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

Applicant: Crossroads Academy of Kansas City Inc. (U282E180019)
Reader #2: ********

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Priority Questions

| Competitive Preference Priority 1       |                 |               |
| Access to High-Quality Educational Choice |                 |               |
| 1. Increasing Access                   | 2               | 2             |
| **Sub Total**                          | 2               | 2             |

| Competitive Preference Priority 2       |                 |               |
| Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs |                 |               |
| 1. Enrollment Programs                 | 2               | 1             |
| **Sub Total**                          | 2               | 1             |

**Total** 104 95
Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - CSP Developers (84.282E) - 3: 84.282E

Reader #2:  ********
Applicant: Crossroads Academy of Kansas City Inc. (U282E180019)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational Opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary considers the quality of the plan to ensure that the charter school the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly explained that the Crossroads Charter Schools conducts an annual non-weighted enrollment lottery in March in accordance with state charter school law. Missouri law only allows enrollment preference for siblings of current students, children of employees, or for a geographically defined area that does not result in racially or socioeconomically isolated schools. The law was designed to ensure there are equitable enrollment opportunities for all students regardless of background. Crossroads uses a sibling preference and defines a geographically preferred area that includes the downtown urban core that encompasses lower income neighborhoods. The applicant indicated that the charter school has concentrated its recruitment efforts prior to the enrollment lottery to low-income and minority populations. Outcomes for Crossroads educationally disadvantaged students significantly exceed those of such students in surrounding public school districts. Retention rates for Crossroads educationally disadvantaged students are equal or surpassing the overall rate for all Crossroads students and higher than the average retention rate of surrounding districts.

The Community Engagement Coordinator coordinates all recruitment and enrollment processes. In the 2018 enrollment lottery 56% of all kindergarten applications were from families of color, which is a 5% increase over the previous year. Students enrolled for the 2017-18 school year form a diverse student population that is representative of the broader community. The 697 students are 36% Caucasian, 36% African American, 15% Hispanic, 11% Multiracial, 1% Asian, and 1% American Indian. (pgs. 12-14)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable

   Strengths:

   The applicant provided detailed goals that were appropriately aligned with measurable performance objectives and outcomes. For example, one of the academic goals for the project is to increase the percentage of 8th grade students proficient or better in English language arts on state assessments from a baseline of 52% to 64% within 5-years. Similarly, the applicant is proposing to increase the percentage by 4% of high school students proficient or better on the Algebra I state assessment compared to the state average. The goals and objectives were appropriately aligned with tasks and activities needed to meet the performance measures. (pgs. 20-23)

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses noted.

2. (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs

   Strengths:

   The applicant effectively demonstrated that the proposed expansion program is designed to meet the needs of the targeted population. For example, the applicant has proposed high standards for improving student achievement at all levels. In order to meet those standards with the targeted population the applicant is proposing to do the following: (a) provide a rigorous academic program, (b) train and employ highly effective instructors, (c) utilize only certified English learners and students with disabilities teachers, (d) incorporate a Project-Based Learning model, (e) longer school days and a summer program. (pgs. 25-28) The applicant will further provide regular assessments and designated periods each day for remediation and homework assistance. All of these program components have the potential for addressing student needs.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant did not identify any curriculum models that will be put in place to evidence what the rigorous academic program will encompass.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

   **Strengths:**
   The applicant provided a detailed strategic plan for ensuring and encouraging applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

   The applicant indicated that initiatives have been developed toward prioritizing the recruitment efforts which will include revising and refining recruitment, screening, and offering processes to align to the Crossroads model to ensure a strong pipeline of quality talent. For example, the recruitment strategies include visiting with college students, posting positions to websites and teacher recruitment networks and participating in teacher training programs. (pg. 26)

   **Weaknesses:**
   No weaknesses noted.

Reader’s Score: 1

2. (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel

   **Strengths:**
   The applicant provided evidence via resumes and summary narratives that the key personnel are highly qualified with various levels of experience and training to successfully implement the proposed project. For example, the Executive Director of Crossroads Charter Schools, will serve as the Project Director. He has many years of experience working in education with aligning educational degrees. (pg. 32) (Appendices)

