

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 09:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Hill House Passport Academy Charter School (U282B140065)

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	12
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	10
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	92

Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 4: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Hill House Passport Academy Charter School (U282B140065)

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:

A strength of the application is that the model recaptures students who have dropped out of high school in a target area where the dropout rate is high (p10). The hybrid model includes the use of K12 software, individualized instruction, immediate feedback on performance, and six levels of courses (p13, 16). The curriculum will align with Pennsylvania Performance Standards (p7) and provide wrap around services to address non-academic student needs. The narrative clearly states that the proposed charter school will serve grades 9-12 and provide a physical space for face-to-face instruction.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 applicant will leverage the individualized instruction offered through K-12 software to address student underperformance. The ability of students to progress through the standards at their own pace is a strength of the proposal. The use of an individual learning plan that maps student progress toward graduation and college/career entry and daily advisory classes are also strengths of the application in that they ensure that students do not repeat actions that lead to their dropping out of the system (p14-16). The availability of wraparound supports is another critical program component that increases the likelihood that students will receive academic and non-academic supports that encourage persistence and graduation (p14). The option for parents to view and access student progress online is also a best practice strategy to provide underperforming students with supports to meet the standards (p32).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 applicant presents a set of performance targets that address academic and non-academic project areas (p30). The measures collect data annually and reflect student, faculty, and school indicators.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear why only 95% of eligible students will participate in State mandated Keystone Exams when all eligible students are required to participate (p29). Also, the performance measure related to teacher evaluation does not address the quality of the evaluation, only the number of times the teacher has been evaluated (p28). The ability of data from this indicator to inform project progress is not, therefore, clearly indicated. Similar concern exists for the indicator measuring the number of times a teacher participates in training and not the quality of the training (p27).

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:

NA

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant references letters of support submitted with the district charter application to the authorizer as evidence of support for the model (p31). The history of the applicant organization in the target community is also evidence of support and shows that it is knowledgeable of the challenges and opportunities in the community that can be leveraged to benefit the proposed school (p4).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide actual documentation of community support. The narrative notes that documentation is available, but it was not submitted with this application packet (p30-32). The lack of support documentation (i.e., letters of supports from the charter application, copies of submitted petitions for the charter school, letters from partners) weakens this section of the proposal (p31).

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:

Parent and community outreach will be encourage through membership on the governing board and ad-hoc committees, participation in online surveys about the school, designated outreach coordinator, parent-student handbook, and a call center will likely facilitate information dissemination (p32-36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

NA

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 were noted.

Weaknesses:

The narrative does not specifically state that 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 will be encouraged by the applicant (p37).

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

The identified project director is qualified to guide charter school development. He has experience in school administration, teaching, curriculum development, and teacher evaluation (p37-38). A strength of the application is the school's decision to use an established education service provider with vetted protocols and resources. Board members will provide additional expertise including education, marketing, technology, business, and community relations (p.43, e76-e78).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 management plan includes a description of Board operations and how the Board will interact with the school administrator. The education service provider will be K12, who will also be responsible for identifying school teachers (p43). The principal and teachers will be employed by the Board and administrative staff by K12 (p44).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide an organizational chart or management plan matrix that refines the management plan beyond the brief overview in the charter application and CSP application (p44-46). The lack of a matrix that aligns project goals, time targets, milestones, and persons responsible weakens this section of the narrative (p38-40).

Reader's Score: 10

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 a signed charter contract with its authorizer. A copy of the charter agreement was included in the appendix. In the absence of actual performance benchmarks, the charter agreement indicates the state's expectation that the charter school participate in the state PSSA assessment and a formative assessment selected by the school (appendix-charter application, p6).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 proposed charter school has flexibility afforded by the State (p41) which includes budgeting, curriculum, and operations. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools gave the State a high ranking regarding legal and fiscal autonomy of charter schools (p42).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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 provides evidence that addresses accelerated learning and improving high school graduation rates through impacting the dropout rate (p3). Strategies that include flexible scheduling, online curriculum, and wrap-around services to address the non-academic needs of target students will likely both accelerate learning for students re-entering the system and increase the likelihood that target students will graduate (p4). These strategies and certified personnel will also have a positive impact on students with disabilities given the self-paced environment and number of curriculum and human supports (p6-7).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html) at (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>)).

