

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (U282A160017)

Reader #1: *****

	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	7
Past Performance is NOT APPLICABLE		
1. N/A	0	
Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	16
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	4
Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	25	17
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	5
Sub Total	85	59
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
High-Quality Authorizing and Monitoring Processes		
1. CPP 1a	5	2
2. CPP 1b	5	2
3. CPP 1c	5	4
Sub Total	15	8
Competitive Preference Priority		
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	72

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - State Educational Agencies - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (U282A160017)

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 indicates that the New Charter School Application for the Commission and SPS both require developers to indicate in the application process how they will identify and meet the academic needs of educationally disadvantaged students (p. e41). Specifically, developers are rated on the extent to which they have identified special populations and at-risk groups of students and the extent to which the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted to meet the needs of all students (p. e158). This application will also be used for the CSP subgrant application (p. e41).

Academic achievement is a critical component of charter school renewal; authorizers may not renew a charter if, at the time of the renewal application, the school falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the state's achievement index (p. e30).

The Academic Performance Framework used by the Commission has clear metrics to evaluate the progress of its authorized charter schools in assisting educationally disadvantaged students and all students in meeting state academic content and student achievement standards. Specifically, the academic performance framework measures annual student achievement proficiency and growth for all students and students who are educationally disadvantaged, as measured by subgroup performance (p. e200).

Weaknesses:

The demographic data listed on p. e40 indicates that some charter schools do not serve large populations of educationally disadvantaged students. The extent to which CSP subgrantees will enroll educationally disadvantaged students is unclear. For example, the applicant has a performance target of at least 95% of subgrantees serving a higher percentage of educationally disadvantaged students than the charter's resident district, but the applicant does not provide details for how it will ensure subgrantees meet this goal or how it will incentivize them to do so (p. e55).

Furthermore, the applicant set performance targets for 50% of eighth grade students in charter schools to be proficient in math in 16-17, 58% to be proficient in 17-18, and 67% to be proficient in 18-19 (p. e56). It is unclear how the applicant set these goals for charter school students and whether they are consistent with ensuring the program will assist educationally disadvantaged students with meeting state academic content and student achievement standards.

Finally, the applicant notes that the SPS performance framework is similar to the comprehensive one described above for the Commission, but there is no evidence presented regarding the extent to which they are similar or may differ in measuring academic progress of charter schools for educationally disadvantaged and all students (p. e27).

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:

The applicant describes a solid plan to support the creation of high-quality public charter schools through the key actions associated with the following three objectives:

1) increase and sustain the number of high-quality charter schools through subgrants for planning, program design, and implementation;

2) increase capacity of charter school leaders and board members; and

3) increase the quality of the state's charter school authorizer infrastructure (p. e51-e52).

The key actions associated with each objective have clear performance measures and targets for each year of the proposed project, resulting in a feasible plan (p. e55-e56).

There are currently 8 charter schools authorized in Washington State (p. e49). The applicant indicates that there will be 14 charter schools authorized by the end of the project period (p. e49).

State law mandates that authorizers may not renew a charter if, at the time of the renewal application, the school falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the state's achievement index (p. e30; p. e73-e74).

Weaknesses:

Regarding increasing charter board member capacity, the applicant notes that the SEA, the State Board of Education, and authorizers will jointly develop guidance documents and trainings for charter school boards (p. e52). However, the division of responsibility for this is unclear, as are the incentives for charter school board members to attend optional trainings.

The applicant describes the Intervention Protocol for the Commission, but it is unclear the extent to which the other authorizer, SPS, follows a similar procedure (p. e57).

Although charter schools that perform in the bottom quartile at the time of their five-year charter renewal cannot have a successful charter renewal, it is unclear what happens if a charter school is seriously off track to meeting its academic goals before then as evidenced by the annual performance review.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Past Performance is NOT APPLICABLE

1. This criterion is not applicable.

Reader's Score:

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. 1) The quality of the SEA's process for awarding subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, if applicable, for dissemination, including --
 - 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 indicates that the New School Application, which developers use to request charter authorization, will also be used as the CSP subgrant application to streamline the process for developers and authorizers (p. e58). The applicant notes that authorizer evaluators will score new charter applications in their entirety, including any optional CSP subgrant criteria, and that the evaluator team will include CSP or OPSI staff (p. e58). Furthermore, the applicant also provides a clear, feasible timeline for the review process (p. e502). The Commission's RFP for new charter applicants requires developers to provide evidence for a comprehensive set of selection criteria in the three domains of 1) educational program design and capacity, 2) operations plan and capacity, and 3) financial plan and capacity (p. e144-e194). The Commission's new charter application process ensures that eligible applicants demonstrate the capacity to create high-quality charter schools; given that this process will be used for issuing CSP subgrants, the subgrant application and peer review process also meets this goal for Commission-authorized schools.

The applicant provides a reasonable year-by-year estimate of the number of planning, year 1 implementation, and year 2 implementation subgrants it expects to make in each year of the project period (p. e62). Furthermore, the applicant indicates that the average award size will be \$200,000 in the planning year, \$305,000 in the first year of implementation, and \$280,000 in the second year of implementation (p. e62). Average award amounts for the planning year are based on average awards charter schools in the state received from their non-SEA CSP grants, while implementation year grants are based on the projected loss of local levy tax revenue (p. e61).

The applicant has not previously received a CSP grant, so there is no data to report for Factor 1(ii)(b) (p. e62).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes that developers would complete optional CSP subgrant criteria as part of the new charter school application (p. e58). It is unclear what this criteria would be and why it is optional.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, it is unclear the extent to which the SPS New School Application mirrors the Commission's application; therefore, it is unclear whether schools authorized by SPS would need the same or different information for the CSP subgrant criteria as schools authorized by the Commission. For example, the applicant notes that the Commission new school application already contains the required federal application elements, but it is unclear if this is also true for SPS (p. e59).

