

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/11/2010 02:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education, Indiana Department of (U282D090013)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. QUESTION 1	0	
Competitive Preference Priority		
Capacity to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need		
1. QUESTION 2	10	8
Selection Criteria		
Need for facility funding		
1. QUESTION 3	30	16
Quality of plan		
1. QUESTION 4	30	27
The grant project team		
1. QUESTION 5	15	12
The budget		
1. QUESTION 6	15	12
State experience		
1. QUESTION 7	10	5
Total	110	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel One: 84.282D

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Education, Indiana Department of (U282D090013)

Questions

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall Comments

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - Capacity to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need

1. The capacity of charter schools to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need for this choice based on--

- (1) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion or number of public schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), 20 U.S.C. 7221a(e);
- (2) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion of students perform poorly on State academic assessments; and
- (3) The extent to which the applicant would target services to communities with large proportions of low-income students.

Strengths:

The applicant plans to target charter schools that serve middle and high school students where at least one traditional middle school or high school has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive years and serves a student population where at least 70% of enrolled students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. [p10-11]

Weaknesses:

Hinging eligibility on a geographic area where one traditional middle or high school has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive years seems rather broad. The applicant could have provided some data to indicate how many districts in the state would qualify as a result. This ?failed AYP? criteria references middle and/or high school in two sections [p10, 14] and high school only in another section [p11].

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Need for facility funding

1. (1) The need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the State.
- (2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil

basis.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 30

**26-30
Excellent**

**21-25
Good**

**16-20
Fair**

**0-15
Poor**

Strengths:

The applicant notes that school corporations (a.k.a. districts) have declined to make capital project funds available to any charter schools in the state, including conversion charter schools. [p6]

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not provided any data to quantify the need. This makes it difficult to assess whether the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of plan

1. (1) The likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State either retaining a new per-pupil facilities aid program or continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period.
- (2) The flexibility charter schools have in their use of facility funds for the various authorized purposes.
- (3) The quality of the plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds.
- (4) The per-pupil facilities aid formula's ability to target resources to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty.
- (5) For projects that plan to reserve funds for evaluation, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for this purpose.
- (6) For projects that plan to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, or personnel, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for these purposes.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 30

**26-30
Excellent**

**21-25
Good**

**16-20
Fair**

**0-15
Poor**

Strengths:

The State is likely to retain a new per-pupil facilities aid program as the existence of the program is conditioned on receipt of the grant. [p6] The applicant shows state per-pupil facilities aid growing from \$1M to \$4.9M over the five-year period for total state support of \$14.8M. [Table 3]

The proposal allows for the flexibility of charter schools to use facility funds for the various authorized purposes, including rent, purchase of a building or land (provided the land is used for a school building), construction, renovation, leasehold improvements, and debt service. [p9]

The applicant has a quality plan to determine eligibility that targets charter schools that serve middle and high school students where at least one traditional middle school or high school has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive years and serves a student population where at least 70% of enrolled students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. It sets a floor of support of \$150 per pupil and maximum support of \$500K per charter school. To receive funds, charter schools must meet the academic standards of not failing to meet AYP for two consecutive years or graduation rates less than 60%. [p10-11]

The above eligibility criteria, especially when taken together (failure to meet AYP and serving a minimum of 70% low-income), demonstrates a sound means of targeting the per-pupil facilities aid to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty. [p10-11]

The applicant explained a contracting process for selecting an independent evaluator and discussed in concept the creation of logic model, goals, and activities using both formative and summative measures of outcomes. [p13]

The application describes a plan for technical assistance that involve subgrant application workshops, development of online work groups, and one-on-one grant assistance. The applicant will also create a partnership with the state charter school association to inform high need communities about charter schools and drive entrepreneurial creation of high quality charter schools. [p14-15]

Weaknesses:

While the applicant could not discuss the evaluator in detail due to the need to issue an RFP, more details could have been provided about the scope of the evaluation, how it will be conducted, the research methodologies to be employed, and the performance measures to be assessed. [p13]

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - The grant project team

1. (1) **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds, consultants, and subcontractors.**
- (2) **The adequacy and appropriateness of the applicant's staffing plan for the grant project.**

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 15

**14-15
Excellent**

**11-13
Good**

**8-10
Fair**

**0-7
Poor**

Strengths:

The applicant will hire a per-pupil charter school facilities manager to work under the direction of the coordinator of all charter school programs. The applicant described the duties of the manager. The applicant identified other personnel to be involved in the project, including a chief policy advisor, accounting, IT, data analysis, and grants management staff. [p16-17]

The coordinator has five years experience in the charter school division and more than fifteen years with the department. [resume]

Weaknesses:

