

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: CA Department of Education for the State Board of Education (U282A160024)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	13
Vision for Growth and Accountability		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	6
Past Performance		
1. Past Performance	15	13
Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	16
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	8
Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	25	21
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	3
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1a	5	4
2. CPP 1b	5	3
3. CPP 1c	5	4
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Total	120	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - State Educational Agencies - 10: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: CA Department of Education for the State Board of Education (U282A160024)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The Secretary considers the contribution that the charter schools grant program will make to assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

Strengths:

(p. 15) The applicant will align grant allocation to state priorities serving educationally disadvantaged students, ensuring that focus will remain on serving these students.

(p. 16) The applicant details how it will require subgrantees to address serving and retaining educationally disadvantaged students and must align proposed activities to the needs of the communities they plan to serve. The annual progress reporting requirement ensures that focus remains on serving these students.

(p. 17) The description of the external program review and annual reporting requirements strengthens the argument that grantees will remain focused on serving educationally disadvantaged students and that the grant program will make a strong contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students.

Weaknesses:

(Throughout) The application discusses closing the achievement gap and improving outcomes but does not explicitly reference state standards nor does it provide sufficient evidence of strategic guidance directing authorizers to focus on these standards, nor does it require charter schools to explain how flexibility and autonomy may be used to improve outcomes for these students.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Vision for Growth and Accountability

- 1. The Secretary determines the quality of the statewide vision, including the role of the SEA, for charter school growth and accountability. In determining the quality of the statewide vision, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

1) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period, including a reasonable estimate of the number of high-quality charter schools in the State at both the beginning and the end of the project period; and

2) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools in the State (i.e., through revocation, non-renewal, or voluntary termination of a charter) during the project period.

Strengths:

(p. 19) The applicant's plan to support high growth of quality schools through partnerships with a number of regional and state-wide organizations speaks persuasively to their ability to overcome their geographical challenges as a large state.

(pp. 19 -20) The applicant describes a detailed and logical plan to support charter applicants through workshops, training, technical assistance, and outreach both in-person and virtually.

Weaknesses:

(throughout) It is unclear whether or not applicant plans to recruit high-performing charter operators and CMOs with a record of success from other states, which would provide a varied approach.

(p. 18, budget) The applicant lists target goal of 150 new schools in places, which conflicts with goal of 120 schools mentioned other places in grant. This lack of consistency raises questions about the accuracy of applicant's plan, particularly the budget.

(pp. 20-21) Closure plan does not include a plan to ensure that students from closing schools have relocation options that perform at least as well as the closing school. Additional support(s) for parents, students, and staff may be needed to implement the aggressive closure plan described in the narrative. Without such a plan, it is likely that students may go or return to low-performing schools.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Past Performance

1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and

2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State.

Strengths:

(p. 22) The applicant provides persuasive data showing increase of graduation rates at charter schools over a five-year period.

(p. 23) The applicant provides persuasive data showing increase of African American and Latino charter students completing A – G classes, both alone and in comparison to all state schools.

(p. 26) The applicant provides persuasive data indicating that low-performing charter schools have been closed each of the past five years and that the majority of schools closed are in the bottom 50th percentile.

Weaknesses:

(p. 25) The application needs a year-by-year chart showing growth of high-quality schools.

(pp 23 – 25) While the specific metrics the applicant used to determine “high-quality” are aligned with examples included in the CSP’s “high-quality charter school” definition, justification for using these specific metrics over others, such as

performance on mandatory state tests, would have been helpful because graduation rates, for example, may be influenced by factors not aligned with evidence of quality: social promotion, success in classes that are not demanding or not assessed.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the SEA's charter school subgrant program, including the extent to which the project design furthers the SEA's overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and improving student academic achievement. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 16

Sub Question

1.

i. The subgrant application and peer review process, timelines for these processes, and how the SEA intends to ensure that subgrants will be awarded to eligible applicants demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; and

ii. A reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence, of

a) the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award during the project period and the average size of those subgrants, including an explanation of any assumptions upon which the estimates are based; and

b) if the SEA has previously received a CSP grant, the percentage of eligible applicants that were awarded subgrants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of the applicant pool.

Strengths:

(p. 28) The applicant presents a multi-phase grant review process for start-up and dissemination grants that is strongly aligned to the state's mission to increase the number of high-quality schools and increase outcomes for students.

(p. 28) External review is an important step towards ensuring that plans and processes are objectively strong and fair.

(p. 29) Timelines provided for the grant process support substantive and thoughtful review of grant applications.

(p. 31) The estimated grant numbers for the three projected grant years are reasonable and appear to be based on previous experience.

(p. 32) The application presents clear data showing the applicant pool and percentage and number of charter schools funded for each year of the previous CSP grant. The practice of increasing grant amounts for applicants

Sub Question

servicing educationally disadvantaged students aligns with the state's strategic plan for chartering.

(p. 29) The applicant describes a robust process for advertising, evaluating and awarding dissemination grants, including external review, use of transparent rubrics, and prioritization for underserved populations.

(p. 32) The application presents clear data showing the applicant pool and percentage and number of charter schools funded for each year of the previous CSP grant. The practice of increasing grant amounts for applicants servicing educationally disadvantaged students aligns with the state's strategic plan for chartering.

(p. 29) The applicant describes a robust process for advertising, evaluating and awarding dissemination grants, including external review, use of transparent rubrics, and prioritization for underserved populations.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 10

2. 2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees.**Strengths:**

(p. 34) Monitoring plan is logical and straightforward. Dividing the state into regions and offering both personalized support and a checklist of expectations establishes clear and supportive processes.

(p. 34) Corrective action plan strategy seems fair and supportive rather than punitive.

(p. 35) The process for monitoring dissemination grantees is clearly described and includes important elements including: quarterly and annual reports, site monitoring visits and/or desk reviews of performance indicators.

Weaknesses:

(p. 35) Given the size of this state, a description of current staff capacity and plans to meet planned sector growth are needed and what they are going to be doing under the grant.

(p. 34) 12 indicators used in the site-monitoring instrument for start-up and implementation grants are mentioned, but are never delineated in the plan. Knowing what these indicators are would increase the strength of the plan.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools to each LEA in the State as well as to charter schools, other public schools, and charter school developers (20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(2)(C) and 7221(c)(f)(6)). If an SEA proposes to use a portion of its grant funds for dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6)(B)), the SEA should incorporate these subgrants into the overall plan for dissemination. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate**

information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

(pp. 37 - 38) The applicant presents a varied and detailed strategy for disseminating practice in a number of modes and through a variety of methods, including forums, web-based content, strategic partnerships and other resources.