Reader's Score: 8

2. 2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees.

Strengths:

The SEA's grant management office proposes providing comprehensive subgrant fiscal compliance monitoring, including: (1) reviewing and approving subgrant budgets prior to approval, (2) conducting mid-year fiscal desk review protocols, including evaluating expenditure documentation, (3) monitoring timely drawdown of subgrant funds, and (4) receiving information from the authorizer about any concerns (p. e62).

The SEA's programmatic monitoring includes (1) a performance evaluation at the end of the first CSP subgrant year, with future funding contingent on results, (2) a site visit in year one of implementation, and (3) a final CSP subgrant report, and (4) an investigation of any complaints, concerns, or findings brought to the attention of the authorizer or the SEA (p. e63-e64).

The applicant indicates it has extensive federal grant management experience through its 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and Title I, Part A Programs (p. e503).

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes that there is routine programmatic monitoring of charter documents and performance data, but it is unclear specifically what the SEA will be evaluating and at what point findings might warrant providing technical assistance or suspending funding (p. e64).

Furthermore, the applicant notes that if awarded the grant, it will hire a part-time CSP Fiscal Compliance Manager to provide fiscal oversight for the CSP grant, including monitoring subgrantees (p. e503). The job description indicates that candidates should have familiarity with the federal CSP grant program, and that this person will initially be hired as a 0.25 FTE at a salary of [REDACTED]. Given that this staff member has not yet been hired, it is unclear whether the applicant will be able to find a suitable candidate with the desired experience to oversee fiscal monitoring for the grant. Furthermore, given the extensive set of responsibilities this person would be required to implement in the first year of the grant, including developing a written set of policies and procedures that guide the scope and frequency of fiscal monitoring, it is unclear whether all initial fiscal monitoring activities can be completed in a 0.25 FTE role (p. e503).

Reader's Score: 8

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: 4

Sub Question

- 1) The extent to which the SEA will serve as a leader in the State for identifying and disseminating information and research (which may include, but is not limited to, providing technical assistance) about best or promising practices in successful charter schools, including how the SEA will use measures of efficacy and data in identifying such practices and assessing the impact of its dissemination activities.

Strengths:

The applicant indicated that it would support and collaborate with both authorizers in their continued partnership with the University of Washington Center for Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) to identify and research best practices in Washington Charter Schools to be disseminated by CRPE (p. e66).

The applicant also described numerous venues for charter schools to present information about their programs at conferences, including the SEA's annual Best Practice Conference and Early Learning Conference, the Rural Alliance Annual Conference, the State and National Charter Schools Conference, and the NACSA conference (p. e65-e66). The applicant also intends to disseminate information through its website (p. e64).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant included several ways in which it would encourage charter schools to disseminate best practices, it did not include a description of how it would use measures of efficacy and data to identify those best practices for dissemination activities beyond CRPE research (p. e65-e66). It is not clear from the application that the SEA would serve as a leader in the state for identifying information and research about best or promising practices in successful charter schools. Furthermore, it is unclear how the SEA intends to assess the impact of its dissemination activities.

Reader's Score: 3

- 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:

No strengths found.

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant proposes posting charter schools' discipline and attendance data on its website, it does not provide a plan for disseminating information and research on best or promising practices in charter schools related to student discipline and school climate (p. e66-e67).

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

1. 1) 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. 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 measureable 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:

One of the state's authorizers, the Commission, has a clear plan for authorizing charter schools with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, including those that focus on racial and ethnic diversity in student bodies, as evidenced by the rubric used to assess new charter school applications (p. e144-e199).

The applicant notes that the Academic and Operational Performance Frameworks have indicators, measures, and targets used to assess progress on an annual basis (p. e70). Washington allows for alternative and virtual charter schools, and these schools have the same oversight as other charter schools (p. e70).

The Academic Performance Framework includes measurable goals that are aligned with the definition of a high-quality charter school, including student proficiency and growth for all students and subgroups of educationally disadvantaged students (p. e200-e209).

State law mandates that charter schools will have their performance reviewed annually (p. e70). All charter schools receive an annual review using the Academic, Financial, and Operational Performance Framework's indicators, measures, and contract compliance (p. e70). The Commission uses results from the annual review to make decisions about charter renewal and revocation (p. e71).

The applicant notes that the Performance Frameworks are designed to hold charters accountable to specific metrics, but that charter schools retain the autonomy to determine the inputs (p. e71-e72).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Although the Commission has a clear plan for authorizing charter schools with design elements that incorporate evidence-based school models and practices, it is unclear if the other authorizer, SPS, also has a clear plan for this. As noted previously, the applicant indicates that SPS has modeled its new charter application process after the Commission's process, but there is no evidence in the application to support this, and it is unclear the extent to which the SPS process contains the same design elements of the Commission (p. e32). Therefore, it is unclear whether the SEA has a plan to ensure all authorized public chartering agencies in Washington meet this goal.

Although the applicant provides detailed information on the Academic Performance Framework used to evaluate charters annually (p. e200-e218), it does not provide information on the financial and operational components of the performance framework. Therefore, the extent to which operational performance measures are consistent with the definition of high-quality charter school is unclear.

The applicant describes how the Commission uses results from the annual review to make decisions about charter renewal and revocation, but it does not explain whether SPS also uses results in this way (p. e71). Furthermore, the applicant does not explain what happens to a charter school if it fails to meet an expectation in any part of the three Performance Frameworks during its annual review. For that reason, it is unclear specifically how authorizers hold charter schools accountable in the years between the five-year charter renewal process.

