

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/10/2015 07:14 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (U282B160010)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	14
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	5
<b>Assessing Achievement of School Objectives</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	13
<b>Community &amp; Parental Support &amp; Comm. Involvement</b>		
1. Community Support	10	9
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	15
<b>Existence &amp; Quality of Charter or Performance Con.</b>		
1. Existence of Charter	15	14
<b>Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	94
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	1
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments</b>		
1. CPP 3	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	1
<b>Total</b>	108	95

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (U282B160010)

## 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:

Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (YSMCS) will implement a program that establishes a culture to meet the individual needs of the students. Strategies such as Response to Intervention activities, Saturday Academy, and after school tutoring, as well as a gifted and talented identification, will be used to improve student success. (e 20) YSMCS is the first multilingual and multicultural elementary school in the district to requiring all students to be engaged in new language acquisition, they are conversant in two major world languages, understand the interdependence of the world's peoples;(and are proficient not only in core academic subjects but are also equally adept at moving between cultures. (e 19) There is a diverse student population and the school will foster this with parents as well. Assessments will be used to document and address student learning and outcomes of achievement. (e 19) The various content areas are described in detail and discuss how the student will meet the State student academic achievement and content standards. (e 23) The Marzano instructional strategies are listed in the proposal and include the use of Project Based Learning that is inquiry-driven, student-centered, and interdisciplinary. (e 36)

#### Weaknesses:

There is no discussion on the instructional practices that will be used and what accommodations will be made to students who come in during the school year or after kindergarten.

Reader's Score: 14

### 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 focus of YSMCS will be on Language acquisition and math/science competency. The identification of student academic needs through assessments is key to improving student outcomes and developing a student-learning plan with input from staff, parents, and specialists. A thorough description is provided that explains the process used to identify student needs, RTI, and the steps for dealing with students that are at risk in completing their educational plan. (e 21) The use of the student assistance committee (SAP) will be to recommend additional intervention for the student's personal education plan to promote success. (e 39) With this process in place, the assessment results indicated that 46% of the ELL population improved from below basic and basic performance levels to proficient levels. Family involvement is also a key component of this effort and the school joined the National Network of Partnership Schools to support and deliver

training designed to enhance school engagement of traditionally disassociated families. (e 41) A number of support activities were included in the proposal such as one-on-one staff or volunteer tutoring on specific content (matter during the school day, Counseling and problem-solving support and a number of other strategies. The formation of clubs that has about 10 members includes the Language Clubs, Math Clubs and many others. (e 42) The YSMCS Advisory Board has been established to provide the administration and educators with current educational research that will guide decision-making related to the school's success, school policies, and other functions to support the school in meeting the academic achievement of its students. (e 44-47)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted

**Reader's Score:** 5

**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:**

A number of assessments such as STAR, Aimsweb and others will be used to identify student progress in meeting core content academic strengths and weaknesses as aligned to state and national norms. (e 21) The language needs of the ELL population and content areas that require targeted support will be identified through the various assessments presented in the proposal. (e 23) Individualized learning plans will be established to serve as a tool to determine the progress of the student to achieving success. (e 24)

**Weaknesses:**

The measures listed were vague, unclear, and general since it included the word "exceeds" as an example in Goal 1 and states that the YSMCS students will "meet or exceed" the whole school state average on the PSSA. The proposal does not define or explain what "meet or exceed" means.

**Reader's Score:** 13

**Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement**

**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:**

The use of multilingual flyers, bulletins, media, mailings, Internet website and workshops at schools and other public institution was used to provide information about the school and admission process. (e 31) The information about "open houses" was distributed to the community and those that did not attend were provided with a packet of information about the school. (e 48) An application is required to be submitted by the parents/guardians for admissions into the school. It must be submitted prior to the deadline and if there are more applicants than spaces, a lottery is held. (e 49)

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness 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 founding board established community outreach activities to inform members of the school's community about the charter school's proposed program. As a result of the outreach activities, the school met initial enrollment targets and is fully enrolled for the 2015/16 school year with a waiting list for next school year. (e 43) YSMCS established an Advisory Board whose members include highly distinguished educators from local universities who provide the administration and educators with current educational research that will assist in guiding decision-making to the school's success. A list of the distinguished members is included in the proposal. (e 44-45) There were many parents who lent their support to the founding board and participated on various committees and the PTO. (e 52 & e 63)