Weaknesses:

(p. 39) Plan for dissemination grants could be strengthened by providing a clearer and more detailed description of the number of awards anticipated under the grant each year. The application states that "up to ten CSP Dissemination Grants" will be awarded, but a range of 0 to 10 is too general for a strong plan.

(p. 35) 10 indicators used in the site-monitoring instrument for dissemination grants are mentioned, but are never delineated in the plan. Knowing what these indicators are would increase the strength of the plan.

Reader's Score: 6

2. **2) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate.**

Strengths:

(p. 36-37) The applicant includes school climate and student discipline as one model supported through its technical assistance program. Points are awarded to applicants who include this priority.

Weaknesses:

The application could have benefited from a more detailed, intentional and stronger description of applicant's plan to encourage and support dissemination of best practices related to school climate and student discipline.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies

Reader's Score: 21

Sub Question

Sub Question

1.

a. Approving charter school petitions with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, including, but not limited to, school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies and diversity in student bodies with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;

b. Establishing measurable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools (including alternative charter schools, virtual charter schools, and charter schools that include pre-kindergarten, if such schools exist in the State) that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school as defined in this notice;

c. Providing, on an annual basis, public reports on the performance of their portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school with respect to meeting the terms of, and expectations set forth in, the school's charter or performance contract; and

d. Supporting charter school autonomy while holding charter schools accountable for results and meeting the terms of their charters or performance contracts.

Strengths:

(pp. 39, 41) State statute clearly requires authorizers to require evidence based models, alignment with state educational standards, and strong support and programs for diverse learners. Dissemination grants will support successful strategies that meet the needs of the state's racially and ethnically diverse population.

(p. 41) The state provides support to local authorizers by providing resources about best authorizing practices.

(p. 42) Although charter schools may develop their own MPOs, all schools are required to address required state performance expectations and priorities. This is reinforced, or checked, through mandatory submission to the state. Charter school performance is released publicly and community input is solicited.

(p. 44) The applicant will reinforce emphasis on autonomy by only awarding subgrants to schools that are highly autonomous.

Weaknesses:

(p. 41) The application could have benefited from a clearer description of how the above authorization standards are enforced, other than in court. Legal action is a high bar that doesn't allow the SEA significant flexibility in enforcing standards and expectations.

Reader's Score: 17

2. 2) The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan (including any use of grant administrative or other funds) to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to provide oversight to authorized public chartering agencies, the Secretary considers how well the SEA's plan will ensure that authorized public chartering agencies are --

a. Seeking and approving charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools;

b. Monitoring their charter schools on at least an annual basis, including conducting an in-depth

Sub Question

review of each charter school at least once every five years, to ensure that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter or performance contracts and complying with applicable State and Federal laws;

c. Using increases in student academic achievement as one of the most important factors in renewal decisions; basing renewal decisions on a comprehensive set of criteria, which are set forth in the charter or performance contract; and revoking, not renewing, or encouraging the voluntary termination of charters held by academically poor-performing charter schools;

d. Ensuring the continued accountability of charter schools during any transition to new State assessments or accountability systems, including those based on college- and career-ready standards.

Strengths:

(p. 42) School performance is monitored annually through mandatory performance data submission to the state and local authorizers are required to review school-level performance data submitted in their annual report. An in-depth performance review is conducted once every five years.

(p. 41) Authorizers must require applicants to provide evidence of how they will support and serve diverse learners, use evidence-based models, and align with the state's strategic priorities, which include attracting and approving high-quality charter schools.

(p. 46) State law requires that increases in academic achievement be the most important factor in renewal decisions.

(p. 49) The applicant provides a detailed and clear picture of how schools will be supported as new assessment models are introduced and the requirement that schools must continue to conduct state texting through transition periods allows authorizers to track school performance without gaps.

Weaknesses:

(p. 42) Monitoring is needed more frequently than once per year, particularly for schools operating under an improvement or correction plan.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools

1. The Secretary considers the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project. In determining the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The degree of flexibility afforded to charter schools under the State's charter school law, including:

i. The extent to which charter schools in the State are exempt from State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools; and

ii. The extent to which charter schools in the State have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over the charter school's budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum; and

2) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that charter schools that are considered to be LEA's under State law and LEA's in which charter schools are located will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).

Strengths:

(p. 48) Charter schools are granted a “mega-waiver” or blanket-waiver, ensuring complete flexibility outside of charter law and the provisions of their charter agreement.

(p. 54) Charter schools electing to serve as their own LEAs must describe, in their petitions, how they will fulfill all LEA duties.

Weaknesses:

(p. 48) Based on what is presented in the application, it is unclear from description the extent to which the provisions of individual charter petitions, if dictated by local authorizers, might limit school-level flexibility.

(p. 54) The plan could have benefited from the inclusion of more information as to how applicant will support and monitor single-site LEA charters.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes**

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

a) Authorizing processes that establish clear criteria for evaluating charter applications and include a multi-tiered clearance or review of a charter school, including a final review immediately before the school opens for its first operational year.

Strengths:

(pp 9-10) The applicant’s process for evaluation charter applications is multi-tiered and clearly described.

Weaknesses:

(p . 11) The described process requires post-approval, pre-opening activities, but these are not necessarily tied to specific requirements (“may have conditions that must be met prior to opening”). This creates uncertainty as to whether all authorizers will be subject to the mentioned pre-opening activities.

Reader's Score: 4

2. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

b) Authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has been successful (as determined by the authorized public chartering agency) in establishing and operating one or more high-quality charter schools.

Strengths:

(p. 11) The statute requires authorizing agencies to consider the likelihood of an applicant's success, considering prior performance, in the approval process.

Weaknesses:

(p. 11) Differentiated review is not required: "the authorizing agency may elect to differentiate the review process." This language creates uncertainty as to whether all authorizers will be required to conduct a differentiated review.

Reader's Score: 3

3. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

c) Clear and specific standards and formalized processes that measure and benchmark the performance of the authorized public chartering agency or agencies, including the performance of its portfolio of charter schools, and provide for the annual dissemination of information on such performance.

Strengths:

(p. 12) Local authorizing agencies are required to consider "if pupil achievement for all groups of pupils served by the charter is at least equal to the public school that the pupils would otherwise have attended," a clear and important benchmark.

(p. 12) All schools are required to create and publish an annual report allowing comparison of school performance in terms of achievement (including subgroup performance), environment, resources and demographics.

Weaknesses:

(throughout) No discussion is included related to state-level authorization, only LEA-level authorization.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process

1. To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

b) In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Strengths:

(p. 13) Multiple non-LEA authorizers are active within the applicant state.