Reader's Score: 13

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 Commission's clear plan for seeking and approving charter school applications from developers with the capacity to create high-quality charter schools is evidenced by the extensive rubric it uses to evaluate the quality of applications on a variety of domains essential for school success (p. e144-e199).

The applicant indicates all charter schools receive an annual performance review against the Performance Frameworks (p. e70), and all charter schools receive an in-depth review at least every five years when they are up for charter renewal (p. e26-e27; e72). Authorizers also conduct annual site visits (p. e29).

State law mandates that authorizers may not renew a charter if, at the time of the renewal application, the school falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the state's achievement index (p. e30; p. e73-e74).

Sub Question

Charter schools must use the same state assessment, the Smarter Balanced Assessment, as other public schools (p. e45; p. e74). The applicant indicates that charter schools would remain accountable to any future shift in state assessments or accountability systems (p. e74).

Weaknesses:

As noted earlier, it is unclear the extent to which the new charter application process for SPS is similar to the Commission and thus able to authorize high-quality charter schools.

Beyond requiring charter schools to be in the top three quartiles of schools on the state's academic achievement index, it is unclear what other specific metrics authorizers use to make renewal decisions (p. e72-e73). Furthermore, it is unclear what happens to a charter school that is severely off track in its goals prior to the charter renewal process in year 5.

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 LEAs under State law and LEAs 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:

State law mandates that charter schools are exempt from state and local rules that are applicable to school districts, except as indicated in the school's charter contract (p. e73-e75). Washington state charter schools have a high degree of autonomy, including autonomy over their budget, expenditures, staffing, procurement, and curriculum as codified in state law (p. e75).

All charter schools are considered by state law (p. e78). The SEA has a clear plan for ensuring compliance 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). Specifically, the SEA provides both annual and periodic training on federal program requirements, technical assistance, and regularly scheduled monitoring visits (p. e78).

For special education specifically, the SEA works with authorizers and a special education collaborative to provide resources and technical assistance to support charter schools in IDEA compliance (p. e79). Charter schools receive the same annual special education compliance monitoring as other public schools (p. e79).

As part of completing the Pre-Opening Conditions in the charter contract, new schools must also submit the names of the

Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, the Section 504 Coordinator, and the Title IX Officer to OPSI and the Commission (p. e559).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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 provides evidence that the state authorizing entity, the Commission, has clear criteria for evaluating charter applications, and the authorizing process includes a multi-tiered review of schools, including submitting an application in response to the New School Application RFP, a completeness check, an external review process using the RFP rubric, an in-person interview and performance task, public forums for community feedback, written recommendation to the Commissioners, and Commissioner final decision on approval (p. e31-e32). The Commission uses a comprehensive rubric to evaluate whether charter applications exceed, meet, partially meet, or do not meet expectations in a broad set of criteria, including 1) educational program design and capacity, 2) operations plan and capacity, and 3) financial plan and capacity (p. e144-e194).

The authorizing process also includes a final review immediately before the school opens; new schools must complete all of the Pre-Opening Conditions listed in its charter contract before opening (p. e32; p. e522; p. e557-e561).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant provides detailed information about the authorizing process of the Commission, the application does not provide specific evidence of the process followed by the other authorizing entity in the state, Spokane Public Schools (SPS). The application notes that SPS has modeled its application process after the Commission's process, but there is no evidence in the application to support this (p. e32). Therefore, it is unclear whether all authorized public chartering agencies in Washington use an authorizing process with clear criteria for evaluating applications and a multi-tiered review, including a final review immediately before a new charter school opens.

Furthermore, the applicant indicates that there will be three charter school authorizers in 2017-2018, but does not indicate the extent to which that authorizer will be required to follow the authorizing process of the Commission (p. e56)

Reader's Score: 2

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 describes a differentiated review process for developers that run at least one charter school. Applications from existing operators must also include 1) a detailed description of the organization's growth plan and ability to successfully execute that plan, 2) a Portfolio Summary Template detailing information on each school currently running, and 3) whether or not any of the developer's schools have been closed or not renewed, or whether any of their charters have been revoked (p. e33).

Weaknesses:

Although the applicant has a differentiated review process for developers that are already running at least one charter school (p. e.33), it is unclear what additional information is requested of schools beyond what is noted in the strengths section. The applicant indicates that developers with at least one school are required to submit school profile information in the Portfolio Summary Template in the RFP for new charter schools, but there is no indication in the application what information is collected, including prior academic performance (p. e33; p. e139). The rubric used to assess RFPs includes a domain for Existing Operators, but does not indicate what prior academic performance measures are assessed beyond whether or not the developer has had any charter schools closed, non-renewed, or had any charters revoked (p. e199). The overall section of this rubric domain indicates that existing operators are assessed overall on whether they have strong operations capacity and high potential for organizational effectiveness (p. e199). It is unclear whether authorizers assess specific academic performance of current charter schools operated by the developer and whether developers' prior schools have been high-quality specifically in terms of achievement (p. e199).

As noted earlier, the applicant only provides specific evidence of the authorizing review process for the Commission. The application only notes that SPS modeled its review process after the Commission, but it is unclear from the evidence provided whether SPS follows the exact same process (p. e32).

Reader's Score: 2

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:

State law mandates that the SBE apply nationally recognized principles and standards for quality charter authorizing (p. e34). State law also requires that the State Board of Education (SBE) issues a report on the performance of charter schools by December 1 annually (p. e35). This report includes information provided by the authorizer and other data from SBE, including the performance of charter school students compared to the performance of students in other public schools (p. e35).