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

The proposal did not describe the specific parental and community involvement in the planning and program design of the charter school.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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: 21**

**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 YSMCS Board Members have extensive experiences and backgrounds in parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school. (e 48) The experiences and background of the Board members are included in the proposal. There is also an advisory board and their names and backgrounds are included as well. (e 44) The school recruiting efforts have been a success, which is reflected by the mission of a cultural and diverse school staff. They are committed to actively seeking diversity among staff reflective of the diversity of the population. All of the recruitment includes assurances of non-discrimination and is based on strong academic preparation, professional competence, intellectual rigor, emotional maturity, enthusiastic professional attitude, knowledge of instructional practices, and the advancement of the school's educational goals. (e 57) The proposal presented the data on the faculty, which identified 16 faculty members, 45.5% are minorities, 36.5 % are first generation college graduates, 38.9 % are multi-lingual, 100 % have more than one certification or highly qualified designation. (e 56)

**Weaknesses:**

There was no effort to recruit beyond the local community and the local university. This did not explain in detail the development of a comprehensive strategy for encouraging applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

## Sub Question

**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 applicant indicated that the funding from this grant will be committed to improving staff development, evaluation, and retention. It will include the delivery of PBL, data-driven instruction, and instructional delivery aligned with state standards. (e 38) YSMCS will provide professional development opportunities through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and identified staff development days. (e 57-58) The strategies and process employed in the school for the PLCs and PD efforts are thoroughly explained in the proposal.

### **Weaknesses:**

No weakness 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:**

The proposal presents the five (5) objectives and performance indicators, which includes the metrics and measurements used to determine the outcomes of each objective. (e 58-61) The proposal provided a map of the academic areas and the expected outcomes for academic success. The school's approved charter serves as its primary performance contract with its authorizing district and serves as the measures to assess the quality of the school performance related to academics and operations. (e 61) The budget provides a list of expenditures for the grant that are correlated to the outcomes of the proposal. (e 1354-1361)

### **Weaknesses:**

No weakness 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: 14**

**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:**

YSMCS is authorized by the McKeesport Area School District and the superintendent is informed about the school development in formal meetings with the founding Board members. (e 61) The signed Charter School Agreement is included in the proposal.

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness 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:**

The proposal included a copy of the Charter School agreement for the five years, which was very comprehensive and included items such as governance, goals and objectives, recruiting and marketing plan and other key elements. (e 74)

**Weaknesses:**

Some of the goals and objectives were unclear and vague such as "All students will sustain consistent incremental growth toward achieving the state mandated proficiency levels" which does not provide details and specific performance measures. (e 77)

**Reader's Score: 4**

## 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:

YSMCS is given exception to state and local rules in a number of areas such as selection of staff, is a non-union school that has an evaluation model that reviews staff efficacy on multiple measures, including student performance and parent satisfaction, full autonomy over budgeting and facility, length of school day and other areas. (e 62)

### Weaknesses:

No weakness 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:

Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (YSMCS) will focus on providing an educational program that will support students in meeting or exceeding the academic standards. (e 17) The use of a differentiated curriculum that emphasizes access to the content across subject areas, remediation to assist in student growth and an extended school day to support the students with the time and tools to be successful. (e 18)

### Weaknesses:

It was difficult to ascertain what specific steps and strategies will be implemented to support high needs students. There were many broad statements but the response lacked specificity when it came to identifying the steps of the programs that will lead to a higher number of students achieving success in the program. While the proposal discussed the broad approaches such as the differentiated curriculum, there were no in-depth comments detailing specific methods and strategies for supporting students with disabilities and English Language Learners. (e 18-19)

**Reader's Score:** 1

**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:**

No strength noted

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted

**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:**

No strength noted

**Weaknesses:**

No weakness noted

**Reader's Score:** 0

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (U282B160010)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	14
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	5
<b>Assessing Achievement of School Objectives</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	13
<b>Community &amp; Parental Support &amp; Comm. Involvement</b>		
1. Community Support	10	9
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	14
<b>Existence &amp; Quality of Charter or Performance Con.</b>		
1. Existence of Charter	15	14
<b>Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	93
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	1
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments</b>		
1. CPP 3	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	1
<b>Total</b>	108	94