   The Crossroads Preparatory Academy Principal will be responsible for successfully opening the district’s high school this year. She is the founding Principal of Crossroads High School and previously taught 6th grade at Crossroads Academy. She graduated from the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s Institute for Urban Education and has earned a Master’s in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Additionally, she has completed the Leading Educators Fellowship program. (pgs. 34-36)

   **Weaknesses:**
   No weaknesses noted.

Reader’s Score: 9

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

Strengths:
The applicant provided a detailed management plan that clearly outlined the processes and procedures that will be implemented to ensure the efficient operation of the program. The management plan is appropriately aligned with activities and tasks and corresponding milestones, a timeframe for completing tasks and the person(s) responsible for ensuring the implementation. For example, the applicant indicated that one of the tasks is the recruitment of students by all of the key personnel and these tasks will begin immediately after the grant award with media outreach, open house and other marketing strategies. (pg. 31) To ensure the project is within budget the applicant adequately detailed their success in completing projects of similar scope to the one in this proposal on time, within budget and with high quality outcomes. For example, the district completed an $8.2 million project to purchase the facility adjacent to their original building and expand the capacity of the school. Overall, based on a review of the management plan, the applicant has clearly developed a blueprint for project implementation and has the potential for achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the proposal.

Weaknesses:
The applicant did not provide a timeline to detail the professional development. Without this timeline it is unclear how this component of the project will be implemented and who is responsible for ensuring all the tasks and activities are completed for meeting the goals and objectives.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the charter school to be replicated or expanded is a high-quality charter school, including:

   (1) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages. These subgroups of students include: Economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and students who are ELs.

   (2) The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments and annual student attendance and retention rates, and where applicable and available, student academic growth, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates) for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have exceeded the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.

   (3) The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school’s charter; and have had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

(1) The applicant successfully demonstrated how the proposed expansion program will support English learners and students with disabilities. Prior experience and data indicated that retention rates for these students are equal or surpassing the overall rate for all Crossroads students and are higher than the average retention rate of surrounding districts. Data presented also evidenced that the proficiency on state assessments of Crossroads’ English learners and students with disabilities is better than the achievement of these groups of students across the State and significantly
better than the achievement of such students in the Kansas City Public Schools. (pgs. 12-17)

(2) The applicant successfully demonstrated that the Crossroads Charter Schools is ranked fourth out of the nineteen traditional and charter school districts serving Kansas City students on the State assessments. In 2017 Crossroads Charter Schools was recognized as the Missouri Charter School of the Year by the Missouri Charter Public School Association. (pg. 18-20) The percent of Crossroads students proficient in English Language Arts is higher than the overall state averages for all students and subgroups with the differences ranging from 3% to 9%.

The applicant indicated that comparison data to the Kansas City Public Schools is important because Missouri charter school laws require that the comparison of charter LEA results to the traditional public-school district serving the same geographic area be considered in charter renewal decisions. The criteria for this consideration is that charter LEA performance exceed that of the traditional public-school district in at least three of the preceding four years.

(3) The applicant provided a letter from the Director of the UCM Charter School Office attesting to the following statement that no charter schools operated by Crossroads Charter Schools have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with Crossroads Charter Schools revoked or terminated; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; nor have had any significant issues with respect to student safety within the last three years. The charter for Crossroads Charter Schools was renewed in 2017 for five years through June of 2022. (pg. 39) (Appendices)

Weaknesses:
The applicant did not provide comparison data in some of the data sets. Without this information it is unclear how the applicant is documenting student achievement as compared to the state. For example, the applicant did not adequately provide data for subgroups of students, such as economically disadvantaged students or students from racial and ethnic groups and children with disabilities.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Continuation Plan

1. The extent to which the eligible applicant is prepared to continue to operate charter schools that would receive grant funds in a manner consistent with the eligible applicant’s application once the grant funds under this program are no longer available.