Resumes were included for only two of the team members cited in the application. The applicant could have been strengthened by including the resumes or more descriptive information about the relevant training and experience of these other two team members. The applicant's staffing plan would be strengthened if it provided an organizational chart to visually depict the interactions between cross-departmental team members and by providing a timeline for activities and benchmarks for measuring team progress.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - The budget

1. (1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project.
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits.
- (3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 5205(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 15

**14-15
Excellent**

**11-13
Good**

**8-10
Fair**

**0-7
Poor**

Strengths:

The applicant identified three objectives for the grant proposal that align well with its plan and budget. [p6]

The plan's academic standards and its targeted approach to low-income students from high-need areas gives some

confidence that the anticipated results or benefits for students will be significant. [p10-11]

The minimum percentages for the non-Federal share are exceeded or satisfied for all the years. [p18-19]

Weaknesses:

The applicant provided overall projections for total charter school enrollment in the state [Table 1], but since its proposal is targeted to qualifying charter middle and high schools only, there is insufficient data to determine the reasonableness of the proposal.

The applicant did not make clear if its use of the Common School Fund would result in an overall increase in per-pupil support to charter schools, thus supplementing (not supplanting) current support. [p7-8]

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State experience

- 1. The experience of the State in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through various means, including providing per-pupil aid, access to State loan or bonding pools, and the use of Qualified Zone Academy Bonds.**

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 10

**10
Excellent**

**8-9
Good**

**6-7
Fair**

**0-5
Poor**

Strengths:

The Common School Fund is in use currently to provide new charter schools advancements to cover the first six months of operations prior to establishment of enrollment counts. [p7]

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not currently operate a per-pupil facilities program; its establishment is conditioned on being awarded this grant. [p7]

In the need section, the applicant made a strong case that school corporations (a.k.a. districts) are not exercising options under current law to share capital outlays with charter schools, not even conversion schools. [p6]

The applicant did not address whether charters are eligible under the Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) and Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB).

Reader's Score: 5

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education, Indiana Department of (U282D090013)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. QUESTION 1	0	0
Competitive Preference Priority		
Capacity to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need		
1. QUESTION 2	10	7
Selection Criteria		
Need for facility funding		
1. QUESTION 3	30	18
Quality of plan		
1. QUESTION 4	30	26
The grant project team		
1. QUESTION 5	15	11
The budget		
1. QUESTION 6	15	13
State experience		
1. QUESTION 7	10	4
Total	110	79

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel One: 84.282D

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Education, Indiana Department of (U282D090013)

Questions

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall Comments

General:

The applicant requests \$15 million over five years from the Department to jump start a brand new facilities per pupil funding program in the state. The state will match the Federal support over the same five years.]

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Capacity to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need

1. The capacity of charter schools to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need for this choice based on--

- (1) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion or number of public schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), 20 U.S.C. 7221a(e);
- (2) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion of students perform poorly on State academic assessments; and
- (3) The extent to which the applicant would target services to communities with large proportions of low-income students.

Strengths:

The applicant states that it will target middle and high school charter schools in districts where there are public middle and high schools not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years or in school districts with high school graduation rates of 60% or less.

The applicant states a funding priority to applicants serving students of low-income (70% Title I).

Weaknesses:

The application could be stronger if the applicant had named specific school districts in which public charter schools are most likely to qualify.

The applicant also does not name the number of high schools that currently do not make Adequately Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind. Given the information provided, it's possible that a charter school could receive the Federal support if it were located in a district where there is a single high school not making Adequate Yearly Progress, but the charter school would not necessarily be located near that school nor attracting any of the low-performing school's students.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Need for facility funding

1. (1) The need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the State.
(2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 30

**26-30
Excellent**

**21-25
Good**

**16-20
Fair**

**0-15
Poor**

Strengths:

The applicant describes how charter schools, while Local Education Agencies (LEAs), may not raise funds for capital projects (page e6).

The applicant describes that without matching funds provided by the State Facilities Incentive Grant, the Indiana Department of Education lacks the authority to create a per pupil facilities funding program for the state's public charter schools.

Weaknesses:

The application would have been stronger if the applicant had defined a per-pupil funding formula or allocation in this section.

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of plan

1. (1) The likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State either retaining a new per-pupil facilities aid program or continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period.
(2) The flexibility charter schools have in their use of facility funds for the various authorized purposes.
(3) The quality of the plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds.
(4) The per-pupil facilities aid formula's ability to target resources to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty.
(5) For projects that plan to reserve funds for evaluation, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for this purpose.
(6) For projects that plan to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, or personnel, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for these purposes.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 30

**26-30
Excellent**

**21-25
Good**

**16-20
Fair**

**0-15
Poor**

Strengths:

The applicant describes the declining Federal contribution from \$5 million in year 1 to \$1 million in year 5.