(p. 13) Applicant describes a clear path to appeal for applicants denied locally and/or at the county level.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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Applicant: CA Department of Education for the State Board of Education (U282A160024)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	12
Vision for Growth and Accountability		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	6
Past Performance		
1. Past Performance	15	11
Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	16
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	7
Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	25	23
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	4
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1a	5	4
2. CPP 1b	5	3
3. CPP 1c	5	3
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Total	120	94

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - State Educational Agencies - 10: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: CA Department of Education for the State Board of Education (U282A160024)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. **The Secretary considers the contribution that the charter schools grant program will make to assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

Strengths:

The applicant clearly states that all charter schools are required to seek and serve educationally disadvantaged students, which also aligns to its local control funding formula (LCFF) (e33).

Additionally, the applicant's charter schools are required to articulate and evaluate the academic outcomes by pupil subgroups to assure progress towards closing the achievement gap (e33).

The applicant also states that the CSP grant is critical for building operational, organizational and instructional capacity at newly approved charter schools in order to meet and improve the academic outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students (e33 to e34).

The applicant requires all subgrant applicants to outline how they will attract, recruit, admit, enroll and retain educationally disadvantaged students as part of their overall strategy for improving the educational outcomes for all students (e34).

The applicant states that CSP funds will support rigorous and innovative instruction designed to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students, including teacher professional development and the procurement of instructional materials and support services (e34 to e35).

The applicant requires all subgrantees to report on the progress towards achieving their stated academic goals (e34) as well as to provide a comprehensive review at the end of the project period that summarizes the effectiveness of their implementation activities (e34 to e36).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not present achievement data specific to the charter schools operating under its various authorizing agencies that shows a demonstrable trend towards closing the achievement gaps in targeted subgroups.

The applicant has not demonstrated that the current proposal will increase the number and percentage of educationally disadvantaged students served by charter schools, nor has it put forward any strategies or incentives to attract charter school operators in high-needs areas.

The applicant did not describe how its authorizing agencies will collect, analyze and use achievement data to increase levels of academic achievement for all students as well as inform the applicant's technical assistance plan to its authorizing agencies. Additionally, the applicant has not provided any metrics to show the impact of the CSP subgrants.

Selection Criteria - Vision for Growth and Accountability

1. The Secretary determines the quality of the statewide vision, including the role of the SEA, for charter school growth and accountability. In determining the quality of the statewide vision, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period, including a reasonable estimate of the number of high-quality charter schools in the State at both the beginning and the end of the project period; and

2) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools in the State (i.e., through revocation, non-renewal, or voluntary termination of a charter) during the project period.

Strengths:

The applicant expects to fund the startup of up to 150 new charter schools over the three-year grant period, which aligns to the recent charter schools growth in the applicant state (e36).

The applicant also expects to support these newly formed charter schools with a rigorous technical assistance plan and by working closely with the Charter Authorizer Regional Support Network and other stakeholders to share best practices and encourage charter schools to collaborate to increase capacity and sustainability (e36 to e38).

The applicant's vision for the new charter schools is ambitious and feasible, and is permitted under state law and will allow for growth in the number of charter schools over the project period (e36) and logic model (e54).

The applicant's state law ensures that academically poor performing charter schools receive multiple levels of support during the five year term of the charter. The statute further supports the revocation or nonrenewal of the charter if the school does not show evidence of progress and fails to meet its academic objectives (e38 to e39).

Further, the applicant states that student academic achievement is the most important factor when determining whether to revoke a charter (e38 to e39). Additionally, the applicant has closed 163 charter schools for poor performance in the last five years (2010-2015)

Weaknesses:

The applicant has also stated in the abstract (e15) that it intends to open 120 schools and then states 150 schools (e36). This is a 30 schools differential of about \$575k per school.

The applicant has not provided any type of in-depth data analysis demonstrating which areas are in need of high quality charter schools and how it will incentivize the CSP grant process to attract charter petition applicants to these areas.

The applicant has listed a number of activities that it will complete but with no concrete plans for ensuring completion of said activities [milestones] by specific dates. Additionally, only about 2% of the proposed budget is earmarked for training and technical assistance and there appears to be some misalignment between the budget request and work proposed in the logic model (e73).

Additionally, the applicant did not provide any research data or best practices to demonstrate that the proposed activities would support the creation of high quality charter schools.

The applicant did not provide a strong closure plan to ensure student transition as well as support to parents, staff and redistribution of school assets.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Past Performance

1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and

2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State.

Strengths:

The applicant has approved the opening of 32 charter schools for Fall 2016; 66% of the charter schools opened 2010-16 received CSP grant funds; and 16 dissemination grants were awarded.

The applicant has closed over 187 charter schools and 47 of these schools were for poor academic performance (e43).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant stated the number of charter schools operating under its various authorizing agencies, it did not state explicitly how many of them were high quality charter schools. Additionally, the applicant did not provide a clear rationale for the data metrics utilized to measure growth and high quality schools.

The applicant did not provide enough data to determine if the number of poor performing schools was trending down over the last five years (e44).

Reader's Score: 11

Selection Criteria - Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the SEA's charter school subgrant program, including the extent to which the project design furthers the SEA's overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and improving student academic achievement. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 16

Sub Question

1.

Sub Question

i. The subgrant application and peer review process, timelines for these processes, and how the SEA intends to ensure that subgrants will be awarded to eligible applicants demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; and

ii. A reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence, of

a) the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award during the project period and the average size of those subgrants, including an explanation of any assumptions upon which the estimates are based; and

b) if the SEA has previously received a CSP grant, the percentage of eligible applicants that were awarded subgrants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of the applicant pool.

Strengths:

The applicant outlined its planning and implementation subgrant application and peer review processes inclusive of timeline for grant application screening, peer review, budget review and grant funds disbursement. The applicant will follow the same procedure for reviewing and awarding its dissemination grants (e44 to e48).

The applicant provided year-by-year estimates of its plans to fund both planning and implementation, and dissemination subgrants with supporting information relative to size of subgrants and any assumptions (e48 to e52). Additionally, awards amounts increased based on listed criteria (e51) and stakeholder input was obtained with regards to funding based on enrollment.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. 2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees.

Strengths:

The applicant has six regions that help with streamlining and provides targeted technical assistance, and monitoring and reporting supports for subgrantees. The applicant utilizes a standardized monitoring instrument with twelve corresponding risk assessment criteria to complete subgrantee site visits and desk reviews.

Failure to pass any of the criteria results in a Corrective Action Plan for the subgrantee. Failure by the subgrant to demonstrate progress will result in cancellation of the grant and the return of unused funds (e52 to e53).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not adequately describe its department's operating structure and support needed to complete the work throughout the grant period given: (i) the number of charter schools that it expects to open over the project period and (ii) all technical assistance is to be funded through the CSP grant.

