

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/04/2015 10:38 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Baxter Academies of Maine (U282B160036)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Achievement Standards	5	4
Assessing Achievement of School Objectives		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement		
1. Community Support	10	9
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	22	22
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	14
Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.		
1. Existence of Charter	15	15
Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Sub Total	100	97
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students - 1		
1. CPP 1	3	3
Supporting High-Need Students - 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments		
1. CPP 3	2	0
Sub Total	8	3
Total	108	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 1: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Baxter Academies of Maine (U282B160036)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices

1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(1)).

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.

Strengths:

Curriculum is "designed for project-based learning, student-centered learning, and standards-based assessment" (p. 7). Curriculum is also aligned to common core (p. 8) and has a STEM focus. Students work alongside teachers Mondays through Thursdays and on Fridays participate in Flex Friday. On Flex Friday, students work on student-designed and student-driven yearlong projects. Baxter Academy provided test scores (p. 13) that demonstrated that the program is working: Baxter exceeded state and national averages in the 10th grade PSAT.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 U.S.C. 7221c(a)(1)).

Strengths:

Baxter Academy provided five examples of students who have met or exceeded standards in their time at the school (pps. 14 - 16). One student went from a GPA of 48 out of 100 to meeting or exceeding the majority of students at Baxter (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

The examples on pages 14 through 16 painted a detailed picture of how Baxter is assisting educationally disadvantaged students, but there was no mention of the strategy used to ensure these students are meeting State academic content standards. It would have been helpful to compare additional data against Maine and National averages.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement of School Objectives

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school s objectives, inclusive of developing 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 Section VI.4. Performance Measures 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:

Baxter Academy has an approved charter with the Maine Charter School Commission and provided an abbreviated version of the project-specific performance measures and its plan on achieving each goal (p. 28). Baxter provided details on student attendance goals, the plan to close the achievement gap, Board goals, and parental engagement goals. This was a comprehensive narrative.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The extent of community support and parental and community involvement (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(3); 20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(3)(E)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

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--

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

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.

Strengths:

Community support is clear through the established partnerships with the Biodiversity Research Institute, Maine Medical Center Research Institute, and Wells Reserve (p. 18).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful to see community support for having the school in the first place. Baxter mentioned that parents were out in force during public meetings regarding the charter. Although Baxter is in its third year of operation, Baxter could have described whether there was a lot of community support for its application. Then, Baxter could have compared whether this support has increased or decreased.

Reader's Score: 4

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

(ii) How parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).

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.

Strengths:

The board chair is a parent (p. 33), and both principle writers of the grant application are parents. Parents are included in conversations through monthly meetings and complete an annual parent survey (p. 34).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The quality of project personnel (34 CFR 75.210(e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3)(ii)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's

Sub Question

training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.

Strengths:

Baxter Academy lists personnel from a variety of backgrounds and experience. Baxter also states on page 27 that it "actively recruits and maintains staff of diverse backgrounds, encouraging people who represent a broad base of ages, gender and cultures to join the collaboration." Baxter also provided a non-discrimination statement on page 28.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

- 2. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).**

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.

Strengths:

Very detailed bios provided for key management positions (pps. 20-28). Relevant training and qualifications provided and demonstrate quality of project personnel. For example, [REDACTED] has 51 years of experience in the fields of public and private education (p. 21), and the head of school [REDACTED] was recently awarded Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Game Changer award. This was one of 10 awards given in the nation (p. 22).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The quality of the management plan (34 CFR 75.210(g)(1) and (g)(2)(i)).**

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

Strengths:

Baxter Academy has detailed its plan for fundraising, supplementing state funding, and fiscal monitoring (p. 37). Based on the biographies of the key staff provided, Baxter seems well suited to meet all school objectives.

Weaknesses:

A description of timelines and milestones would have been helpful to strengthen the narrative.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency (20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(L)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The Secretary considers--

(i) Whether a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists (up to 10 points);

Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

Strengths:

Contract exists and has been approved by the Maine Charter School Commission.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The Secretary considers--

(ii) 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 (up to 5 points)

Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

Strengths:

Baxter Academy provided details on the objectives and measures and detailed how student performance will be measured.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(2)).**

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.