The applicant does a nice job of explaining how the Indiana Common School Fund now has been expanded to allow for per pupil facilities grants.

The applicant describes a strong technical assistance plan as well as a strong evaluation plan.

The applicant describes strong flexibility in terms of how individual charter schools may use federal awards.

The applicant describes that it will give preference points to charter school applicants that have higher than 70 percent of enrolled students qualifying for free or reduced priced lunch, and that the minimum eligibility requirement for schools will be the 70 percent threshold. The applicant also describes that it will specifically target support to charter schools that will locate in districts that have at least one traditional high school that has failed to meet Adequately Yearly Progress for two consecutive years or has graduation rates below 60 percent.

The applicant included a formula that describes how funding will be allocated to eligible schools. It will set a floor of no less than \$150/student and would cap a single charter school at no more than \$500,000 unless the state legislature increased state dollars for this program.

Weaknesses:

The Common Schools Fund is used for several purposes to assist public charter schools and so it is not clear that other programs will suffer if the state allocates money to match the Federal support.

The application would have been stronger if the applicant had included the methods it would use to review school applications and define grant award eligibility.

Reader's Score: 26

Selection Criteria - The grant project team

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds, consultants, and subcontractors.**
- (2) The adequacy and appropriateness of the applicant's staffing plan for the grant project.**

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 15

14-15
Excellent

11-13
Good

8-10
Fair

0-7
Poor

Strengths:

The applicant does a good job of describing the staff to be involved in this project. There are several levels of support described within state government.

The process to be used for managing the grant program is described in adequate detail.

Weaknesses:

The application would be stronger if the applicant had included a robust staffing plan.

It appears that the resume of Kimb Stewart is not current.

Reader's Score: 11

Selection Criteria - The budget

1. (1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project.
- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits.
- (3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 5205(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 15

14-15
Excellent

11-13
Good

8-10
Fair

0-7
Poor

Strengths:

The applicant makes a reasonable case for the strong infusion of Federal dollars in year 1 (\$5 million).

The state matches over time exceed the minimum required.

Weaknesses:

The application would be stronger if the applicant had explicitly named the numbers of schools and students to be served by the grant.

Table 1 would have been more strongly developed if it had described the likely number of students to be eligible for the grant awards and not simply the total number of public charter students in the state.

Table 1 also has some typographical errors.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - State experience

- 1. The experience of the State in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through various means, including providing per-pupil aid, access to State loan or bonding pools, and the use of Qualified Zone Academy Bonds.**

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 10

**10
Excellent**

**8-9
Good**

**6-7
Fair**

**0-5
Poor**

Strengths:

The applicant does describe the size of the Indiana Common Schools Fund in June 2009: \$35.8 as an unreserved balance.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not specifically address this question or describe in any detail, the state's experience managing funds that support public charter schools in the state.

Reader's Score: 4

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Education, Indiana Department of (U282D090013)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Overall Comments		
Overall Comments		
1. QUESTION 1	0	0
Competitive Preference Priority		
Capacity to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need		
1. QUESTION 2	10	7
Selection Criteria		
Need for facility funding		
1. QUESTION 3	30	20
Quality of plan		
1. QUESTION 4	30	27
The grant project team		
1. QUESTION 5	15	10
The budget		
1. QUESTION 6	15	13
State experience		
1. QUESTION 7	10	5
Total	110	82

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Panel One: 84.282D

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Education, Indiana Department of (U282D090013)

Questions

Overall Comments - Overall Comments

1. Overall Comments

General:

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Capacity to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need

1. The capacity of charter schools to offer public school choice in those communities with the greatest need for this choice based on--

- (1) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion or number of public schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), 20 U.S.C. 7221a(e);
- (2) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion of students perform poorly on State academic assessments; and
- (3) The extent to which the applicant would target services to communities with large proportions of low-income students.

Strengths:

The applicant will target middle and high schools located in districts where at least one traditional middle/high school has failed AYP and has a graduation rate lower than 60% (e 10).

To be eligible to apply for funding the school applicant must serve a student population where at least 70% of enrolled students receive federal free and reduced lunch. (e 11)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly describe how it will target services to a geographic area in which a large proportion or number of public schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title 1 of the ESEA.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Need for facility funding

1. (1) The need for per-pupil charter school facility funding in the State.
- (2) The extent to which the proposal meets the need to fund charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 30

26-30
Excellent

21-25
Good

16-20
Fair

0-15
Poor

Strengths:

The state does not currently have per-pupil charter school facility funding. Only upon receiving an award from this grant competition, the state will create a per-pupil funding program. (e 5-6) Without the grant award, the state lacks authority to create a per-pupil facilities funding program for the state's charter schools. (e 6)

