are successful organizations and provide confidence that they can create a quality school.

The board has extensive experience in successful organizations (Turner Impact Capital, Women's Initiative Network, CEE-Trust). (pp40-42)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

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 list of items for the first two implementation years is concrete and detailed and should lead to greater success in accomplishing the objectives on time and within budget. (pp45-49)

The school has already achieved its planning year goals by being ready to open.

Weaknesses:

The board has too many committees (7) for a founding board of nine members. There is concern that the board members will not have the bandwidth needed in order to fulfill all of their responsibilities. Volunteer board members have limited capacity and should focus on specific targets. It is unlikely the board members would meet for seven monthly committee meetings once a month as the school is starting. Some of the functions of some of the committees may better be served by staff or third party contractors.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

There is a charter with CPS.

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 charter law provides a great deal of flexibility. (p50)

Weaknesses:

The charter law limits hiring flexibility through its certification requirements. (p50) Hiring the best teachers is essential to a quality school. Any regulations that inhibit this are a concern.

Reader's Score: 2

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 has a dedicated Student Support Service Coordinator who provides training to all teachers on referrals and making proper accommodations for special education children in the classroom. (p5)

Weaknesses:

There is no mention of the number of students enrolled with IEPs even though the applicant says they have welcomed students this summer. It would be helpful to know if the school is recruiting students with IEPs at the same rate as neighborhood schools. This is often a criticism of charter schools and evidence to dispel this concern would have strengthened this application.

Reader's Score: 2

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 says they are a community school. Later in the application, the applicant states they will recruit students from the Great Lakes Naval Station—over 35 miles away or an hour and a half in morning rush hour traffic through downtown Chicago. It would be highly unusual for a student to travel from Great Lakes to the southside of Chicago. If this is happening, then an example would have been helpful.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/21/2014 11:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/08/2014 09:15 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Great Lakes Academy (U282B140046)

Reader #2: *****

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1. Project Personnel	22	21
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	2
Priority Questions		
Improving Achievement and High School Graduation		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP 1	4	3
Support for Military Families		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	1
Total	107	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 2: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Great Lakes Academy (U282B140046)

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:

GLA will be a K-8 college preparatory model with focus on core subjects, especially literacy in early years (pg. e27-e28). For example, in grades K-1, a two-teacher model will be used in teaching literacy.

GLA will have targeted instruction and a structured learning environment. Various instructional strategies to be implemented include: small group instruction, blended learning, flexible reading groups, drilling, and incorporating the Joy factor.

The curriculum will be Common Core and Illinois state standards aligned for core subjects.

There will be more time on task during the instructional day for students to be able to meet Common Core and state standards.

The intended plan for the school is a gradual rollout of grades, one per year after the K-1 start.

GLA will be part of the Building Excellent Schools foundation and part of the BES support network.

Weaknesses:

While GLA will take best practices from other schools, it is unclear if the practices are relevant and will be successful when applied to the GLA population.

Instructional practices come from other established schools/network (e.g., Uncommon Schools, Achievement First Network, Success Academies), but corresponding academic performance data is not provided. (pg. e34)

Reader's Score: 13

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 application included general language of assurances for serving for serving ELL, SWD, and at-risk students and provided some comparable data for the anticipated student population. Specifically, FRL percentages in comparison to the district (95% vs. 85%) were provided.

The application did include articulated goals on how the school will measure working with SWDs. (pg. e21)

Weaknesses:

There is not much data on the needs of specific populations and how the academic program would be modified for ELL and SWD.

There was general language in the application for serving ELL and SWD, but the reviewer did not see any specific programs for these populations outlined in the application narrative. Anticipated ELL and SWD data was not provided though school populations should be known (as the school will open 9/14).

Reader's Score: 3

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 application provided comprehensive and specific goals. These included a mix of absolute, growth, and comparative goals.

GLA will use of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced standardized tests. NWEA, STEP, and PARCC will be used to measure achievement in ELA, writing, math, and science. Terra Nova will be used to measure achievement in social studies.

The application provided specific organizational goals. The goals centered on the financial, governance, enrollment and retention, surveys, and student information/data areas.

Weaknesses:

Except for STEP (which was specifically mentioned for K-3), it was not clear which assessments will be administered for which grades or if all assessments will be used across all grades.

The frequency of assessments administration was not evident.

Information on how data collection would be used, specifically how it will be used to inform instruction, was not provided.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The application indicated that community support for the charter school application was actively solicited. Solicitation included: community meetings; events; chats; flyers; brochures; and on-the-ground outreach. For example, over 1,600 signatures were apparently collected in support of the school (pg. e45). For example, a reference was made to letters of support from an Alderman and local community members (did not observe the actually letters). A Community outreach committee which meets monthly has also been created.