Strengths:
The applicant successfully demonstrated that Crossroads has the potential to sustain the program after the grant period. For example, the applicant was awarded $5.5 million from the 11th Street Corridor Tax Increment Financing Redevelopment District which is part of an $8.2-million-dollar capital campaign. The district annually engages the donor community to support expansion efforts and enhance professional development, instructional technology, enrichment activities, and other value-added programming. These funds allow Crossroads to accommodate the growing student body and achieve a level of excellence that exceeds what is possible by relying on public funding alone. (pg. 40)

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses noted.
Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

This priority is for projects that are designed to increase access to educational choice and improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

(i) Students in communities served by rural local educational agencies
(ii) Children with disabilities
(iii) English learners
(iv) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The applicant effectively demonstrated that the proposed program expansion has a goal of providing aggressive academic goals for students through a rigorous academic program. The percentage of Crossroads students who have disabilities or are English learners is compared to the comparable percentages of students in Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS). Crossroads Charter Schools will actively recruit students with high-risk factors. That target population will include English Language Learners and Special education students.

Students with high-risk factors in these two targeted populations will be provided many support services and opportunities to achieve at the same high level as their peers to close the achievement gap. Some of those support services include: ELL and SPED classes, small group work with an instructional specialist and blended learning coach, one-on-one tutoring, and community mentors. (pgs.2-6)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2—Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High Schools

The extent to which the proposed project is designed to increase student access to, participation in, and completion of dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools.

Strengths:

The applicant indicated that the Crossroads Charter Schools is implementing a program called Career Academies and students will be able to earn credit toward a postsecondary degree prior to high school graduation. A project goal is to have at least 50% of 11th grade students earn college credit. The district has partnered with Prep-KC a local nonprofit to design this program. Career Academy graduates will leave high school with college credit, workforce credentials, and real-world experiences. (pg. 12)
Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide any evidence demonstrating that the proposed Career Academy programs are associated with any accredited college or university. The applicant does not explain how the non-profit agency they are proposing to partner with has the capacity and authority to award college credits. More information is needed to determine if the proposed program is more of a career interest program or actual college credit seeking program.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/21/2018 12:07 PM
## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Crossroads Academy of Kansas City Inc. (U282E180019)  
**Reader #1:** ********

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### Priority Questions

#### Competitive Preference Priority 1

**Access to High-Quality Educational Choice**

1. Increasing Access  
   - Points Possible: 2  
   - Points Scored: 1  

**Sub Total**  
- Points Possible: 2  
- Points Scored: 1

#### Competitive Preference Priority 2

**Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs**

1. Enrollment Programs  
   - Points Possible: 2  
   - Points Scored: 1  

**Sub Total**  
- Points Possible: 2  
- Points Scored: 1

**Total**  
- Points Possible: 104  
- Points Scored: 86
Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - CSP Developers (84.282E) - 3: 84.282E

Reader #1: *********
Applicant: Crossroads Academy of Kansas City Inc. (U282E180019)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational Opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary considers the quality of the plan to ensure that the charter school the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

Strengths:
The schools are having some successes with disadvantaged students, especially in ELA, as described on p. e29. The schools were named Charter School of the Year in 2017 by their state charter membership organization. FRL students and ELL students are both ahead of city and state averages in ELA and Math per Table 3.

Weaknesses:
The schools seem to be lagging the state in Math scores, and the schools actually enroll a lower proportion of ELL and SED students than similar charters, the surrounding city, or the state. Also, the application would be clearer if the three school sites’ scores were disaggregated when reported. This would allow reviewers to see if any weaknesses were limited to one school site, or were a network-wide problem.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable

Strengths:
The goals for enrollment on p. e28 are clear, and the logic model on p. e49 is sound. The academic goals are clearly listed on p. e35 Table 10.