Strengths:

Baxter Academy provided a very detailed description of the charter climate in Maine, and detailed that "Baxter Academy and the Maine Charter School Commission have an outstanding relationship that is based on timely reporting...as well as solid communication." (p. 32)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 1

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners)**

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

- (a) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies**
- (b) Students with disabilities**
- (c) English learners**

Note: 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:

Baxter Academy serves 19% of students with disabilities and 1.2% English learners (p. 4). Due to its location (Portland, Maine) and student population from 60 different towns, Baxter Academy serves rural students, students with disabilities, English learners, and other high-need students. The program has already seen results - attendance trends reverse and students with disabilities are integrated (p. 6).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes)

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Strengths:

N/A - Baxter Academy did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

N/A - Baxter Academy did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments

Projects that are designed to improve early learning and development outcomes across one or more of the essential domains of school readiness for children from birth through third grade (or for any age group within this range) through a focus on including preschool, whether offered in school or community-based settings, as part of elementary education programs and systems in order to expand opportunities for preschool students and teachers.

Strengths:

N/A - Baxter Academy did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

N/A - Baxter Academy did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 11/04/2015 10:38 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/05/2015 09:18 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Baxter Academies of Maine (U282B160036)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	13
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Achievement Standards	5	4
Assessing Achievement of School Objectives		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	15
Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement		
1. Community Support	10	10
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	22	20
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.		
1. Existence of Charter	15	15
Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
Sub Total	100	95
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students - 1		
1. CPP 1	3	3
Supporting High-Need Students - 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments		
1. CPP 3	2	0
Sub Total	8	3
Total	108	98

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 1: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Baxter Academies of Maine (U282B160036)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices

1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(1)).

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.

Strengths:

The school's educational philosophy is guided by the Framework for 21st Century Learning. Baxter Academy of Maine will utilize project-based learning, student centered learning, and standards-based assessment in conjunction with a Flex Friday concept. The model allows for the opportunity to create real-world connections, intertwine personal interest with school studies, collaboration, creativity, and reflection. The Flex-Friday projects are innovative and will give the students the chance to serve as project/team leaders and allows learners with different abilities and socio-economic backgrounds to work together and bridge previously existing gaps.

Pages E20-E23

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide any data to reflect the model working and the current successes.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 U.S.C. 7221c(a)(1)).

Strengths:

The school has a tier system, a student support team, and they developed an RTI tracking system to support students who are not mastering standards.

Pages E23, 24

Weaknesses:

The description of the Discipline Ladder suggests that students who are struggling learners will automatically receive a discipline plan as part of the intervention process.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement of School Objectives

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school s objectives, inclusive of developing 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 Section VI.4. Performance Measures 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 school is developing a standards-based assessment system that is aligned to the common core standards. Portfolios developed and maintained by the students are connected to the guiding principles designed by teachers to reflect strengths, demonstrative initiative, collaboration, inquiry and investigation, problem solving, idea integration, effective wiring, communication, reflections, and civic awareness. Students use these portfolios during student led conferences to present learning goals and their progress. Students will participate in the state required assessments and SAT/PSAT Testing. The applicant provided evidence of success, for example, the school's first robotic team participated in the World Competition and earned the 2nd highest ranked rookie team in the world.

E24, E25-E29

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The extent of community support and parental and community involvement (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(3); 20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(3)(E)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

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--

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

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

Sub Question

will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

Strengths:

Community support is evident and the applicant has started a working relationships with research institutes in the area which provide for student internship and mentorship programs. Neighboring schools have visited the school to observe and even replicate the Flex Friday concept.

Pages E31, E32

Weaknesses:

None Noted

Reader's Score: 5

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

(ii) How parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).

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.

Strengths:

The school hosts parent conferences and the application reflects that parents can serve as members of the school governing board. The parent advisory group provides feedback on governance, communications, fundraisers, etc. E31, E32, E43

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The quality of project personnel (34 CFR 75.210(e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3)(ii)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

Sub Question

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.