The applicant did not clearly describe the Risk Assessment Tool for both the implementation and dissemination subgrants nor did it include a sample of said tools as part of its supporting documentation.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools to each LEA in the State as well as to charter schools, other public schools, and charter school developers (20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(2)(C) and 7221(c)(f)(6)). If an SEA proposes to use a portion of its grant funds for dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6)(B)), the SEA should incorporate these subgrants into the overall plan for dissemination. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The applicant will provide technical assistance to its authorizing agencies and other stakeholders across the state on topics related to the CSP grant application process, LCAP updates, promising best practices, etc. (e54).

The applicant will also utilize a web-based application "My Digital Chalkboard" where subgrantees are required to post project deliverables and the platform will also be used to share best practices and it will be free and available state-wide to all charter schools. Additionally, the applicant will disseminate technical assistance and promising best practice through partnerships with its various stakeholders (e65 to e57).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's plan for disseminating information and research did not have any specific goals with corresponding timelines spanning the project period along with milestones, for example, board governance.

The applicant did not provide details related to the criteria it will utilize to capture information and data relative to promising best practices within the charter schools. Additionally, the applicant did not describe how its dissemination efforts will be evaluated and by whom (e57).

Reader's Score: 5

2. 2) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate.

Strengths:

The applicant states that school climate is one of the eight key indicators that contributes to increased educational outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students and emphasizes this priority in its dissemination grant program (e54 to e55).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide adequate details and intentional practice around student discipline and school climate (e54) to monitor and evaluate efforts.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1.

a. Approving charter school petitions with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, including, but not limited to, school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies and diversity in student bodies with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;

b. Establishing measurable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools (including alternative charter schools, virtual charter schools, and charter schools that include pre-kindergarten, if such schools exist in the State) that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school as defined in this notice;

c. Providing, on an annual basis, public reports on the performance of their portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school with respect to meeting the terms of, and expectations set forth in, the school's charter or performance contract; and

d. Supporting charter school autonomy while holding charter schools accountable for results and meeting the terms of their charters or performance contracts.

Strengths:

Overall, the applicant has outlined a plan to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable its authorizing agencies with respect to evaluating and approving charter schools. The plan relies on the applicant state's Education Code governing charter schools (e57 to e58).

All charter applicants must provide comprehensive description of its educational program model and ensure that it aligns to the applicant state's eight priorities. Charter applications lacking in the area are denied (e59).

The applicant has well established measurable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools through their measurable performance objectives (MPOs). The MPO data collected is disaggregated by subgroups and allows charter schools to demonstrate growth and progress towards meeting academic goals. This data must be reported annually through the submission of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and there is no waiver or exception to this requirement (e60).

The applicant makes available annual accountability reports as required by law and is made public on the CDE

Sub Question

website. These annual reports include information on student achievement and other key indicators as reported through the LCAP (e60).

The applicant state's education code provides for charter schools' autonomy with exceptions for safety and state accountability and testing system. The charter schools are held accountable based on the provisions of their charter contract. Failure to meet said provisions will result in referral for technical assistance, revocation or nonrenewal of the charter (e60 to e61).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a clear description of how they will enforce the proposed standards for consistency in monitoring and evaluation (e64).

The applicant did not provide a plan with sufficient detail to show how it will incorporate school models and evidence based practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student populations within its charter schools; but only that it relies on the state's charter law to help achieve racial and ethnic diversity (e25) and that it will disseminate information and research to meet the needs of racially and ethnically diverse student populations (e57).

Reader's Score: 19

2. 2) The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan (including any use of grant administrative or other funds) to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to provide oversight to authorized public chartering agencies, the Secretary considers how well the SEA's plan will ensure that authorized public chartering agencies are --

a. Seeking and approving charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools;

b. Monitoring their charter schools on at least an annual basis, including conducting an in-depth review of each charter school at least once every five years, to ensure that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter or performance contracts and complying with applicable State and Federal laws;

c. Using increases in student academic achievement as one of the most important factors in renewal decisions; basing renewal decisions on a comprehensive set of criteria, which are set forth in the charter or performance contract; and revoking, not renewing, or encouraging the voluntary termination of charters held by academically poor-performing charter schools;

d. Ensuring the continued accountability of charter schools during any transition to new State assessments or accountability systems, including those based on college- and career-ready standards.

Strengths:

The applicant requires its authorizing agencies to require charter application to complete a comprehensive description of the 16 elements to be considered a high quality charter school (e62).

The applicant indicated that its authorizing agencies are required to monitor charter schools' LCAP progress and fiscal condition, including completing an annual site visit (e63 and template).

The applicant's state law expressly provides that its authorizing agencies shall make student academic achievement for all students the most important factor when determining whether to renew or terminate a school

Sub Question

(e20).

The applicant acknowledges and provides its authorizing agencies with adequate time to transition to revised state law and regulations by providing interim guidelines for accountability (e63 to e66) to phase in changes without major disruptions.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide the primary text that outlines the 16 elements to be considered a high quality charter school.

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools

1. The Secretary considers the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project. In determining the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The degree of flexibility afforded to charter schools under the State's charter school law, including:

i. The extent to which charter schools in the State are exempt from State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools; and

ii. The extent to which charter schools in the State have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over the charter school's budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum; and

2) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that charter schools that are considered to be LEA's under State law and LEA's in which charter schools are located will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).

Strengths:

The applicant's state charter school law provides maximum flexibility and autonomy to charter schools (i.e., mega-waiver). In addition to this so-called mega-waiver, charter schools also qualify for significant funding flexibility and they also retain autonomy with regards to educational program, budgets, staffing and curriculum (e66 to e68).

The applicant outlines all the state's law and regulation related to federal and state funding opportunities (e68 to e69). Further, the applicant has established funding mechanisms to ensuring equitable receipt of federal and state funds relative to other public schools (e69 to e71).

The applicant's plan for charter schools to meet the requirements of IDEA is well thought out and described (e71 to e72) and the charter schools must clearly specify how they will comply with the requirements of IDEA.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear from the information provided whether LEA charter contracts might limit charter schools' flexibility (e66).

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

a) Authorizing processes that establish clear criteria for evaluating charter applications and include a multi-tiered clearance or review of a charter school, including a final review immediately before the school opens for its first operational year.

Strengths:

The applicant indicates that its authorizing agencies utilize clear criteria (e25 to e27) and multi-tiered process for evaluating charter applications (e27 to e29) following the state statues and California Code of Regulations (CCR) that outlines the framework and processes for charter schools performance evaluations.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not provided a copy of the education law referenced. Additionally, the applicant did not provide pre- and post- subgrant application requirements tied to specific criteria (e25).

Reader's Score: 4

2. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

b) Authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has been successful (as determined by the authorized public chartering agency) in establishing and operating one or more high-quality charter schools.