Weaknesses:
Though the goals are technically listed and will result in scores above the state average as noted on table 10, the goals call for no growth in any area, except in grades where the schools do not currently offer classes. In those cases, the growth goals are minimal.

6/25/18 3:28 PM
2. (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs

**Strengths:**
The school was named Charter School of the Year by its state charter membership organization in 2017. The schools appear to have a well-considered plan/logic model focused on Project-Based Learning.

**Weaknesses:**
While the schools have had some successes on aggregate, especially in ELA, they have not shown the same success in Math. Also, the application would be strengthened by differentiating between the achievement of the three schools, and discussing their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 11

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

**Strengths:**
The schools have a well-considered plan to recruit diverse staff from a variety of sources, as described in pp. e12 and e43-45, including visiting college campuses, working with teacher recruitment networks, and partnering with the Kansas City Teacher Residency Program.

**Weaknesses:**
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

2. (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel

**Strengths:**
The project team has appropriate and relevant experience in educational leadership, project management, and finance, as described in pp. e61 and e70-81. The team also has experience managing similar, recent large projects.

**Weaknesses:**
No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 9
Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Strengths:
The team has managed similar, recent large projects. Table 11 includes a timeline with activities and responsible parties.

Weaknesses:
While equipping the new group of schools is an objective that the project team seems capable of carrying out, what is not clear is the direct relation between project activities and goals. For example, a recurring large expenditure is iPads (p. e130); the need for these could be more clearly described. The application would also be strengthened by a clarifying of the measurable goals, and an acknowledgement of the potential struggles that will come from merging/shifting school sites.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the charter school to be replicated or expanded is a high-quality charter school, including:

(1) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages. These subgroups of students include: Economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and students who are ELs.

(2) The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments and annual student attendance and retention rates, and where applicable and available, student academic growth, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates) for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have exceeded the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.

(3) The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school’s charter; and have had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

(1) The schools have had some academic success for all students and subgroups, especially in ELA, and noted on p. e29. Students also appear to achieve more the longer they stay at the schools in ELA and Math as shown on pp. e32 and e33. The school performed well on the city’s performance index as well, as shown on p. e31.

(2) The schools are above their local city and state in attendance measures as shown on p. e35. They also retain high numbers of students.

(3) Schools in the network have not been closed or had charters revoked, or had compliance issues per p. e36.
Weaknesses:

(1) While their scores have improved, the schools have demonstrated somewhat uneven academic achievement among subgroups, as shown in Table 3, p. e29. All students and SWD students still lag the state averages by several points.

(2) The schools have not outperformed the state in Math, except for ELL students, per p. e29. They lag the state in Math for all students, students of color, and SWD students. Also, the application would be strengthened by showing the different results for different school sites, rather than as one aggregated score.

(3) No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Continuation Plan

1. The extent to which the eligible applicant is prepared to continue to operate charter schools that would receive grant funds in a manner consistent with the eligible applicant's application once the grant funds under this program are no longer available.

Strengths:
The application states that the schools plan to exist solely on public funding after the grant period's expansion, as noted on p. e64. The schools appear to have a strengthening financial position over time, and has raised outside funds.

Weaknesses:
The application should include a plan for continued future fundraising, rather than a statement of planning to wind it down, especially as it also notes "lean years" at the start of the high school on p. e64. This is especially true as the school plans to maintain a loan balance of nearly $1MM through 2045.

Reader's Score: 14

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

This priority is for projects that are designed to increase access to educational choice and improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

(i) Students in communities served by rural local educational agencies
(ii) Children with disabilities
(iii) English learners
(iv) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:
The application notes that the school actively recruits high-need students on p. e21.
Weaknesses:
The school currently serves a lower proportion of ELL and SWD students than its surrounding school district and its state; the application should include a plan to recruit more such students.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2—Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High Schools

The extent to which the proposed project is designed to increase student access to, participation in, and completion of dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools.

Strengths:
The application includes a well-developed plan for a dual enrollment program, with a well-considered curriculum and an outside partner, as described beginning on p. e23. This program is likely to increase access to enrollment in early college-type programs for the students.