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (U282B160010)

## 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 applicant thoroughly describes each content area, giving details regarding the standards that will be used to measure proficiency, the curriculum that will be used, and the philosophy behind the approach. The descriptions lend confidence to the question of the applicant's capacity to enable all students to meet academic challenges. (e20-38)

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant states that starting in 2nd grade, the student's chosen primary world language will be the sole means of communication during the world language hour. While the applicant cites evidence to show that immersion is effective for language acquisition, there is no discussion of how the learning of students who come in later than kindergarten, and especially after 2nd grade, would be approached. (e25)

Reader's Score: 14

### 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 applicant demonstrates there is a plan for identifying struggling students (assessment data) and creating individualized support plans in place. According to the applicant's RTI program, if a student has not made significant growth after two grading periods, they can be referred for SPED testing. Multiple activities have been planned for struggling students, including tutoring, extended day programming, and 'Saturday Academy.' Each of these suggests the applicant will assist disabled students meet challenging academic goals. (e38-43)

#### Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

## 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 objectives align with the applicant's stated mission and vision for the school, and the applicant identifies objectives across academic, financial, and operational fields. (e59-61)

#### **Weaknesses:**

The measures that the applicant lists are sometimes vague and the level of rigor is unclear. For example, under Objective 1, the applicant seeks students to "exceed average performance in mathematics on Terra Nova or similar test." Without knowing the level at which the students would enter or how the average was determined (compared to whom?), it is difficult to determine if this is a rigorous goal consistent with the overall goal to improve performance for all students. (e59)

**Reader's Score:** 13

## 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:**

See subs

#### **Weaknesses:**

See subs

**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.

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

During the appeals process, the applicant was able to collect more than 1300 signatures from community supporters. An advisory board of university scholars has been established to provide the school's educators and administration with research-based guidance. (e45-e47)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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 applicant has reached out to potential families via pediatricians, youth orgs, and open houses. Outreach materials are in multiple languages to meet the needs of diverse families, suggesting that the applicant has thoughtfully considered how to engage the community. (e43)

**Weaknesses:**

There is not enough detail regarding how parents and community will be involved in the implementation of the school.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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:**

See subs

**Weaknesses:**

See subs

**Reader's Score: 21**

**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

**Sub Question**

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 applicant recruits staff from local universities with underrepresented minorities, suggesting its dedication to recruiting underrepresented minorities. (e55-56)

**Weaknesses:**

Beyond recruiting at universities, the applicant did not provide details of its other recruitment strategies that would lead to employing underrepresented groups.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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 school leader has been identified and has a background in charter education, including founding another charter school. Additionally, the applicant plans to provide multiple development opportunities during the school year, including personal learning communities and staff development days, focusing on a variety of topics including project-based learning instruction and how to incorporate language across curriculum. (e47-58)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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:**

The applicant provided their Implementation Grant Tracker that included a number of responsibilities the applicant would need to accomplish related to the grant proposal. It included "owners" and deadlines--all evidence that there is a plan in place and goals have been set. (pg53)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant failed to include enough budget details related to the objectives or identify responsibilities of the board. (pg53)

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:**

See subs

**Weaknesses:**

See subs

Reader's Score: 14

**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 applicant and the Pennsylvania State Charter School Appeal Board. (See appendix)

**Weaknesses:**

None

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.

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The contract states that the board of the charter shall follow the state's Charter Law, along with any other regulations applicable to charters. (pg49)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide a performance contract.

**Reader's Score:** 4

**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:**

PA charters have flexibility in most areas of operations, including selection of staff, unionization, teacher evaluation, and budgeting and facilities. (pg49)

**Weaknesses:**

None

**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 plans to locate the school in a district that has poor performance, and they plan to follow an academic plan that has proven to help students of similar backgrounds achieve at high levels. This kind of effort demonstrates the applicant's commitment to disadvantaged students. (e17-28)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant hints at serving high-needs students, but fails to describe in any detail how they would address the needs of rural students, students with disabilities, or ELL students specifically. There are some details in the invitational priority "Promoting Diversity," however that is not a field that is scored. (e17-28)

**Reader's Score:** 1

**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

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not respond to this question.