Strengths:

The members of the key project personnel had solid experience with more than 50 years of combined service in education, accreditation, and leadership.

Pages E33-E40

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

2. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.

Strengths:

The members of the key project personnel more than 50 years of combined service in education, accreditation, and leadership.

E33-E40

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not state how personnel recruitment is conducted to ensure diversity in staffing.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The quality of the management plan (34 CFR 75.210(g)(1) and (g)(2)(i)).

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a project implementation plan which clearly outlines tasks, a realistic timeline, milestones, and the personnel responsible.

E56-E59

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency (20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(L)).

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The Secretary considers--

(i) Whether a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists (up to 10 points);

Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

Strengths:

A Charter contract exists between the charter school and authorizer.
E69

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The Secretary considers--

(ii) 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 (up to 5 points)

Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the

Sub Question

authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

Strengths:

The Charter contract adheres to the state assessments that are required by federal and state law.
Page E80

Weaknesses:

None Noted

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(2)).**

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.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a copy the charter contract which outlines the relationship between the charter school and the authorizer and meets the requirements of the state charter law.

Page E69

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 1

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners)**

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

- (a) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies**
- (b) Students with disabilities**
- (c) English learners**

Note: 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 states that the school has a high level of high-need students as determined by a random lottery admissions process. The school has an ESE rate of 19% which is much higher than the state averages. Students served are from 60 towns within the area which has the highest rate of foreign-born individuals in comparison to the entire state. Prior to startup, Baxter Academy successfully created mandatory Special Education Policies and procedures, certified by the Maine Department of Education, Office of Special Education and the Maine Charter School Commission, which includes compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations, and an ELL plan to support student proficiency in English. Also, the applicant states that funding will support the implementation of a project-based program for ELL students. Pages E17-E19

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes)

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Strengths:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments

Projects that are designed to improve early learning and development outcomes across one or more of the essential domains of school readiness for children from birth through third grade (or for any age group within this range) through a focus on including preschool, whether offered in school or community-based settings, as part of elementary education programs and systems in order to expand opportunities for preschool students and teachers.

Strengths:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address this criterion.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/05/2015 09:18 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/04/2015 10:03 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Baxter Academies of Maine (U282B160036)

Reader #3: *****

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1. Community Support	10	10
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1. Project Personnel	22	20
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1. Management Plan	15	15
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1. Existence of Charter	15	15
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Supporting High-Need Students - 2		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments		
1. CPP 3	2	0
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Panel #1 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 1: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Baxter Academies of Maine (U282B160036)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices

1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(1)).

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.

Strengths:

Baxter Academy of Science and Technology ("Baxter") is one of Maine's first charter schools, serving 9th-12th grade students. The school promotes student ownership of learning through inquiry and a project-based curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and proposes to support the model, in part, through US DOE grant funds. The applicant group serves a high needs student population in rural Maine. Nineteen percent of their students have disabilities, 13% have 504s, and students come from over 60 different towns to attend the school. Though Baxter services high need populations (students with disabilities, rural students and English Learners), it connects students to STEM opportunities and alternative learning model in Maine's largest hub for innovative nonprofit and private businesses (Pg. e17).

Baxter has systems and resources in place to enable all students to succeed. Six staff members have advanced degrees, training and certification in special education, and one of the proposed projects under the grant, is an innovative project-based model designed to assist English Learners (Pg.e17). The educational approach is clearly described and is guided by the Framework for 21s Century Learning and Understanding by Design. Baxter concentrates on community-based partnerships with industry, scientific research institutions, and hires teachers experienced in student-centered and project-based learning (Pp.e21-22). All students spend 20% of the week working on self-designed and self-driven yearlong projects that encompasses the humanities, music, world languages, math, science, and technology (Pg.e23).