Weaknesses:
While the application lists a concept and partner, it would be strengthened by including more detailed information about the actual content of the planned program.

Reader's Score: 1

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/22/2018 12:22 PM
Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Crossroads Academy of Kansas City Inc. (U282E180019)
Reader #3: ********

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<td><strong>Continuation Plan</strong></td>
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<td>1. Continuation Plan</td>
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Sub Total: 100 87

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**Access to High-Quality Educational Choice**

1. Increasing Access
   2. 2

Sub Total: 2 2

**Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs**

1. Enrollment Programs
   2. 1

Sub Total: 2 1

Total: 104 90
Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - CSP Developers (84.282E) - 3: 84.282E

Reader #3: ************
Applicant: Crossroads Academy of Kansas City Inc. (U282E180019)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational Opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary considers the quality of the plan to ensure that the charter school the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

Strengths:
The applicant demonstrates strong performance data across all subgroups compared to the host district on ELA and Math proficiency assessments, providing reassurance that the school is enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards (e29).
The application claims a focus on recruitment operations among low-income and minority neighborhoods and the appointment of full-time outreach position to concentrate recruitment in these areas. With the addition of this role, the percentage of students of color enrolling in the lottery increased by 5% to 56% of all kindergarten applications (e39).

Current student enrollment among the network schools reflects racial diversity, including 36% Caucasian, 36% African-American, 15% Hispanic, 11% Multiracial, 1% Asian, and 1% American Indian (e21).

Although the school enrolls disproportionately fewer ELLs, Students of Color, and Students with Disabilities than the KCPS overall population (e41), the numbers still exceed state averages for most subgroups. (e39).

Weaknesses:
Crossroads Charter School currently enrolls disproportionately fewer ELLs, Students of Color, and Students with Disabilities than the KCPS overall population (e41). Data is not separated by school to ascertain effectiveness of each location (e29).

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable

Strengths:
The proposal lists goals of increasing student enrollment to 450 by the end of the grant project and to 600 when the expansion is completed in 2026 (e53). Project performance measurements are aligned to maintaining exceeding state averages and are specific and measurable. These include 8th grade proficiency in ELA and Math and proficiency on high school Algebra I state assessment and English II State Assessment. The project also sets the goal of having 50% of 11th graders complete a dual enrollment course by Year 2 of the project (e54). The goals are appropriate to meet the needs of the target population.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found.

Sub Question

2. (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs

Strengths:
A career exploration model is described beginning in 7th grade with college visits and the opportunities to engage in labs, seminars, and other learning. A freshman career academy course allows for exploration of various pathways; students explore entrepreneurship as sophomores. Juniors and Seniors engage in job shadowing and internships (e24-e25). As described, the model will afford students the opportunity to be exposed to multiple different pathways to a successful professional career.

Weaknesses:
The curricular model, beyond the career exploration aspect, is not well understood from the application. Though the school is exhibiting strong academic results relative to KCPS and raising scores significantly as time enrolled increases (e32), it is unclear from the application the curriculum model that the high school will follow. As a result, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which the model will be effective for the target population.

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

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

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability
Sub Question

Strengths:
Crossroads Academy has affirmed its intention to increase the diversity of an already diverse staff, which is currently 26% African-American, and make it more representative of the student population. The school participates in the New England Minority Network to allow candidates of color from all over the country the opportunity to apply to work at Crossroads. The Kansas City Teacher Residency Program is also a partner with a track record of strong diversity (e12-e13). The steps taken evince a commitment to encouraging applications for employment from persons of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found

Reader's Score: 1

2. (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel

Strengths:
The Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer have overseen two previous successful expansions of the school. The Principal has appropriate experience and education (Master’s in Ed. Leadership and Policy Studies) for the appointment. COO has appropriate HR experience for the role.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

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

Strengths:
The application offers examples of successful execution of past expansions to support the ability to achieve the objectives on time and within budget. An $8.2 million project in 2014 to expand capacity and a $5.5 million project to open the second school in 2016 provide a track record of effective oversight (e56).