Weaknesses:

Although SBE issues an annual report on the performance of charter schools, it is unclear how SBE uses this information to assess authorizer performance or what the timeline is for doing so (p. e35).

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:

The applicant shows that the Commission, authorized by state law, is the only statewide charter authorizer and is not an LEA (p. e36). Therefore, the applicant meets Competitive Preference Priority 2 under section (a).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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Reader #2: *****

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Sub Total	15	13
Competitive Preference Priority		
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	89

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - State Educational Agencies - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (U282A160017)

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 provides data that shows charter schools are serving a higher proportion of educationally disadvantaged students than conventional public schools in the state (p. 18). Early evidence in the charter schools do show that at-risk students are showing academic growth in math and reading in their first year at school (p. 19). Criteria in the application ask schools how they will address educationally disadvantaged students meeting academic achievement standards and how they will support their specific needs (p. 19).

Weaknesses:

With only mid-year data for charter schools and no specific achievement scores or proficiency percentages noted in the application, it is unclear exactly how much growth educationally disadvantaged students are having in charter schools versus conventional public schools. This section is lacking specific details about how charter schools are, and could in the future, address at-risk students meeting academic content standards. It is also unclear if and how charter schools would be incentivized to serve a large population of educationally disadvantaged students.

Reader's Score: 11

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:

Based on the number of schools currently operating in Washington state, the estimate for growth of 14 total schools to be open by the end of the three-year grant period seems feasible and ambitious (p. 27). The objectives and activities listed on pages 29 through 31, if achieved, will create a large number of high-quality charter schools in the state and ensure that they have capacity and infrastructure to succeed, specifically focusing on the development of charter board's to ensure their participation and success. Because of Washington's recent history with the charter school law, when the state Supreme Court ruled charters unconstitutional and ordered them to all be closed, the SEA and charter board have

experience closing charter schools using their developed protocol, and the developed chart in Appendix E.7 clearly explains the process to close low-performing schools. The charter school application is quite robust and detailed, which will help to ensure high-quality charter schools are granted charters.

Weaknesses:

On page 27, the applicant states they expect "only high-quality charter schools" to open in the state and according to the chart on page 27 and their logic model on pages 33-34, the state does not expect to have any poor-performing charter schools over the course of the grant period. Even though the charter law is new and no schools will have been open for five years by the end of this grant period, schools in Washington can be closed earlier for poor performance. It is unreasonable to assume that no charter schools could face sanctions or a lack of academic performance.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Past Performance is NOT APPLICABLE

1. This criterion is not applicable.

N/A

Reader's Score:

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: 18

Sub Question

1. 1) The quality of the SEA's process for awarding subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, if applicable, for dissemination, including --

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.

Sub Question

Strengths:

Washington plans to use the charter school application as the application for the subgrant program, which eliminates work redundancy and costs associated with finding and training reviewers for the subgrant applications (p. 36). The RFP (Appendix E.2) is extremely detailed and contains up to 30 questions for a potential charter school to answer, covering topics such as curriculum, governing documents, enrollment projects, staffing plans, financial plans and budgets, ensuring qualified applicants will be selected to receive subgrants. The rationale for the number of subgrants to be given out and the amount of subgrants given to each school over a three-year period is sensible to cover planning and staffing costs, but also to cover some of the funds charter schools do not receive according to state law (p. 39). The budget narrative clearly states that additional staff will be hired to support the charter school office and the staffing plan seems to be in line with the amount of work proposed. This applicant did not receive a previous CSP grant.

Weaknesses:

The timeline from the request for charter school proposals and when final contracts must be signed lasts nine months through November 2016 (Appendix E.16). This would give charter schools approximately eight months to plan before opening their doors for the 2017-18 school year and due to the extensive pre-opening checklist and site visits, it is unclear if this is enough time to ensure a quality opening.

Reader's Score: 9

2. 2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees.

Strengths:

A two-tiered monitoring process that is used for all other state and federal school grants is already in place and contains both fiscal and programmatic monitoring (p. 40). The current grant management staff handles the monitoring of funds, streamlining the process so additional funding isn't spent on training staff. The list on pages 41 and 42 of the various fiscal, academic and overall performance metrics are thorough and includes an annual site visit by the CSP Project Director.

Weaknesses:

While there is a clear description and expectation of academic performance outcomes for charter schools, less clear are the outcomes and expectations or baselines of financial and organizational outcomes of the charter schools during the grant period. The application lacked specifics on how the SEA defines success for financial or organizational outcomes.

Reader's Score: 9

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) The extent to which the SEA will serve as a leader in the State for identifying and disseminating information and research (which may include, but is not limited to, providing technical assistance) about best or promising practices in successful charter schools, including how the SEA will use measures of efficacy and data in identifying such practices and assessing the impact of its dissemination activities.**

Strengths:

The applicant lists many current distribution efforts of information and is already a leader in disseminating best practices and research in successful charter schools by posting information on their website and the website of the state charter association (p. 42). An additional webpage will be added focused on charter school resources. The applicant will share information and encourage charter schools to participate in various district, state and national conferences (p. 44), and already has a relationship with a research-based organization in Washington that will share information through their own articles and white papers (p. 44).

Weaknesses:

It is not clear how the SEA will assess the impact of its own dissemination activities or use measures of efficacy and data in identifying best practices. Many of the specific examples of dissemination include encouraging schools to participate in conferences, and if the schools don't participate or the schools aren't selected to participate, the dissemination of best practices is minimized considerably.

Reader's Score: 5

- 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:

Indicators around student discipline and school climate will be analyzed and publicly posted in a way that allows the public to compare charter school data with conventional school data (p. 45). Additional worksheets and reports will be created to share best practices in these areas.