The Flexible Friday and Project-Based Learning Models have proven to be effective components of Baxter's design. The applicant purports that these models have enabled Baxter to overcome gaps between different groups of students as evinced by the Smarter Balanced statewide assessment. Accordingly, 85% of Baxter juniors scored at or above standard in Problem-Solving & Modeling Data Analysis, compared with 65% at or above in the state as a whole (Pg. e26). The applicant also presented case studies to demonstrate how Project-Based Learning is making significant differences in student outcomes, including attendance, engagement, and achievement for disadvantaged students (Po. E27-e29).

Weaknesses:

Baxter provided data regarding school wide student performance, but failed to disaggregate the results of the high needs students (special needs students, English Learners, and rural students). Presenting such data would strengthen the school's stance that its models are, in fact, effective with the target population.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. **The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 U.S.C. 7221c(a)(1)).**

Strengths:

Baxter uses a tiered system to address the needs of struggling students (Pg. 10). Students who need assistance beyond RTI's Tier 1 level, are placed on a behavior plan and receive additional in-school and/or after school support. If the student continues to struggle, he/she will be referred for evaluation to receive special education services. Currently, Baxter has a Student Support Team and is "building" a RTI tracking system and students with disabilities and English Learners are mainstreamed into full inclusion classes and participate in all activities (Pg. 39).

Weaknesses:

According to the narrative on page e64, Baxter uses a Discipline ladder system to convey clear expectations, but also to provide supports for struggling students. Also, if a student continues to struggle in Tier I, he/she is placed on an academic plan and a behavioral plan. The applicant fails to discuss the purpose or content of the Discipline ladder system and failed to explain why academically struggling students are placed on behavioral plans.

One of Baxter's project objectives is to design and implement a project-based learning program for English learners; however, the applicant fails to discuss how the project will assist English Learners in meeting academic achievement standards.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement of School Objectives

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school's objectives, inclusive of developing 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 Section VI.4. Performance Measures 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:

Baxter has a plan and ample human resources for assessing the achievement of its objectives. Several staff members [REDACTED] have worked with standards-based models and relevant assessments (Pp.e24-25). Additionally, the school has a performance contract with its authorizer, which sets targets for state assessments and school assessments (Individual Learning Plans/Portfolios, NWEA, Exhibitions, etc.) in ELA and Math. There are also targets for attendance, dual enrollment SAT and ACT performance, college enrollment, and fiscal management (Pp.e41-43 & e98-103).

The applicant clearly identified the project-specific performance measures and performance targets for the objectives indicated on pp.e12 & e44. As stated on both pages, Baxter proposes to use grant funds to: 1) multiple pathways to student success through the Flexible Friday program and classroom Project-Based Learning; 2) expanding and creating opportunity around anywhere, anytime learning; 3) designing proficiency-based graduation requirements; 4) designing and implementing a project-based learning program for English learners; 5) empowering girls learning STEM and 6)

purchasing necessary equipment to increase capacity for Project-Based Learning. There are targets for 4 of the 6 grant related objectives on page e44. Plans to implement all of the objectives are adequately discussed on (pp. 53-55).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The extent of community support and parental and community involvement (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(3); 20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(3)(E)).

Strengths:

Community – The school has established working relationships with research institutions – Biodiversity Research Institute, Maine Medical Center Research Institute, Notfar, Hardy Girls/Healthy Women, the Maine Chapter of the Women’s Transportation Seminar, and Wells Reserve – which provide student internships and mentorships (Pg.e31). Baxter has also shared best practices with high schools in Maine and one high performing high school will pilot a project modeled after the Flexible Friday concept.

Family – Many of the decision-makers at Baxter are parents. The board chair and another director founded the original parent advisory group and both principal writers of the application grant are parents. The parent advisory group, fondly named the “Friends of Baxter Academy” is the formal structure for families to become involved in the school. Parent workshops are conducted monthly to discuss issues that involve the community and an annual parent survey is disseminated to gather input from all parents. Students also have a voice at Baxter. There is a student senate comprised of one elected representative from each of the school’s advisory groups and the school facilitates Town Hall style meetings and a student Judiciary Board.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

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--

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

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.