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant adequately describes its need for funding, it does not provide evidence of that need with data. The applicant does not quantify the per-pupil amount that is needed to fund what is needed nor how much is needed to make up this grant proposal.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of plan

1. (1) The likelihood that the proposed grant project will result in the State either retaining a new per-pupil facilities aid program or continuing to enhance such a program without the total amount of assistance (State and Federal) declining over a five-year period.
- (2) The flexibility charter schools have in their use of facility funds for the various authorized purposes.
- (3) The quality of the plan for identifying charter schools and determining their eligibility to receive funds.
- (4) The per-pupil facilities aid formula's ability to target resources to charter schools with the greatest need and the highest proportions of students in poverty.
- (5) For projects that plan to reserve funds for evaluation, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for this purpose.
- (6) For projects that plan to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, or personnel, the quality of the applicant's plan to use grant funds for these purposes.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 30

26-30
Excellent

21-25

Good

16-20

Fair

0-15

Poor

Strengths:

Without the grant, the applicant lacks the authority to create a per-pupil funding program. If the award is granted, the state intends to create such a program and continue state support for such beyond the grant period. (e7)

The applicant's plan for a charter school's use of funding allows expenditures to be used for rent, leasehold improvements, and debt service. (e 9)

The applicant has determined that schools eligible to receive funding must be middle/high schools located in districts who have failed to meet AYP and have graduation rates lower than 60%. Schools must also serve a population where 70% of students are eligible for federal free and reduced lunch. (e 10)

The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the elements of a quality evaluation process and intends to dedicate 15% of its 5% administrative costs to development of an appropriate evaluation tool that will include both formative and summative measurements. (e 13)

The applicant intends to reserve funds for technical assistance, dissemination, and personnel by hiring a qualified project director, creating a process for distribution of funds, selecting an independent evaluator, disseminating information about the availability of funds, and providing technical assistance on the use of funds. (e 14) The applicant will also partner with the state charter school association to inform communities about charter schools and the creation of high quality charters. (3 15)

Weaknesses:

It was not clear if the money received from the federal grant will supplant the interest amount of the Common Fund amount already used to fund charter schools. There was not an adequate description of the Common Fund reserve pool and how or if it will increase with the matching Federal money.

It appears from the applicant's description of determining schools eligible to apply for funding that elementary schools are excluded.

Reader's Score: 27

Selection Criteria - The grant project team

- (1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the grant project team, including employees not paid with grant funds, consultants, and subcontractors.**
- (2) The adequacy and appropriateness of the applicant's staffing plan for the grant project.**

--

Criterion Maximum Point Value - 15

14-15

Excellent

11-13
Good

8-10
Fair

0-7
Poor

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - The budget

1. (1) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed grant project.
(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of students served and to the anticipated results and benefits.
(3) The extent to which the non-Federal share exceeds the minimum percentages (which are based on the percentages under section 5205(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA), particularly in the initial years of the program.

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 15

14-15
Excellent

11-13
Good

8-10
Fair

0-7
Poor

Strengths:

The applicant lists three objectives for utilizing the grant: increase number of high quality charter schools, enhance fiscal stability, and increase student achievement. The amount requested and the project costs appear reasonable in relation to these objectives. (e 17 - Budget Narrative)

The applicant states that it is requesting the grant funding as an up front infusion to jump-start the states charter school facility funding program. It requests that federal support diminish over the course of the grant in direct proportion to increases in state funding levels and over the final three years, the state's financial commitment to the program will continue to grow and exceed the federal minimum requirements in every year of the grant. (e 19-20)

Weaknesses:

It is difficult to ascertain the reasonableness of the costs in relation to the number of students served because the applicant did not clearly state how many students it anticipates serving.

Table 1 of the Budget Attachments lists the total number of students projected to be in average daily attendance in charter schools but as noted in comments on the plan, it appears grants will be limited to middle/high schools. It is unclear whether the applicant intends to provide funding for every student enrolled or just those in schools serving middle/high school with a 70% free and reduced lunch population.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - State experience

1. **The experience of the State in addressing the facility needs of charter schools through various means, including providing per-pupil aid, access to State loan or bonding pools, and the use of Qualified Zone Academy Bonds.**

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Criterion Maximum Point Value - 10

**10
Excellent**

**8-9
Good**

**6-7
Fair**

**0-5
Poor**

Strengths:

The state has experience in administering a loan fund through its Common School fund that allows charter schools to access per-pupil funding to pay for limited school building costs and technology costs. (e 7)

Weaknesses:

Charter schools are limited to applying for per-pupil funding through the Common School fund and are not eligible to share in local property tax funds. The applicant did not address the availability of any additional facilities bonding pools or use of QZAB programs.

Reader's Score: 5

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