Weaknesses:

The application discusses sharing the data around student discipline and school climate, but it does not discuss how this data would be analyzed and used to research and share best or promising practices in these areas for charter schools.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies

Sub Question

1. 1) 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. 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 measureable 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 SEA by law is mandated to oversee all authorizers, establish application timelines, revocation timelines, and establish the authorizer fee formula (p. 46). The application for new charter schools specifically asks potential charter schools to address the curriculum and evidence-based models and practices that their school will use, focusing on working with educationally disadvantaged students (p. 47) and ensuring racial and ethnic diversity in the school's enrollment. There is a clearly-written performance framework that measures academic and operational performance of all charter schools, including virtual, and this information is publicly shared in annual reports. The performance framework (Appendix E.3) clearly outlines all academic expectations of state assessments, academic growth, graduation rates, and additional measures that will clearly show if a charter school is high-quality. The SEA creates their own annual report which is compiled using the authorizer and individual school reports and is readily available for the general public to view on their website.

Weaknesses:

The application discussed the importance of holding charter schools accountable and meeting the terms of their charters or contracts, but there was no discussion about how the SEA will balance a charter school's autonomy with holding them accountable.

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

Sub Question

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:

Part of the application is dedicated to gathering additional information from charter school developers that have already opened schools to ensure that they fulfill the definition of high-quality. The attached performance framework in Appendix E clearly shows that increases in student academic achievement, disaggregated by subgroup is one of the key factors in renewing charter schools. Charter schools are reviewed at least annually, and as part of their review have an annual site visit, as documented in Appendix E.5. The law states that schools in the "bottom quartile of schools on the SBE Achievement Index" could be revoked unless there are other circumstances (p. 52), so there are distinct, legal guidelines established for the authorizers to review charter schools. The SEA can review any authorizer that they feel is not properly evaluating schools for renewal or revocation and the annual report assists in those decisions (p. 51). The state assessment is currently not being transitioned but there is committed collaboration between the SEA, OSPI and the commission as noted on page 52.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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 LEAs under State law and LEAs 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 does list specific areas on page 53 where charter schools have autonomy and those areas include developing their curriculum, choosing staff, setting educational goals, offering a longer school day or year, and establishing behavior standards. Charter schools are their own LEA and by law receive state and federal funding directly. The applicant clearly documented a variety of ways that the SEA and the state charter association notify LEAs about federal and state funding and ensure that they receive the correct technical assistance (p. 57). The applicant also cited

the various statutes and regulations on page 57 that ensure all charter schools comply with state and federal civil rights laws.

Weaknesses:

The law does state that charter schools are exempt from state statutes and rules applicable to school districts (except as provided otherwise by this chapter or a charter contract) (p. 53). This language raises doubts about the true autonomy of a charter school because an authorizer could eliminate much of their autonomy through the charter school contract.

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:

The Washington state charter application has many levels of review as evidenced by the paragraph on page 9 that details the various criteria, including a final list of "Pre-Opening Conditions" in the charter contract (p. 10). The attached Request for Proposal (Appendix E.2) includes the specific criteria that must be addressed in the application and the timeline for the review process.

Weaknesses:

On page 10 it says that the other current authorizer, Spokane Public Schools is modeling their charter authorizing process after the commission, but because Spokane's framework is not attached, it is unclear how much of their process is being modeled after the commission's and whether or not all of the criteria such as multi-tiered review or a final review prior to opening is required.

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:

Applicants that already operate other schools must answer specific questions in the application, which are outlined on page 11 to assess the academic and financial success of the EMO or CMO (p. 11).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear what specifics are asked of charter school developer in regards to academic performance, closing achievement gaps or operating a "high-quality" charter school.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

Within the state charter law, there are clear and specific standards that allow the SEA to measure, and seek sanctions or close an authorizing agency, if necessary (p. 12-13). There are clear courses of action for the SEA outlined in law. The annual report is issued to the public and compares the performance of charter schools with comparable schools and groups of students and summarizes the portfolio of charter schools for each authorizer (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

Washington has the State Charter School Commission, an independent state agency that is not an LEA and can authorize charter schools (p. 14).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/27/2016 05:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/27/2016 05:16 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (U282A160017)

Reader #3: *****

	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	10
Past Performance is NOT APPLICABLE		
1. N/A	0	
Project Design		
1. Project Design	20	18
Dissemination of Information and Best Practices		
1. Dissemination	10	8
Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies		
1. Oversight of Authorizers	25	19
Policy Context for Charter Schools		
1. Policy Context	5	5
Sub Total	85	73
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	5
Sub Total	15	12
Competitive Preference Priority		
Authorizer other than LEA or Appeals Process		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - State Educational Agencies - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (U282A160017)

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's definition of "at-risk" aligns with the federal definition of "educationally disadvantaged," as evidenced by the detailed definition provided (e39). The application has three objectives and key activities defined for ensuring that educationally disadvantaged groups that attend the state's charter schools meet high academic achievement standards: (1) increase and sustain the number of new, high-quality charter schools through planning, design and implementation subgrants; (2) enhance the capacity of charter school leaders and board members in new and existing charter schools; (3) increase the quality of the state's charter school authorizer's infrastructure through high quality and accessible technical assistance, training, and access to resources (e51-e52).

The application targets and reports the achievement indicators of educationally disadvantaged students who were enrolled in charter schools statewide until 2015 (when charter schools were closed per a 2014 State Supreme Court ruling) (e40). Emerging evidence from the newly constituted charter schools suggests the newly-constituted schools are serving nearly 70 percent of students of color and from low-income families and, at mid-year, assessment results were demonstrating gains among students (e41). The expectation is that the Charter School Application both for charter schools and for school authorizers put in place aligned criteria that identify and demonstrate how schools are showing success in meeting the learning needs of disadvantaged students (including ELL, special education, and other categories of disadvantaged and underserved students) (40-e41). The application process also requires applicants make clear how their programs are culturally inclusive and offering equal access to all interested students and families (as per Criteria D in the Application, Appendix E2).