Strengths:

The applicant states that its authorizing agencies have the option to elect to differentiate the review process and it is codified in the CCR (e29) and may consider past performance, finances and operations when reviewing a new charter, replication model or renewal.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant states that its authorizing agencies "may elect" to differentiate the review process, it has not indicated if or how many of its authorizing agencies have used the process for establishing one or more high quality charter schools.

The applicant did not state if any of its authorizing agencies utilizing a differentiated and/or expedited track were accepting charter applications on a rolling basis or by invitation during the normal chartering review process or at some other time.

The applicant did not state how its authorizing agencies would ensure that the charter applications and/or renewals under review utilizing a differentiated and/or expedited track would meet all requirements in law and regulation.

The applicant did not state if it will develop guidelines to assist its authorizing agencies in identifying charter schools with performance in the areas of academics, finance and organization that merit expedited renewal.

Reader's Score: 3

3. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

c) Clear and specific standards and formalized processes that measure and benchmark the performance of the authorized public chartering agency or agencies, including the performance of its portfolio of charter schools, and provide for the annual dissemination of information on such performance.

Strengths:

The applicant indicates that charter schools are held to the same measurement and benchmark standards of performance as other public schools (e29).

The applicant's charter schools are required to create an annual School Accountability Report Card to provide information to the community for comparison of a school's achievement, environment, resources and demographics (e30).

Additionally, the applicant's charter schools must establish school-wide annual goals by sub-groups aligned to the priorities of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant has specific standards and formalized processes for use by its authorizing agencies, it does not state explicitly how it measures and benchmarks their performance against said standards and formalized processes.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process

1. To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

b) In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Strengths:

The applicant currently utilizes an Appeals Process through which charter school applicants can appeal a LEA denial directly to a county board of education and then to the state board of education if also rejected by the county board of education (e30 to e31).

Both agencies have authority under the applicant's state education law to approve charter petition and will subsequently take on authorizer responsibilities for that school (e57 to e58).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/27/2016 05:06 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/27/2016 05:06 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: CA Department of Education for the State Board of Education (U282A160024)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Ed. Dis. Students	15	10
Vision for Growth and Accountability		
1. Growth and Accountability	10	5
Past Performance		
1. Past Performance	15	13
Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	15
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	6
Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	25	20
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	4
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1a	5	4
2. CPP 1b	5	3
3. CPP 1c	5	3
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Total	120	88

Technical Review Form

Panel #10 - State Educational Agencies - 10: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: CA Department of Education for the State Board of Education (U282A160024)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. **The Secretary considers the contribution that the charter schools grant program will make to assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

Strengths:

The application points to the state education law to stress that the law itself requires charter schools to target increased educational opportunities to academically low achieving students. Additionally, it notes that all charter schools are required to seek out and serve EL students and SPED students. It also indicates that there is a local control funding formula (LCFF) that provides enhanced funding to schools that offer improved services to low income, foster care, and EL students. Moreover, this initiative is aligned with one of the state's educational emphases (p. e33). The various requirements and inducements in-place to get charter schools to focus on the educationally disadvantaged along with the fact these are for the most part built into law demonstrated that this state wants to ensure the charter schools and the grant program assist educationally disadvantaged students to meet academic content standards.

The application continues with a brief discussion of how state-collected demographic data showing where the disadvantaged, foster, homeless, migrant, disabled and other similar student groups has been used with past CSP subgrantees and will be used with potential subgrantees to help aim them and their LCFF dollars at educational initiatives for these types of students. These data also have been used and will be used to call on potential subgrantees to account in their petitions for serving these particular student populations (pp. e33-34). This discussion draws on the applicant's past performance by highlighting how previous subgrantees used 2010-2015 CSP grant funds to establish innovative teaching models and support services for these various disadvantaged student populations (pp. e34-36). The level of detail in this discussion of how data were and will be used demonstrates the applicant has systems in place for and a history of employing data to ensure that subgrantees will be able to zero their efforts in on helping disadvantaged students meet state academic requirements.

Weaknesses:

In choosing to showcase how 2010-2015 CSP subgrantees used funds from that program, the applicant fails to address the impact of these expenditures and the implementation of the resultant innovative instructional models on disadvantaged student achievement or on metrics showing an increase in student outcomes of any kind: attendance, attitudes toward school, dropout rates, etc. (pp. e34-36).

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Vision for Growth and Accountability

1. **The Secretary determines the quality of the statewide vision, including the role of the SEA, for charter school growth and accountability. In determining the quality of the statewide vision, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

- 1) **The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period, including a reasonable**

estimate of the number of high-quality charter schools in the State at both the beginning and the end of the project period; and

2) The ambitiousness, quality of vision, and feasibility of the SEA's plan (including key actions) to support the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools in the State (i.e., through revocation, non-renewal, or voluntary termination of a charter) during the project period.

Strengths:

Factor 1:

The application states the applicant's funding request will be used for programmatic assistance to establish up to 150 new high-quality charter schools as well as for the financial support of these schools from planning to early implementation (p. e36). It very generally outlines the project plan for accomplishing this end, listing outreach, technical assistance, in-person and web-based training, conference presentations as the strategies to be employed. The application details these strategies in an appendix presenting its logic model and a chart laying out key actions, activities, performance measures, and timelines for supporting the creation of high-quality charter schools during the project period (pp. e37-38; e76-78; e101). The information presented provides a comprehensive and easily understood picture of an ambitious, quality vision as well as a viable plan for carrying it out.

Factor 2:

The applicant stresses that state education law drives the steps and criteria for closing poorly performing charter schools as well as for supporting these schools over the five-year period of their contracts before determining they are not to be renewed. It notes that the law makes it clear that academic achievement is the most important factor in a closure decision and it also spells out the steps to be taken in revocation as well as the process for the closure itself and subsequent disbursement of assets (pp. e38-39). The discussion and specifics of how the applicant will support and conduct the closure of academically poor-performing charter schools makes it clear that there already is a process, backed by law for doing this. The application likewise makes it clear this process has been enacted with some success so that between 2010 and 2015 187 charters were either revoked, not renewed, or the schools closed voluntarily (p. e39). There are 1208 charter schools in the state (p. e15).

Additionally, the application notes the law states that charters may be revoked at any time when the schools are in material violation of stipulations set forth in their petition or failing to meet petition-identified performance goals (p. e38).