**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

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant failed to respond to this question.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 11/12/2015 12:46 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/04/2015 09:48 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (U282B160010)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	14
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	5
<b>Assessing Achievement of School Objectives</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	13
<b>Community &amp; Parental Support &amp; Comm. Involvement</b>		
1. Community Support	10	9
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	14
<b>Existence &amp; Quality of Charter or Performance Con.</b>		
1. Existence of Charter	15	14
<b>Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	93
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	1
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments</b>		
1. CPP 3	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	1
<b>Total</b>	108	94

# Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (U282B160010)

### 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 applicant provides a thorough and detailed explanation of curriculum chosen, including all core content domains, enrichment coursework and foreign languages studied (e20-37) that will be developed into a well-rounded educational program. In addition, the applicant details the various instructional approaches that are expected to be employed, including strategies that will be utilized across content/grades (e24-26).

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant should detail out rationale for choosing particular approach for ELL methodology and additional highlight additional student performance detail from sister schools throughout the state.

Reader's Score: 14

#### 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:

Through a thorough explanation of content and curriculum choices, applicant demonstrates their commitment and ability to assist educationally disadvantaged students to meet State academic and achievement standards. In addition, school details out a Response to Intervention protocol (e39) and potential additional supports (e41) that will ensure students who are identified as educationally disadvantaged are able to meet standards. Finally, the school has created additional enrichment clubs (e42) that seek to ensure students are afforded a well-rounded approach to learning core content.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

#### 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 applicant includes a number of high-quality assessments (e21-23) which will ensure that the school is able to ascertain appropriate student achievement levels and benchmarks. In addition, staff will reflect on student data during professional learning community (PLC) time (e23) and develop learning plans for students that are individualized based on student data (e23-24).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant should detail out exact quantitative goals for student achievement and progress towards academic goals. Instead, goals reported (e59-61), while lofty, lack specificity towards closing student achievement gaps.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**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.

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

Applicant details relationship with surround community, specifically calling attention to 1,300 support signatures for the school (e43) and diversity of the school board (e44).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses 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:**

Parental engagement is detailed in applicant's application and highlights how parent voice will be an integral aspect of the school community (e63). Through parental participation on the school board and PTO, parents will be thoughtfully included into the school community.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant should detail out exact goals for parental involvement, beyond participation (61).

**Reader's Score: 4**

**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: 21**

**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).**

**Sub Question**

**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 school cites a non-discrimination policy in ensuring that there is fair employment (e55). The applicant's initial hiring shows a diverse employment base (e56) and has outlined potential job skills required of applicants (e57).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant fails to give a thorough plan for how a diverse employment application pool will continued to be recruited, beyond university and teacher partnerships (e55-56).

**Reader's Score: 1**

- 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 applicant clearly articulates key project personnel, their qualifications and trainings needed to ensure appropriate project implementation (e47-55). In addition, the applicant cites staff already hired for key board and school positions.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses 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:**

The applicant includes a budget breakdown of key items for purchase (e1354-1358), which provides detail of expenses. In addition, the applicant includes general goals of what the funding will be utilized for, including staff development, curriculum, technology improvements and furnishings (e67).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant is missing a detailed narrative that explains goals for various expenses and ownership/responsibility of each party within each domain of the budget.

**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: 14**

**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:**

The applicant has a charter contract with the authorized public chartering agency.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses 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:**

The applicant details high-level goals for school to achieve as per chartering contract.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant should detail out specific objectives in chartering contract and ensure that fully detailed and quantitative.

**Reader's Score:** 4

**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 is detailed in their description of SEA flexibility, including what flexibility is afforded to the school both on a local and state-wide level (e61-62). In addition, the applicant provides examples to solidify the exact areas of flexibility, including that of teaching evaluations, hiring, school day length, and curriculum.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses 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:**

Applicant details out enrollment vision for student population, which includes students whose native language is not American English (e18-19). In addition, applicant discusses both racial diversity and that of language diversity, which are both targeted for program build out.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant does not detail the exact supports for English Language Learners within program choice(s).

**Reader's Score:** 1

**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:**

No strengths reported.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant does not detail how they will improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

**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:**

No strengths reported.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant does not include preschool within their application.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 11/04/2015 09:48 PM