Strengths:

The applicant did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 09:21 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 04:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Hill House Passport Academy Charter School (U282B140065)

Reader #2: *****

	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	13
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	10
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 #4 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 4: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Hill House Passport Academy Charter School (U282B140065)

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 proposes to utilize a blended learning high school environment designed to address the varying academic needs of high school dropouts. It is student centric in nature and allows for an individualized learning experience supported by rigorous online learning combined with targeted face to face instruction. Accompanied by a supportive social services component the program is designed to accelerate learning and to help improve high school graduation rates for participants. Additionally, the program approach has been successfully utilized by the applicant's program partner in Chicago. Data on the success of this effort can be found on page 11.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

By integrating an effective system of test prep, assessment and intervention into the student learning process the school will enable educationally disadvantaged students to pass the State mandated Keystone exams. The process of reclaiming disengaged students renders them all educationally disadvantaged. The applicant will also address the issue that non academic challenges play in student achievement by addressing the need for supportive social services for the educationally disadvantaged student population.

Weaknesses:

None are 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 applicant will utilize a Student Achievement Improvement Process model as the primary means of self evaluation of the curriculum, instructional methods, and practices of the school on an annual basis. Additional evaluative criteria will include the goals and evaluative criteria in the charter school application administered by the Pittsburgh School District. Finally the operational performance of the school will be evaluated by the continuous monitoring of the services agreement with k12. This evaluation will include input from administrator evaluations, parent surveys, operations management and other formative and summative content assessments .

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to explain why the goal for student achievement was not set at 100 percent rather than the 95 percent listed on page 29.

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:

The applicant has done a strong job of conducting outreach to ensure parental and community involvement in planning and program design. They do however, reference letters of support for this effort which are not included with the application.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant has conducted extensive outreach in the community to obtain support for the application. They have surveyed community needs for the school, analyzed data and engaged in post survey follow up with interested stakeholders. The success of this effort is demonstrated in the cooperative work and study programs the school has been able to develop with schools and businesses in the area that offer students the opportunity to gain work experience in their selected fields.

Weaknesses:

The letters of support from interested stakeholders referenced in the application were not included with the application.

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:

Parental and community involvement on the planning, program design and implementation of the charter school has been strong. Parents and community groups were surveyed about the need and makeup of the proposed school. Interested stakeholders have written letters of support and collaboration for the school. They also testified in support of the school's charter at a local public hearing. The school's educational and administrative model encourages parental input for curriculum design through board input, oversight, participation in the Parent Advisory Council, in person and virtual input. (See page 33.)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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:

Key staff onboard for the applicant are well credentialed. However, the applicant could have done a better job conducting outreach to traditionally underrepresented minorities.

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 were noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to explain why more specific targeting to attract underrepresented groups was not discussed in this criterion.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

The Principal of Hill House Passport Academy is a highly qualified teacher and administrator. His experience includes a strong background in curriculum development, new teacher evaluation systems, accountability programs, and the implementation of real world student assessments. The applicants partner organization and education services providers has 13 years of experience in assisting charter schools in grams management activity, accounting ,procurement, management bookkeeping and other day to day activities.

Weaknesses:

None were 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 applicant provides a narrative explanation of management goals and objectives in answering this criterion but does not offer the specificity and detail required by the question.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides narrative support of its management objectives on pages 39-40 but fails to include a specific management template which utilizes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and specific and measurable milestones . See page 40.