Weaknesses:

Factor 1:

Although on p. e36, and pages that follow the application says there will be up to 150 new charters established as a result of the grant, elsewhere the number quoted is 120 high quality charter schools serving disadvantaged students (p. e15). This is a significant difference since the budget estimates between \$475,000 and \$575,000 for brick and mortar school subgrants and \$175,000 for virtual school subgrants (pp. e51; e121). Moreover, even though the majority of the applicant's plan for supporting creation of these new charter schools focuses heavily on training and technical assistance, looking liberally at the budget categories that might apply to these activities and the amounts budgeted in them, suggests the total projected expenditure for these areas is between \$250,000 and \$300,000 or about 1.5% of the total grant requested (pp. e118-121).

Factor 2:

The law referenced by the applicant, is not quoted as a part of the discussion or included as an appendix therefore evidence for the statements referenced cannot be confirmed, in particular the steps required for revocation and for closing a charter school and disbursing its assets (e38-39).

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Past Performance

1. The Secretary considers the past performance of charter schools in a State that enacted a charter school law for the first time five or more years before submission of its application. In determining the past performance of charter schools in such a State, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated increase, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State; and

2) The extent to which there has been a demonstrated reduction, for each of the past five years, in the number and percentage of academically poor-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State.

Strengths:

Factor 1:

The application notes that currently there are 1208 charter schools serving over 500,000 students in the state which is more schools and students than any other state (pp. e15; e39). It goes on to say that 430 of the 645 charter schools opened between 2010 and 2016 received CSP grants (p. e39). Quoting a study done in conjunction with state IHEs the application shows data indicating that charter graduation rates have increased steadily for the last five years and that the rates of Latinos and African Americans completing college prep courses have gone up in the same period as compared to regular public schools indicating the high levels of success these schools have demonstrated (pp. e40-42). Importantly, the applicant states 20 percent of charter graduates are accepted to the state system colleges versus 14 percent from regular public schools and 19 percent of Latino and African American charter graduates are accepted versus 11 percent from regular public schools (p. e42). The U-shaped graph on p. e43 shows that there has been an increase in the number of high-quality charter schools and a decrease in underperforming charter schools between 2007 and 2013.

Factor 2:

The applicant demonstrates that the number of poorly-performing charter schools that have been closed has grown. It provides a graph showing that there has been a significant shift in the percent of under-performing charter schools from 2007-08 to 2012-13 and says it is due to an emphasis at the state department of education on closing the under-performers (academic performance in the bottom tenth of schools statewide) while opening charters that prove to be high-performers (academic performance in the top tenth) (pp. e43-44). They also list the number of closures year-by-year and this data shows an increasing number of closures over the last six years (p. e44).

Weaknesses:

Factor 1:

The application does not talk about the degree to which there has been an increase in the number and percent of high-quality charter schools, specifically, in the last five years, as called for in the criterion.

Factor 2:

No weaknesses identified for this factor.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Project Design

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the SEA's charter school subgrant program, including the extent to which the project design furthers the SEA's overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools in the State and improving student academic achievement. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1.

i. The subgrant application and peer review process, timelines for these processes, and how the SEA intends to ensure that subgrants will be awarded to eligible applicants demonstrating the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; and

ii. A reasonable year-by-year estimate, with supporting evidence, of

a) the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award during the project period and the average size of those subgrants, including an explanation of any assumptions upon which the estimates are based; and

b) if the SEA has previously received a CSP grant, the percentage of eligible applicants that were awarded subgrants and how this percentage related to the overall quality of the applicant pool.

Strengths:

The application provides a step-by-step outline that clearly shows a comprehensive, well-reasoned process for awarding subgrants. It begins with posting an RFA via press releases, posts to the state department of education Web site, and notices to charter supporters and state PTA (pp. e44-45). At the same time, a link to the subgrant RFA will appear on the state department of education Web site detailing specifications for applying, deadline dates, funding levels, etc., as well as available technical assistance. In addition, the RFA will describe a first cut screening process and present a checklist of eligibility factors. State department staff will conduct this first screen and for those petitions accepted will move to the peer review phase of the process which as noted earlier the elements of which are defined by law -- as are the uniform criteria and uniform scoring rubric (p. e46). The applicant goes on to detail the specific procedures the peer review will follow in order to ensure only the highest-quality petitions are approved (pp. e46-47). These also are clearly described, thorough, and comprehensive and taken as a whole likely will ensure only petitions demonstrating a capacity for creating high-quality charters will make the cut.

The applicant also describes the process to be used to solicit petitions for dissemination sub-grants (p. 47). This description is thorough and easily understood. The application includes a clear description of a comprehensive process for evaluating dissemination petitions with reference to a peer review, special scoring process, rubric and the like (p. e47).

The applicant estimates that up to fifty subgrants will be awarded each project year for about as many as 150 grants over a three year period at a \$475,000-\$575,000 per school level (\$175,000 for virtual schools). This is a very reasonable estimate and one based on CSP grant dispersals from past years coupled with input from state charter stakeholders to determine reasonable funding structures for schools with at least 50 enrollees. Applying this experience and stakeholder guidance the application estimates this will fund about 65 percent of the approved petitions (pp. e48; e50).

The application displays petition approval rates from the 2010-2015 CSP program and explains that the quality of the charters receiving these subgrants was very high based on a very low closure rate (4 percent) versus the closure rate for non-subgrant approvals (14 percent) (pp. e49-50).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified for this factor.

Reader's Score: 10

2. 2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The application explains that the sub-grantees will undergo desk and site monitoring on a regional basis by state department staff according to a standard monitoring instrument developed for the state's 2010-2016 CSP implementation. This instrument consists of 12 indicators of compliance along with associated compliance criteria for start-up subgrantees and 10 indicators of compliance for dissemination sub-grantees (pp. e52-53).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not directly address whether or how the SEA oversees authorizers in order to make sure they are held accountable in fulfilling their responsibilities (pp. e65-66). The applicant's case for meeting the provisions of this factor essentially revolves around its contention that the provisions are also provisions of the state education law ; therefore legally the plan must address them. However, except for a quotation from the law on p. e62, the applicant only refers to the law and does not include a copy of the state education law whose stipulations and specifications it references throughout this section. Therefore the statements cannot be confirmed.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools to each LEA in the State as well as to charter schools, other public schools, and charter school developers (20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(2)(C) and 7221(c)(f)(6)). If an SEA proposes to use a portion of its grant funds for dissemination subgrants under section 5204(f)(6)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221c(f)(6)(B)), the SEA should incorporate these subgrants into the overall plan for dissemination. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to disseminate information about charter schools and best or promising practices of successful charter schools, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The application describes in some detail a wide variety of dissemination efforts to be undertaken in support of charter schools and charter educators. They are well-thought-out and comprehensive relying on a range of delivery strategies. The descriptions of these efforts provide enough elaboration of the information to enable a solid understanding of who is responsible, what will take place, how, and for what audiences. For example, dissemination will be spearheaded by the state department of education and carried out in collaboration with charter organizations and county offices of education (pp. e54; e56). Dissemination will proceed according to six strategies from in-person training to building a requirement to conduct dissemination into the subgrant specifications (pp. e54; e56-57). And some of these strategies will be aimed at authorizers in order to not only provide information but also to build a network of charter authorizers. One dissemination strategy will be technical assistance workshops to guide potential applicants in the development of high-quality subgrant applications and to showcase for them best practices especially best practices for serving educationally disadvantaged students (p. e54).