An appropriate list of project activities with responsible individuals and timelines is included. Oversight of the project will be the responsibility of the Executive Director of Crossroads Charter School.

Weaknesses:
The list of project activities includes broad categories, leaving questions about what specific PD, technology, or textbook resources are being purchased (e58-e60). Specific links to project outcomes are not found to be well described. Milestones for completion of project activities are not found to be described.
Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the charter school to be replicated or expanded is a high-quality charter school, including:

(1) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages. These subgroups of students include: Economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and students who are ELs.

(2) The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments and annual student attendance and retention rates, and where applicable and available, student academic growth, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates) for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have exceeded the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.

(3) The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school’s charter; and have had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

The application contains a statement affirming that no charter schools operated by Crossroads have been closed due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements, nor have the schools faced any significant issues with statutory or regulatory requirements (e91).

Proficiency of Crossroads students on state assessments disaggregated by subgroup is included, demonstrating higher than district and state performance in ELA and Math for almost all subgroups. Crossroads shows significantly higher scores than KCPS, particularly on ELA assessments (e29). The school’s performance data indicate an ability to effectively provide services to these subgroups above and beyond the host district as a whole.

Weaknesses:

Although attendance and student retention data for Crossroads Charter Schools is given, comparisons to state averages are not included in order to determine whether the network is exceeding the state averages for these statistics (e90-e91).

Selection Criteria - Continuation Plan

1. The extent to which the eligible applicant is prepared to continue to operate charter schools that would receive grant funds in a manner consistent with the eligible applicant’s application once the grant funds under this program are no longer available.

Strengths:

The proposal indicates that none of the proposed activities within the project are for core operating expenses and that the state funding will be sufficient to maintain operations at the conclusion of the grant (e64).

Crossroads will continue to solicit the support of donors during the expansion and has a full-time Development
Coordinator (e64).

Financial statements indicate revenues exceeding expenditures on an annual basis and a reserve fund of almost one million dollars (e97). The school is in a financial position to pursue this expansion and enrollment increases. That result will drive down the per student costs of delivering instruction and put the school in a strong position to maintain operations at the conclusion of the grant.

Weaknesses:

Outstanding debt amortized to a total obligation including interest of nearly $8 million (e102) may rely on additional funding while a plan to reduce fundraising is in place (e64).

Reader's Score: 14

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

This priority is for projects that are designed to increase access to educational choice and improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

(i) Students in communities served by rural local educational agencies
(ii) Children with disabilities
(iii) English learners
(iv) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The application indicates a non-weighted lottery process in accordance with state law in order to create equal opportunity for members of all subgroups to be admitted.

As a network, UCM schools admit a disproportionately higher percentage of ELL students than Kansas City Public Schools (e21). The proposal claims higher than district average retention rate for ELL students at Crossroads.

Crossroads’ ELL students have performed better than state average and significantly better than district average on proficiency tests (e22).

Although the percentage of ELL is disproportionately lower than the district at the school level, it is a small sample size. The group is well represented in the network of charter schools (e17, e21).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.
Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2—Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High Schools

The extent to which the proposed project is designed to increase student access to, participation in, and completion of dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools.

Strengths:
A partnership with Prep-KC is intended to provide students with real-world work experience that also includes college credit and workforce credentials. Students in their junior and senior years will have the opportunity to take career related courses for college credit (e25-e26). The proposal indicates a commitment on the part of the school towards including dual enrollment as a component of the expansion.

Weaknesses:
Although Project Lead the Way will also be incorporated into the curriculum, it is unclear from the proposal whether actual college credit will be awarded through this program (e61). The application does not describe in detail the types of dual/concurrent enrollment courses that will be offered or other program components related to this criterion. Because these systems are not yet in place and will be part of the expanded grades, more planning and specifics need to be offered in order to ensure an increased student access to dual enrollment.