Weaknesses:

Although the Commission's performance framework is included in the application, it is not absolutely clear whether authorizers are using this framework or are required to design one that is similar to it. The text leaves unclear what standards all authorizers and their schools are required to meet to confirm their accountability for providing high-quality services to disadvantaged and high-needs 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:

Factor 1: The applicant offers an ambitious vision and a proposed plan that demonstrates the feasibility of achieving its vision and goals. The application includes materials that demonstrate the coherent planning and coordination among the State Board of Education (SBE), Office of State Public Instruction (OSPI), and the Charter School Commission (CSC), which are well-coordinated and working together to achieve the project's outcomes (e47-e48). Five priorities undergird the state's plans for the next five years and for how the applicant proposes that the CSP funds will support its priorities (e44-e45). The state's funding for LEAs and for charter schools is currently in transition (e44) and its assessment system is also changing (e46). The applicant's stated goals are (1) to seek to improve academic achievement and (2) to reduce the high school dropout rates. The applicant makes a convincing case that the resources available from this grant will support charter school participation and leadership in the statewide public school improvement process (e46).

The SEA's plan focuses on increasing quality educational services to disadvantaged and special needs students and for ensuring accountability and assessment systems that support and monitor progress towards this goal. Its plan is to nurture "slow growth" of charter schools so that "only high-quality charter schools will be authorized" (e49). Table 4 (e49) projects a reasonable estimate of 14 new charter schools to be opened between the beginning and the end of the grant period. The largest number of schools (8 of them) are projected to open during project year one, with three additional schools opening in project years two and three. Since charter schools are new in the state, there is no expectation of school closures during the grant period (e49).

The applicant offers a reasonably ambitious plan for creating new high-quality charter schools during the project period (e50-e51). It articulates and differentiates roles for the SBE, OSPI, and the CSC in actively supporting school growth with a sound development and management structure, technical assistance and support, and a focus on developing educational programs that lead to high-quality schools that serve high concentrations of disadvantaged and underserved students across the state. The coordinated agency support and collaboration have already led the state to put in place application structures, an innovative and demanding performance framework, and clear timelines, guidelines, and supports for developing schools. The mechanisms in place hold promise for achieving the vision of opening effective and successful high-quality charter schools in the next three years.

Although an entirely new charter schools system is just being put in place, the applicant has not yet had to be concerned with closing poor-performing schools. However, its planning, support, and accountability structure (e51) holds promise for minimizing the likelihood that schools would fail to achieve their goals in the near future. If problems do occur, the applicant's renewal and review process hold great potential for turning around weak schools or, if necessary, closing or denying them renewal.

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Past Performance is NOT APPLICABLE

1. This criterion is not applicable.

N/A

Reader's Score:

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: 18

Sub Question

- 1. 1) The quality of the SEA's process for awarding subgrants for planning, program design, and initial implementation and, if applicable, for dissemination, including --**
 - 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 provides an extensive series of appendices (listed on e21-e22) which, together, detail the in-depth quality expectations prospective charter school applicants must demonstrate before they can open. The state's proposed plan incorporates subgrantee selection with the excellent research-based charter application process it is using to approve new charter schools (e58). The integrated and thorough school selection and subgrant application and peer review process (e5-e59) defines timelines (e502), and relies on a stringent school application process that ensures subgrants will be awarded only to applicants that have the capacity to create high-quality charter schools (e58 and relevant appendices in Appendix E). The applications will be reviewed by trained and experienced SEA personnel, representing the three-component oversight organization, who follow a detailed evaluation rubric (Appendix E2, e140-e189) to guide selection and decision making.

The applicant indicates the number of subgrants the SEA expects to award (14) during the project period and the average size of those subgrants (between \$585,000 and \$785,000) (e61) in Table 6 (e62). It explains that coordinating the school approval and grantee selection processes improves the accuracy and efficiency of both selection processes (e61 and criteria which are summarized in Appendix E, cited above).

The SEA has not previously received a CSP grant (e62).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 10

2. 2) The process for monitoring CSP subgrantees.

Strengths:

The SEA's process for awarding subgrants furthers the SEA's overall strategy for increasing the number of high-quality charter schools by linking the selection and monitoring process to the state's overall charter school selection and monitoring process (e62-e64). Supporting documentation of the standards, methods, timelines, and monitoring criteria is detailed in the appendices, which include copies of the application schools must complete and the evaluation rubric reviewers use (Appendix E2, e140-e189; Appendix E3, e200-e218; Appendix E17, e503-e508). Additional CSP-focused monitoring of subgrantees includes: annual performance evaluation (against previous cited criteria), year-1 implementation site visit that includes a review of progress toward grant goals, observation of the educational program, a final CSP subgrant report; review of charter documents and performance data; and review of any complaints concerns, or findings brought to the attention of either OSPI or charter authorizers (e63-e64 and Appendices cited above).

The state will only be authorizing planning and implementation subgrants because the state's schools are not yet eligible for dissemination or expansion grants (e61).