Sub Question

There also will be state department offered technical assistance for subgrant applicants and awardees. These will be delivered in-person and through Webinars and a Web-based community of practice designed for sharing best practice and developed by the state department during its 2010-2015 CSP grant implementation, called My Digital Chalkboard (pp. e54-55). The applicant notes that the dissemination activities will be assessed throughout the grant period for impact and includes details regarding the nature of the assessments, who will conduct them, and how often will they take place (p. e57).

Weaknesses:

Although the application provides a solid explanation of what likely will be effective dissemination and training strategies and gives good examples, there is no mention among them of the business aspects of charter school operation or any mention of topics or strategies aimed at charter school boards. These are key components of charter school success and should be included (pp. e54-57).

Reader's Score: 5

2. 2) The quality of the SEA's plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate.

Strengths:

The applicant says school climate (and associated discipline practice) is one of the factors named by the state department of education as contributing to educational outcomes for disadvantaged students and thus it is a priority as detailed in state charter law. Consequently there are numerous opportunities to receive training and guidance for charter educators that are accessible on the state department Website. More importantly, charter schools are reviewed annually for effectiveness vis a vis this factor and it will be especially emphasized for the 2016-2019 CSP (pp. e54-55).

Weaknesses:

The law referenced by the applicant, is not quoted as a part of the discussion or included as an appendix therefore evidence for the statements referenced cannot be confirmed. Given the thorough discussion of a very robust approach to dissemination provided for factor 1, the dissemination of information about climate and discipline practices, the applicant's proposal to making best practicesit available on a Web site, is seems thin and passive.

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

a. Approving charter school petitions with design elements that incorporate evidence-based

Sub Question

school models and practices, including, but not limited to, school models and practices that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies and diversity in student bodies with respect to educationally disadvantaged students, consistent with applicable law;

b. Establishing measurable academic and operational performance expectations for all charter schools (including alternative charter schools, virtual charter schools, and charter schools that include pre-kindergarten, if such schools exist in the State) that are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school as defined in this notice;

c. Providing, on an annual basis, public reports on the performance of their portfolios of charter schools, including the performance of each individual charter school with respect to meeting the terms of, and expectations set forth in, the school's charter or performance contract; and

d. Supporting charter school autonomy while holding charter schools accountable for results and meeting the terms of their charters or performance contracts.

Strengths:

The application notes there are processes in place for holding charter authorizers accountable for their responsibilities as regards charter schools: consistent communication with the state department of education, response by county superintendents to complaints against charter schools, and the appeal process (pp.e57-58). As for their responsibilities to seek to approve petitions with educational programs stressing services to disadvantaged students, the application reiterates that the charter law specifically calls on charter authorizers to do this and the application lists the various educational program elements called for in the petitions including plans for attending to all segments of a diverse student body, plans for any necessary intensive intervention, and evidence-based climate and discipline plans (p. e59). It also notes that the state department makes available resources to support these elements. Based on the descriptions of the law provided in the application, the applicant seems to meet the first element of this factor.

Again, based on the descriptions of the law provided throughout, the application seems to meet the second, third and fourth elements of the factor one. Referencing the law again, the application makes a similar point for performance expectations and measurement in that consistent, uniform academic and operational expectations established at the state level as well as a uniform requirement that assessment methods for these expectations must be specified and the results of the assessments be arrayed by student subgroup, all guided by the state education law (p. e60). These assessments occur annually, again as required by law. In an earlier section (pp e52-53) the applicant outlines the processes to be used in sub-grantee oversight and notes there is instrumentation that guides oversight.

Also legally required are the submission of annual reports of assessment results which are available to the public by authorizers. The application outlines what this report must include and says that the state School Accountability Report Cards are yet another annual, available-to-the-public set of reports called for by law that hold charters and their authorizers accountable (pp. e60-61).

The application indicates there are various ways the state department promotes charter school autonomy. One is a provision that allows charters to establish performance measures beyond those required by law (p. e60). Another is the exact wording of the law (which in this case is quoted as well as referenced) saying charter schools are to operate independently from the district structure, that essentially exempts charters from all laws and regulations governing regular public schools -- except for health, safety, and state accountability and testing -- and holds them accountable only to the terms of their charter contract (pp. e61-62).

Weaknesses:

The applicant makes it clear that the law is the primary force in holding authorizers and charter schools accountable for performance. However, the applicant does not specifically address what sanctions are to be employed should schools and authorizers fail to follow the law or miss targets set in the oversight instruments (pp. e52-53). The applicant does not include a copy of the state education law whose stipulations and specifications it references to support its responses in most subsections of this factor.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 17

2. 2) The Secretary considers the quality of the SEA's plan (including any use of grant administrative or other funds) to monitor, evaluate, assist, and hold accountable authorized public chartering agencies. In determining the quality of the SEA's plan to provide oversight to authorized public chartering agencies, the Secretary considers how well the SEA's plan will ensure that authorized public chartering agencies are --

a. Seeking and approving charter school petitions from developers that have the capacity to create charter schools that can become high-quality charter schools;

b. Monitoring their charter schools on at least an annual basis, including conducting an in-depth review of each charter school at least once every five years, to ensure that charter schools are meeting the terms of their charter or performance contracts and complying with applicable State and Federal laws;

c. Using increases in student academic achievement as one of the most important factors in renewal decisions; basing renewal decisions on a comprehensive set of criteria, which are set forth in the charter or performance contract; and revoking, not renewing, or encouraging the voluntary termination of charters held by academically poor-performing charter schools;

d. Ensuring the continued accountability of charter schools during any transition to new State assessments or accountability systems, including those based on college- and career-ready standards.

Strengths:

The applicant relies heavily on provisions of the state charter law to establish an adequate case that its plan will meet the provisions of this factor. For example, the application quotes the state charter law to demonstrate that authorizers, when reviewing petitions, are required to address the sixteen elements described in the law. These lay out what constitutes a high-quality charter school and the applicant notes that not addressing these elements poses the risk of non-approval (pp. e62-63). This time referencing the law, the applicant states there is a requirement in it that calls for annual monitoring of academic results using the measures established by law at the state level for all public schools. Additionally, it says that charters must submit annual fiscal audits and authorizers must conduct annual site visits. The applicant emphasizes that annual monitoring may result in authorizer intervention up to and including charter revocation should there be a serious lapse of contract terms such as financial mismanagement and failure to meet measurable student outcomes (pp. e22-23; p. e63).