Weaknesses:

The letters of support from an Alderman and local community members were not provided in the application.

Reader's Score: 4

- 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 application describes how community input was sought during outreach to identify the educational needs of the community.

Active engagement of GLA families will be sought through multiple means. This will include: orientation; home visits;

Sub Question

newsletters; parent-teacher conferences; report cards; workshops; biweekly phone calls; etc.

In addition, a Family and Friends for GLA group will be created. The group would act as an advisory board to the Board of Trustees and will coordinate the annual completion of the parent satisfaction survey.

The application provided an example of programmatic modification from parent input, specifically detailing a modification in the afterschool programming options.

Weaknesses:

The design of the program is very much top heavy (i.e., a downward push). Actual changes in academic program are not evident. The modification of the afterschool program did not impact instruction/methodology/content of the school design.

The Family and Friends of GLA report annually to the board of findings, but the application does not describe what happens with this information and if the board is obligated to take the results into any consideration.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 21

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:

GLA is committed to hiring a diverse staff that is representative of the community to be served. (pg. e49)

The application provided staff data. The majority of teaching staff have experience in urban, low income schools. As described in the application, staff members are: 50% African-American; 25% Asian or Asian American; 20% male; and between the ages of 22 and 41.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

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

Strengths:

The application provides sufficient information on the qualifications of the Founder and Executive Director, [REDACTED]. She is a BES Fellow, Educator, attorney and coach, and she has experience working in charter schools.

The application provides sufficient information on the qualifications of the Director of Finance and Operations, [REDACTED] has experience working in charter school operations.

The GLA board of directors has nine current members who have a range of experiences, including experience in finance, education, law, real estate and school governance.

Weaknesses:

Although additional leadership staff will be in place in later years (e.g., dean of curriculum, dean of culture), the current leadership team appears to be lean. Charter school start up entails a lot of work, and it is not evident that additional lead staff will be hired to support the leadership team. For example, there was no indication that an academic lead/principal would be in place. The executive director would be responsible for hiring, supporting, and evaluating all staff. (pg. e58)

Reader's Score: 19

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 application provided a list of Key Success Factors, Milestones/Targets, Timelines and the personnel responsible for meeting the targets (pg. e59). Outlined responsibilities fall to the Executive Director, Director of Operations and Master Teachers. The Board, though its various committees, will monitor the ED and GLA.

Weaknesses:

Although the application provides a list of Key Success Factors, Milestones/Targets and Timelines, some of the timelines are vague and not specific. For example, the purpose of holding "events to cultivate teacher interest in blended learning" is unclear (pg. e61).

According to the timeline, there are currently milestones that are already past due. For example, the summer 2014 completion of the selection and purchase of a learning management system should have already happened.

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 application included a letter of support from the authorizer, the approved charter, and a school quality rating policy.

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 charter agreement gives the school flexibility under current state and federal laws.

Weaknesses:

In Illinois, charter schools are required to have a minimum of 75% state certified instructional staff; those who are not certified must meet certain minimum requirements. This requirement potentially curtails recruiting and hiring of school staff. (pg. e64)

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 application included general language for serving ELL, SWD, and at-risk students. It also provided some data on the anticipated student population—95% FRL.

The curriculum will be aligned to Common Core standards.

The school will have an emphasis on literacy and math with over 5 total hours of daily instruction in those areas. In addition, there will be more time on task for students. This will include: an extended day and year; block scheduling; re-teaching blocks; daily tutoring blocks; RTI; and IAPs for students that come in below grade level.

GLA intends to provide college exposure for all students through visits, homeroom adoptions, role models, and college mentors.

The School will eventually serve K-8, and a high school guidance counselor will be hired for upper grades to place students into college prep high schools.

Weaknesses:

The school is not located in rural location.

While there was general language in the application for serving ELL and SWD students, the reviewer did not see specific programs for these populations beyond these initial statements. Anticipated ELL and SWD data was not provided. These school populations should be known (as the school will open 9/14).

Although GLA will expose students to college as a K-8 institution, the ability of the school to improve achievement and high school graduations rates would be a challenge to quantify and verify.

Reader's Score: 3

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](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html) at (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>)).

Strengths:

The application addressed the needs of military families and stated that GLA will actively recruit military families. For example, the Individual Action Plans for students that come in below grade level may be useful for military children due to frequent relocations and interruptions in education.

GLA will explore a partnership with a naval base in suburban Chicago.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear if the school intends to give military families enrollment priority/preference. Actively targeting this community in recruitment is not the same as offering enrollment preference.