Strengths:

The school has established working relationships with research institutions – Biodiversity Research Institute, Maine Medical Center Research Institute, Notfar, Hardy Girls/Healthy Women, the Maine Chapter of the Women’s

Sub Question

Transportation Seminar, and Wells Reserve – which provide student internships and mentorships (Pg.e31). Baxter has also shared best practices with high schools in Maine and one high performing high school will pilot a project modeled after the Flexible Friday concept.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

(ii) How parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).

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.

Strengths:

Many of the decision-makers at Baxter are parents. The board chair and another director founded the original parent advisory group and both principal writers of the application grant are parents. The parent advisory group, fondly named the “Friends of Baxter Academy” is the formal structure for families to become involved in the school. Parent workshops are conducted monthly to discuss issues that involve the community and an annual parent survey is disseminated to gather input from all parents. Students also have a voice at Baxter. There is a student senate comprised of one elected representative from each of the school’s advisory groups and the school facilitates Town Hall style meetings and a student Judiciary Board.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The quality of project personnel (34 CFR 75.210(e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3)(ii)).

Strengths:

Management of the grant will be a team effort to be led by [REDACTED], an experienced administrator from a standards-based school, [REDACTED]. Each member’s experience and backgrounds are aligned to the six project-specific areas indicated on page e12. On the governance and management side, the school has an experienced Board Treasurer, [REDACTED], who holds a CPA license in five states, to provide fiscal monitoring for grant funds and [REDACTED] will continue to be responsible for state mandated reporting.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to describe how it will recruit for diversity moving forward.

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

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

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.

Strengths:

Management of the grant will be a team effort to be led by [REDACTED], an experienced administrator from a standards-based school, [REDACTED]. Each member's experience and backgrounds are aligned to the six project-specific areas indicated on page e12.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

2. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.

Strengths:

On the governance and management side, the school has an experienced Board Treasurer, [REDACTED], who holds a CPA license in five states, to provide fiscal monitoring for grant funds and [REDACTED] will continue to be responsible for state mandated reporting.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to describe how it will recruit for diversity moving forward

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The quality of the management plan (34 CFR 75.210(g)(1) and (g)(2)(i)).

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

Strengths:

The management plan is thoroughly detailed in a Project Implementation Plan that includes activities, timelines, responsible parties and milestones to be met (Pg. e56-59).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.

1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency (20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(L)).

Strengths:

There is an existence of a charter agreement and performance contract between Baxter and the Maine Charter School Commission that was executed on May 7, 2013.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The Secretary considers--

(i) Whether a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists (up to 10 points);

Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

Strengths:

There is an existence of a charter agreement and performance contract between Baxter and the Maine Charter School Commission that was executed on May 7, 2013.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The Secretary considers--

(ii) 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 (up to 5 points)

Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant

Sub Question

should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

Strengths:

There is an existence of a charter agreement and performance contract between Baxter and the Maine Charter School Commission that was executed on May 7, 2013.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(2)).**

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.

Strengths:

The applicant provided detailed information regarding state accountability requirements of charter schools in Maine. Included in the narrative is a discussion about the authorizer's oversight process, which entails a year-end review of compliance performance and progress towards meeting performance goals and objectives. Findings from this review process results in public disclosure and in Baxter's initial review was satisfactory.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 1

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners)**

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

- (a) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies**
- (b) Students with disabilities**
- (c) English learners**

Note: 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 group serves a high needs student population in rural Maine. Nineteen percent of their students have disabilities, 13% have 504s, and students come from over 60 different towns to attend the school. Though Baxter services high need populations (students with disabilities, rural students and English Learners), it connects students to STEM opportunities and alternative learning model in Maine's largest hub for innovative nonprofit and private businesses (Pg. e17).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 2

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes)

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Strengths:

None noted.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not respond to this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments

Projects that are designed to improve early learning and development outcomes across one or more of the essential domains of school readiness for children from birth through third grade (or for any age group within this range) through a focus on including preschool, whether offered in school or community-based settings, as part of elementary education programs and systems in order to expand opportunities for preschool students and teachers.

Strengths:

None noted.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not respond to this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

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