The applicant also refers to specific sections of California education law that stipulate charter contracts are for a period of five years and that requires authorizers to conduct in-depth renewal reviews every five years the result of which determine if a school is approved for another five years (pp. e20; 63). Referencing the law once more, the application indicates this law provides a framework and process for renewal reviews and decisions with primary emphasis on increased student academic achievement (pp. e63-64). Academic achievement is also the principle factor in revocation decisions as well. Significantly, the state board of education may revoke charters even though it is not the primary authorizer in the event of critical failures such as gross mismanagement (pp. e64-65). Lastly, the application outlines how the state department initiates changes to assessments and accountability systems in an overlapping fashion that allows charters (and other public schools) to phase in the changes without serious disruptions while still maintaining accountability as the changes are folded in (pp.e65-66).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's case for meeting the provisions of this factor essentially revolves around its contention that the provisions are also provisions of the state education law; therefore legally the plan must address them. However, except for a quotation from the law on p. e62, the applicant only refers to the law and does not include a copy of the state education law whose stipulations and specifications it references throughout this section. Therefore the statements cannot be confirmed.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Policy Context for Charter Schools

1. The Secretary considers the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project. In determining the policy context for charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1) The degree of flexibility afforded to charter schools under the State's charter school law, including:

i. The extent to which charter schools in the State are exempt from State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools; and

ii. The extent to which charter schools in the State have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over the charter school's budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum; and

2) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that charter schools that are considered to be LEA's under State law and LEA's in which charter schools are located will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).

Strengths:

Factor 1:

The application meets the stipulations of this factor by thoroughly describing how a provision in the state charter law called mega-waiver essentially exempts charters from all laws and regulations governing regular public schools -- except for health, safety, and state accountability and testing -- and holds them accountable only to the terms of their charter contract. The application supports its descriptions by noting that this section of the law is quoted and referenced in an earlier section of the application (pp. e61-62; e66). The application goes on to state all charter schools in the state have significant flexibility in that they can use funds for any purpose that promotes their mission. Moreover it stresses they have autonomy over budget, staffing, and operations as well as over educational program, instructional methodology and resources, as long as these meet the needs of their student population. Again, the law is quoted to illustrate the commitment to this autonomy (pp. e66-67).

Factor 2:

The application also notes charter schools may choose to be an LEA for funding purposes, especially federal funding (pp e67-68). The application indicates that the state charter law requires that all charters selecting to be LEAs comply with all applicable federal laws listed in the RFP: sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq.), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794).

Weaknesses:

Factor 1:

No weaknesses identified for this factor.

Factor 2:

The applicant does not include a copy of the state education law it references in this subsection; therefore the statements cannot be confirmed.

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

a) Authorizing processes that establish clear criteria for evaluating charter applications and include a multi-tiered clearance or review of a charter school, including a final review immediately before the school opens for its first operational year.

Strengths:

The application explains that the state charter law (i.e., California Code of Regulations, Title 5) specifies the requirement and process for charter application approval and references the pertinent section of the law by number. Having these provisions in the law indicate the applicant is obligated to meet them and thus also meet this sub-criterion. In describing the law's relevant sections, the application provides a clear and comprehensive description of sixteen elements that the charter petition must contain from descriptions of the educational program to audit procedures (p. e23). The applicant also details review criteria for the authorizer and specific elements charter applicants must include in their petitions. The applicant provides a detailed description that evidences that there are processes that have established clear and comprehensive criteria -- determined through legislation --for evaluating charter applications (pp. e25-27). The applicant identifies LEAs, county boards of education, and the state department of education as the three authorizing agencies described in state law (p. e27). The applicant also stresses that each authorizer applies a multi-tiered review approach including document review, a public hearing, an approval/disapproval report and importantly a review of licenses, health and occupancy permits, etc. just before the charter school opens (pp. e28-29).

Weaknesses:

The law referenced by the applicant, is not quoted as a part of the discussion or included as an appendix. Therefore, evidence for the statements referenced cannot be confirmed .

Reader's Score: 4

2. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

b) Authorizing processes that include differentiated review of charter petitions to assess whether, and the extent to which, the charter school developer has been successful (as determined by the authorized public chartering agency) in establishing and operating one or more high-quality charter schools.

Strengths:

The application again references stipulations spelled out in the state education law that allow authorizers to look at the success record of those petitioners already operating high-quality charter schools and implement a differentiated process for petition review taking into account the petitioners' track record as regards achievement performance, operational and fiscal management, and the like (p. e29). Insofar as these provisions as described by the applicant carry the weight of law the application meets this sub-criterion.

Weaknesses:

The law referenced by the applicant, is not quoted as a part of the discussion or included as an appendix therefore evidence for the statements referenced cannot be confirmed. Also the applicant does not spell out how the authorizer conducts its review of current charter holders or what criteria authorizers use to deny additional charters to current operators (p. e29-30).

Reader's Score: 3

3. To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that all authorized public chartering agencies in the State use one or more of the following:

c) Clear and specific standards and formalized processes that measure and benchmark the performance of the authorized public chartering agency or agencies, including the performance of its portfolio of charter schools, and provide for the annual dissemination of information on such performance.

Strengths:

The application says the authorizers are held accountable for student performance and lists the various state-wide performance measures that the charter schools -- and all non-charter public schools -- must carry out and report on to the public. These are sufficiently detailed by the applicant to show they meet the sub-priority (pp. e29-30). The applicant includes a copy of the authorizer accountability plan; this document details the criteria, standards, and benchmarks for the performance accountability of the authorized public chartering agency. It also explains how this accountability is operationalized as they measure their performance. The document is comprehensive and shows there are strong accountability benchmarks and procedures by which authorizers are measured (pp. e102-116).

Weaknesses:

The authorizer accountability plan included states it applies to LEA and county level authorizers but there is no similar document describing how the state office of education is held accountable (p. e102).

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process

1. To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

a) Provides for one authorized public chartering agency that is not an LEA, such as a State chartering board, for each individual or entity seeking to operate a charter school pursuant to State law; or

b) In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, allows for an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Strengths:

The applicant reiterates that state education law identifies LEAs, county boards of education, and the state department of education as the three authorizing agencies and notes that the county boards and state board of education also act as appellant bodies in the case of charter petition denials (pp. e27; e30-31). The application goes on to detail the appeals process highlighting the three tiers that move an appeal from LEA to county board and finally to the state board (p. e31). The description of these detailed and specific procedures that are already in-place and stipulated by state charter laws shows that the application meets this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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