The naval base is not located in Chicago, and the school must give preference to in-District students over students who reside outside of the city.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/08/2014 09:15 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/13/2014 04:36 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Great Lakes Academy (U282B140046)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Curriculum	15	12
Significance		
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Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP 1	4	2
Support for Military Families		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP 2	3	1
Total	107	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 2: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Great Lakes Academy (U282B140046)

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 highlights a Balanced Literacy Approach, Common Core Driven practices, Research Based Texts, Clear Instructional Strategies – Teach Like A Champion, etc. Some curriculum overview is included in the application. For example the applicant lists the strategies that will be employed for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English; identifying curriculum materials such as “Words their way”, “I-ready”, and Lucy Calkins Units of Writing Writer’s Workshop.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide concrete information on external assessment practices, the norming of teacher grading practices, and the usage of data in curriculum planning and development. Comparative data is lacking, with regard to curricula decisions.

Reader's Score: 12

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 identifies and has embedded strategies to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. These strategies detailed by the applicant include: Extended Time, daily tutoring, testing for weaknesses and the development of an Individual Action Plan for students in need.

Weaknesses:

Although these systems are listed; the applicant did not unpack the method of the IAP. The application would benefit from information on how frequent the Individual Action Plan is followed up on and redeveloped.

Reader's Score: 3

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 application established clear performance targets in English language arts, Mathematics, Writing, and Science. For example, academic goals are extensive and include student mastery in writing and mathematics.

Organizational and fiscal goals are clear. Organizational goals include goals for the board of directors and enrollment targets.

Targets are targeted and aligned to the overarching goals.

Weaknesses:

The application established clear performance targets in English language arts, Mathematics, Writing, and Science. For example, academic goals are extensive and include student mastery in writing and mathematics.

Organizational and fiscal goals are clear. Organizational goals include goals for the board of directors and enrollment targets.

Targets are targeted and aligned to the overarching goals.

Reader's Score: 12

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:

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The school makes a clear case that community support is evident with regard to application support for the grant.

Weaknesses:

The application would benefit from the inclusion of parent or community supporting documents and evidence to substantiate claims.

Reader's Score: 3

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 school makes a clear case that community support is evident with regard to application support for the grant. The school states that 1,600 parents have signed support letters, and business support is present. As a means of including the community in future development, the school holds parent orientations, BBQ's, an open door policy, parent-student workshops, and there is parent membership on the advisory board.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

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:

The school's staff appears to have adequate experience and appropriate certifications. The principal has extensive training and credentials. Impressively, the board has operational, educational and fiscal experience and access to capital. Board numbers are sufficient to support the school.

Although the staff is diverse, the applicant has not explained a concrete strategy on how they will encourage applications

from underserved groups via an intentional practice.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 21

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:

The school's staff appears to have adequate experience and appropriate certifications. The principal has extensive training and credentials. Impressively, the board has operational, educational and fiscal experience and access to capital. Board numbers are sufficient to support the school.

Weaknesses:

Although the staff is diverse, the applicant has not explained a concrete strategy on how they will encourage applications from underserved groups via an intentional practice.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The school's staff appears to have adequate experience and appropriate certifications. The principal has extensive training and credentials. Impressively, the board has operational, educational and fiscal experience and access to capital. Board numbers are sufficient to support the school.

Weaknesses:

Although the staff is diverse, the applicant has not explained a concrete strategy on how they will encourage applications from underserved groups via an intentional practice.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

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 school's management plan includes the work of the board down to the committee level.

Timelines, responsibilities and milestones are present for each goal. Goals are specific and long and short-term goals are included.

Weaknesses:

The application would benefit from additional detail with regard to milestones and rationales.

Reader's Score: 14

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:

Contract is present in the application.

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:

School states it has full autonomy except for federal laws and minor state "acts".

Weaknesses:

Illinois state law limits hiring flexibility.

Reader's Score: 2

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 program aims to raise graduation rates in high poverty communities amongst underserved students. Ninety-five percent of students come from high poverty backgrounds. The applicant displays an emphasis on college.

Weaknesses:

The true impact of this program on high school graduation rates is muted given that it is a K-8 school.

Reader's Score: 2

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 applicant intentionally recruits military families through faith-based organizations and works to reduce the negative impacts of frequent relocation.

Weaknesses:

The school does not indicate how the students will receive preference and, given the location of the military base mentioned, if enrollment in this school is even practical.

I have discussed this selection criterion with my fellow panelists, and this score reflects my professional assessment of this section.

Reader's Score: 1

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