Weaknesses:

Although fiscal monitoring responsibilities are described (e17 e18), it is not clear what the standards are for evaluating fiscal compliance and who is managing the fiscal review. The budget indicates a quarter-time staff person managing fiscal compliance (e503 – e505), to increase in FTE allocation over the three year grant to .75 FTE. But this level of fiscal management effort seems demanding for one part-time individual. It is also not entirely clear whether all authorizers will be following the Performance Framework of the Commission, making unclear precisely what the performance expectations are for authorizers and schools that are not authorized by Commission.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Dissemination of Information and Best Practices

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) **The extent to which the SEA will serve as a leader in the State for identifying and disseminating information and research (which may include, but is not limited to, providing technical assistance) about best or promising practices in successful charter schools, including how the SEA will use measures of efficacy and data in identifying such practices and assessing the impact of its dissemination activities.**

Strengths:

The SEA's excellent overall plan for dissemination using a wide array of traditional and electronically-based dissemination strategies will make it a state leader in identifying and disseminating information and research about best practices. The proposal committees to disseminating information about best practices, success stories, research, case studies and other resources through the OSPI and authorizer websites (e64) and will be disseminated at workshops, trainings, and at various state and national conferences (e64-e66). The Charter School Commission will disseminate information through newsletters and its website. The SEA will include lessons learned from subgrantees in its regular information updates to schools and school districts, including, bulletins memoranda, list services, and on its iGrants web portal (e65). The Charter School Commission's website posts charter school annual reports and applications, and data that demonstrates effectiveness of specific practices and programs (e65). Authorizers, OSPI officials, and schools will be encouraged to expand the dissemination of information by partnering with schools, offering conference presentations, and collaborating with dissemination expert organizations such as the Center for Reinventing Public Education and other state and national conferences and organizations (e66).

This wide array of proposed dissemination activities represent research-based dissemination "best practices." In addition to the multi-method dissemination and training approaches cited above, the applicant plans to add a Charter School Resources and Information webpage to its website (e64). And, finally, OSPI uses research-based performance indicators as part of the required application and year-end reporting, increasing the efficacy and transparency of data about school processes and outcomes (e68). The applicant describes measuring a wide array of academic indicators and outcomes (e66), e.g., student assessments; dual credit programs; SAT and ACT outcomes; post-secondary enrollments as well as indicators of course failure, student discipline, and attendance (e67) (see also appendices related to charter school design and performance reporting).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address its strategy for assessing the impact of its dissemination activities.

Reader's Score: 6

- 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:

As described in Factor 1, in addition to the multi-method approaches to dissemination and training cited above, the applicant plans to add a Charter School Resources and Information webpage to its website (e64). The SEA proposes to analyze and post charter school discipline data (e.e., suspension and expulsion and equity in discipline data) and attendance indicators on the OSPI website along with all other public school and district achievement indicators. Operational definitions of indicators are posted, along with explanations of why an indicator matters, district and data, and additional resources, as identified (e67). OSPI provides interactive worksheets, charts, and animations to support data-informed decision making that supports goals achievement and indicator analyses to encourage the use of findings to improve student and school success (e67). Appendix e19 lists the array of multi-layered state data collection and reporting systems and resources, all of which CSP grantees are encouraged to contribute to and to use for dissemination and monitoring (e67).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The application would benefit from more clarity about what defines its concept of "best or promising practices" as related to school discipline and climate. This section could be strengthened with additional information about the SEA's plans to help eventual users of the information it disseminates develop, assess, and maintain positive school climates and discipline practices in their schools.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Oversight of Authorized Public Chartering Agencies

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

1. 1) 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. 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 measureable 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 applicant indicates that the State Board of Education, OSPI, and charter authorizers are mandated by statute and by regulatory practice to adopt, evaluate, and report the outcomes and effects of evidence-based models and practices that focus on ensuring high-quality educational programs for ethnically diverse, disadvantaged student bodies (e68-e69). This policy is carried out through the required school application process and by the annual performance framework that every charter school must use in annual reports to the SEA (e60 and Appendix E3). New charter schools are specifically mandated to explain how they use evidence-based school models and practices that address the needs of educationally disadvantaged students (e69 and Appendix E2; see Criteria A)

Sub Question

The Commission's Academic and Operational Performance Frameworks (Appendix E3) is provided as a model of charter schools and sub grantees reporting. This model proposes using data to determine if schools are "high-quality," defined in this state as schools that collect and report data on graduation requirements, post-secondary enrollment (e70). The model also requires schools to provide evidence of how they are closing the achievement gap in ESEA subgroups, and attendance retention rates. Oversight for alternative and virtual charter schools would be the same for all charters. (e70).

The richness and thoroughness of the Commission's model Charter Contract and Performance Framework (Appendix E) demonstrates the SEA's data-based mechanism for engaging schools in continuous program analysis, learning, and improvement (e71). The applicant recognizes that compliance reporting sets the standard for and relies on monitoring and interaction with OSPI and authorizers. The applicant notes: "using a Performance Framework ensures high standards and accountability - not by dictating inputs or controlling processes -rather by setting expectations and holding schools accountable for results" (e72).

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not made clear that the Commission's excellent evaluation framework also applies to other authorizers and charter school statewide. Without this explicit information, it is not clear how non-Commission authorizer schools will be held to standard. Measurable fiscal and operational standards are not defined, and it is not clear how or under what circumstances further inquiry will occur if evidence from schools suggests they are off track on one or more significant metric. Thus, while there is a rich discussion of the model that one authorizer uses, it is not clear what all authorizers will use to hold schools accountable other than academic achievement scores.

Reader's Score: 16

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 demonstrates that all charter schools are monitored annually and every five years using in-depth reviews of schools with on-site visits and extensive analysis of the data returned in the annual Performance Frameworks (e72 and Appendix E3). Per statute, authorizers and OSPI monitor schools in accordance with the terms of their signed and executed legal contracts with charter schools. The State Board of Education (SBE), in

Sub Question

turn, is responsible for overseeing performance, evaluating effectiveness, and regularly monitoring all authorizers approved under the law (e73). Persistent underperformance, complaints, or portfolio reviews can trigger a special review by the State Board of Education (SBE). These reviews occur on top of the SBE review of the annual reports that authorizers must submit, which include the evidence-based reports on academic, operational, and financial performance evidence described above (e73).