Reader's Score: 10

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 received its Charter agreement from the Board of Public Education of the School District of Pittsburgh on December 18, 2013 and a copy of the approved charter was provided . The applicant agrees to utilize the Pennsylvania System of School assessment and to provide the District with the data files and information necessary for them to be evaluated in accordance with PSSA requirements.

Weaknesses:

None were 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 Pennsylvania Charter School Law provides a great degree of flexibility to the applicant in the operation and administration of the charter school. They school,has statutory authority to decide matters related ,but not limited to the operation of the school including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were 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's blended high school learning model is designed to reengage at risk students who have dropped out of high school. The model utilizes flexible scheduling, online work, face to face instruction, career exploration and wrap around supportive social services provide an individualized educational experience. This model has been successfully utilized in the applicant's partner K12 school that has served students who have dropped out of high school in a blended learning environment for the past five years. This blended learning model with supportive school and community based social support services has proven to be an effective reengagement solution for out of school youth.

Weaknesses:

None were 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:

None were noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 04:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/26/2014 12:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Hill House Passport Academy Charter School (U282B140065)

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	15
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	10
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 #4 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 4: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Hill House Passport Academy Charter School (U282B140065)

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 describes both the instructional practices and curriculum of the school to be an innovative and highly personalized effective model of education. The applicant has partnered with K12 INC who according to the applicant is the leading provider of K12 online courses and blended learning (page 11). The applicant describes the instructional practices that will be used which includes blended learning, direct instruction, and independent work.

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 applicant describes the use of individualized learning plans (pages 21-24) to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. The applicant also includes information on how the curriculum will be aligned and integrated with supplemental materials to prepare students for keystone exams.

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 applicant outlines their strategies for meeting three objectives on pages 20-22. The applicant' s goal is to have 93% of students master all disciplines as shown by curricular assessments and will begin testing in October of the school year (page 20). The applicant's second objective is for 95% of students who have attended for a complete year to show one full year of academic growth and will utilize the Stanford Achievement test to assess this objective (page 21). The final objective is that by the second year of operations all students will achieve a score of "meet" or "exceed" on the Oaks testing which is in alignment with State law (page 22).

Weaknesses:

No weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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:

The applicant outlines the number of relationships that they have built in the community and the ways that they will encourage parental involvement in the school.

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant has built relationships with degree programs in the area for students to participate in dual enrollment and also attend after high school (page 30). The applicant also describes relationships that have been established with businesses and non-profits as well as social service agencies and faith based institutions (page 31).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide any documentation in the appendix regarding the relationships that have been established in the community.

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 applicant describes the ability of parents/guardians to monitor student course work through online systems and tools (page 32).

The applicant includes information on how parents can hold direct leadership positions within the school and influence the management of school by serving on the Board (page 32). Parents who are not members of the Board can attend board meetings and there is the potential for a parent advisory committee (page 33).

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 applicant does not describe how they will encourage applicants from a variety of backgrounds but does outline the experience and education of the key project personnel.

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:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Reader's Score: 0

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

Strengths:

The public charter school grant director [REDACTED] is the principal of the school and has a strong background in education and experience as both a teacher and administrator (page 37).

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 applicant describes who will be responsible for management and relationships between the Board and the principal (page 38). The applicant also outlines how finances and purchases will be handled by the administration; and how performance reports will be created.

Weaknesses:

The times line that is provided by the applicant on page 40 does not include clearly defined responsibilities or milestones (page 40).

Reader's Score: 10

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 an approved charter by the Board of Education that was granted on December 18, 2013.

The applicant will participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (or any successor assessment system authorized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) and provide the school district with both preliminary and final PSSA files and implement a formative assessment which is aligned to the school's curriculum (page 41).

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 applicant states that according to Pennsylvania charter school law the Board of trustees has the ability to decide budget, curriculum, and operating procedure (page 41).

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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's program is targeted for drop out students and will utilize the pull out intervention model along with individualized support and self-contained classrooms to accelerate learning and improve high school graduation rates (page 6-8).

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 applicant did not address this criterion.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/26/2014 12:32 PM