As indicated in previous sections of this review, academic performance monitoring of charter schools aligns with the same monitoring required of all schools within the state and uses the same yardsticks – including assessments, indicators, and targets (e73 and appendices). Per statute, a charter contract may not be renewed if the school's performance falls in the bottom quartile of schools on the state's Accountability Index (e74). The SEA holds to its accountability mandates during all transitions to new state assessments or accountability systems (e.g., during changes to college and career ready standards, and commits to supporting schools through a potential transition to new accountability systems using training and technical assistance, as it would for all public schools and districts in the state (e74).

Weaknesses:

The applicant has implied, but not made explicit, that the Commission's model for monitoring charter schools also applies to other authorizers statewide. Without a specific statement regarding the widespread use of the Commission's model, the applicant's process for ensuring the authorization of high-quality charter schools is suggested but not assured.

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 LEAs under State law and LEAs 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 applicant demonstrates how the state ensures a high degree of flexibility to charter schools under the state's charter school law (e74) by exempting schools from state and local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools as per assurances written into the law. Charter schools are freed from regulations pertaining to curriculum, budgets, hiring and firing of teachers and staff, and in terms of the range of customized learning experiences they can offer students (e75). Charter schools are independent from the public school district system and are free to develop their own academic programs, choose staff, set educational goals, offer longer school days and year, and establish their own student behavior standards as long as they meet self-defined standards and goals (e75).

Factor 2: The SEA's plan ensures that charter schools that are considered to be LEAs under State law and LEAs 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) (e76 and e78).

OSPI annually informs each charter school about available federal funds for which they might be eligible, following the dissemination, training, and support mandates incorporated into federal program requirements. The OSPI federal grants management application and reporting system (iGrants) is available to all charter as well as traditional public schools. All charter schools are considered districts for the purpose of state and federal funds eligibility and program participation (e76). By law, OSPI is required to ensure that each charter school in the state receives the school's commensurate share of federal funds (e77).

Weaknesses:

None identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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's authorizing process was developed under the auspices of a new agency, opening in 2013, and the Commission for Charter Schools' staff and members collaborated with national charter school leaders to establish clear criteria for school and authorizer selection based on research and best practices nationwide (e31). Authorizers must annually distribute and publicize requests for new charter proposals (e32).

The new charter requirements put in place a multi-tiered application development, review, and approval process that offers accessible and structured technical assistance to applicants. The requirements are detailed and explicit; successful applications must meet the standards defined in a rubric used in the multi-tiered application review which includes training, technical assistance, public forums to obtain community input, and written recommendations, as well as a procedural appeal process (e31-e32). Application requirements emphasize cultural competence, cultural inclusivity, and cultural responsiveness, financial history and transparency, Commission-led evaluation teams, applicant engagement and planning of public forums (e32). After the charter contract becomes effective and before a school opens, new charter schools complete a protocol that confirms they meet "pre-opening conductions" as specified in their charter contract (Appendix 20, e513 forward).

Weaknesses:

The applicant implies, but does not specifically state, that the Charter School Commission's evaluation procedures (e.g., performance framework, charter application, and rubrics) are the same, or the standard for, the procedures that all authorizers must use in evaluating their schools.

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 describes its differentiated review process. For applicants who already operate one or more schools, including charter management organizations and educational management organizations, the Commission requires (1) detailed descriptions of an organization's growth and capacity plans; (2) completion of the Portfolio Summary Template to provide complete information about each of the organization's existing schools; and (3) disclosure regarding any schools that closed or had their charters revoked. Additionally, operators that have already been authorized to open one school must demonstrate that they have successfully executed all legal obligations before the Commission will approve subsequent new schools (e44).

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not made clear what the differentiated review process is for authorizers other than the Commission. The process implies that the process defined by the Commission generalizes to all authorizers, but the applicant is not specific on this point, making it uncertain if all authorizers are holding schools to high performance accountability.

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 the standards and formalized process for evaluating authorizers has been written into the Charter School Act (described in the application, e34 and included in the Appendix). Authorizers are required to annually disseminate evidence of the performance of their portfolio of charter schools. Stringent standards are formalized and clearly stated with specifications that measure and benchmark the performance of chartering agency's existing schools (see Appendices A and E).

Weaknesses:

None indicated

Reader's Score: 5

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 Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) is an independent state agency that is statutorily required to authorize and provide oversight to charter schools. LEAs may apply and complete a rigorous application process to be considered as a charter school authorizer (e38). The Commission is governed by 11 Commissioners, representing different statewide constituencies. It has established an application and appeals process that uses external, neutral expert sources to review application appeals and to make recommendations for action by the Commission, as needed (e37).

The Commission is the only statewide authorizer. The applicant states that the Commission is responsible for ensuring transparency and accountability to improve educational outcomes for at-risk students (e36). As an independent state agency, it has hiring and contracting authority; it authorizes public charter schools “particularly for AT-RISK STUDENTS” (bold emphasis in the original)(e36); and ensures that authorized schools meet high accountability and oversight standards, which are detailed in various Appendices provided in the application. Additional assurances are in place to establish well-defined procedural and accountability standards of selection, management, and oversight and, when necessary, to define procedures for corrective action, exercise sanctions, and renew or revoke charters (e37 and relevant Appendices).

Weaknesses:

None indicated.

Reader's Score: 5

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