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

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/21/2018 12:07 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cumberland County Charter School Network (U282E180007)
Reader #2: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	20	12
Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	15	15
Sub Total	100	92
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	0
Sub Total	2	0
Total	104	94

Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: Cumberland County Charter School Network (U282E180007)

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 comprehensively evidenced that the proposed program expansion will significantly provide expansion opportunities in the targeted region to reach educationally and economically disadvantaged students. The applicant is currently providing educational services to three charter school communities. The applicant will utilize a lottery selection system to select students, as well as extensively advertise and recruit student enrollment. (pg. e61) The schools have a diverse student body and the applicant provided a clear plan for ensuring barriers such as transportation are provided for students to attend the charter schools. The proposed expansion of the three programs will be focused in Cumberland County, which one of the poorest county in New Jersey. The program expansion will provide more educational services and choices for an area where there is a high percentage of minorities who are educationally and economically disadvantaged.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

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:**

Reader's Score: **30**

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**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant comprehensively outlined and described four strategic goals with objectives that were specific and measurable. For example, the applicant is proposing to increase the number of students (180) in years 1-3 and (120 students) in years 4-5. The goals and objective will be measured yearly by the number of new students enrolled, student retention and student attendance. Other measures of success will include student academic success on state assessments. (pg. e 40) A related goal is to reduce the dropout rate at all the schools to less than 2%. The applicant will develop strategies to prevent dropout and monitor success on a yearly basis. (pg. e41)

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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 provided extensive data to evidence the academic achievement of students enrolled in the schools. The data clearly evidenced that there are subgroups of students, in particular those that are economically disadvantaged that are below the expected achievement level, however, showing targeted growth. (pgs. E31-34)

The applicant clearly provided strategic goals and objectives in the project design to ensure the academic performance of the targeted students in the programs are exceeding proficiency on state assessments by 1% yearly over the life of the grant. (pg. e-40-41) The applicant is appropriately proposing to increase support through individualized educational plans, improving attendance, monitoring and teacher development.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:**

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 applicant provided a general GEPA Statement that indicated the applicant will ensure equitable access to participation in the programs, which will include teachers. The applicant further discussed in the narrative that the organization will advertise all positions in the local newspaper and other job sites in an effort to reach traditionally underrepresented populations. (pg. e47) (pg. e12)

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 comprehensive documentation that the proposed project staff and key support personnel which included administrators have the relevant qualifications, training and experience to effectively implement the program goals and objectives. For example, the applicant provided numerous resumes with aligning job descriptions for each person. (Appendices)

A review of the resumes clearly indicated that the Executive Director, charged with the daily operation of the program has an approved state administrative certification and is evaluated yearly by the Board of Trustees. (pg. e31) Similarly, the other key personnel, such as the Financial Director, has over 20 years of experience managing public school funds.

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, tasks, 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 key personnel and these tasks will begin immediately after the grant award with media outreach, open houses and other marketing strategies. (pg. e51) To ensure the project is within budget the applicant adequately detailed how the proposed

project will financially manage the project quarterly and annually, as well as fundraising efforts to ensure sustainability (pg. 52). Overall, based on a review of the management plan, the applicant has clearly developed a blueprint for project implementation the has the potential for achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the proposal.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 that the proposed project to expand its programs are aligned with the goals and objectives of increasing academic achievement, decreasing dropout rates among the economically and educationally disadvantaged sub-groups of students. The applicant comprehensively evidenced the current achievement of students and while some progress has been made the proposed expansion will include efforts to increase yearly proficiency on State assessments. The applicant effectively addressed the plan to increase the support and programmatic efforts to better service children with disabilities. (pgs. 20-22)

(2) The applicant adequately addressed the proposed plans to increase academic and annual student performance on statewide assessments. The applicant indicated and provided annual assessment data which shows some annual growth has been made among high-need students, including their plan to increase that growth by 1% each year over the next five years. In addition to annual academic growth, the applicant outlined a plan to improve attendance and increase parental involvement. (pgs. 27-28)

(3) The applicant provided a clear discussion that evidenced that the proposed charter school expansion operated or managed by the applicant has never been closed and that there has never been a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements. Further, the applicant evidenced through a variety of documents and narrative that the programs are financially sound and have not experienced any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management. (pgs. 30-32)

Weaknesses:

While the applicant addresses many of the issues, challenges and barriers faced by students that are considered eligible high need students, the applicant did not provide any strategies for addressing high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools.

Reader's Score: 12

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 provided a clear and adequate plan for sustainability and continuation of the programs after the grant funds. The applicant provided financial statements that indicate the organization is financially sound and continue to receive the support of the New Jersey State Board of Education and the Highmark School Development, LLC. The applicant is supported by several charter school organizations. For example, the Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS) supports the schools through their human capital management system. (pg. e56) The applicant is supported by the Cumberland County Charter School Network and has not had any findings of misappropriation of funds, non-compliance and mismanagement.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

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 has been designed to increase educational choice and improve academic outcomes for high-need students. The applicant provided evidence that the three schools operated under the program will service high-need students in Pk-12 and K-8. The applicant provided comprehensive evidence to document that the programs are designed to offer inclusive environments with the implementation and monitoring of high risk students with IEPs. The program employs an Intervention Team of administrators, therapists and counselors to ensure modifications are in place and adhered to for students with disabilities. (pg. e25)

While the applicant indicated that due to their locations, the current programs do not have many Hispanic students or ELL students, however, the enrollment is increasing. The applicant successfully demonstrated that the proposed program has in place processes and procedures to identify English Language Learners (ELL). The applicant indicated that students are provided initial baseline entry evaluations through screenings, assessments to determine early interventions and support programs. (pg. e26)

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 is not proposing a dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment or Early College program.

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant is not proposing a dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment or Early College program.

Reader's Score: **0**

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Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cumberland County Charter School Network (U282E180007)
Reader #1: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	15	13
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	27
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	8
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	20	12
Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	79
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	0
Sub Total	2	0
Total	104	81

Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: Cumberland County Charter School Network (U282E180007)

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:

As described in the application (pp. e20-e24), the schools exist in a high-need area and enroll high percentages of disadvantaged students. The applicant has a desire to recruit more high-need students. Some of the data in Table 4 show the school having success with such students, particularly economically disadvantaged students. This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria

Weaknesses:

The existing schools' achievement data (Table 4) show that the schools are having mixed performance when compared to state averages. Schoolwide, Vineland is outperforming the state in 2 of 5 grades; Millville is outperforming in 1 of 4 grades.

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:**

Reader's Score: **27**

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:

Goals with Indicators and Outcomes are labeled clearly on pp. e40-e42, and are mostly measurable. . For example, academic goals like BPCS Goal #1: “By June 2023, 73% of all K-3 students in Bridgeton Public Charter School will read on grade level” is quantifiable, tied to a specific school, and given a date. This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Some of the goals in Table 8 beginning on p. e40 are unclear. For example: it is unclear how enrollment and retention will be divided and measured among the three school sites. The application would be stronger if it included individual goals, rather than goals aggregated across multiple sites, which could cloud how well a particular school is performing. On the academic goals: In addition, it seems possible that some of the academic goal that some of these targets will leave students below state averages even after five years (for example, increasing PARCC scores by 1 percent annually for groups that are beginning well below the state average, as on pp. e41-42).

Reader's Score: 12

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 application is directed at the target population, and the schools have wait lists. The application discusses methods of continuous data analysis and qualitative feedback and improvement on p. e44, including both formative and summative assessments. The application describes the school's continuous improvement model on p. e44, as well as its supports for ELL and SWD students.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:**

Reader's Score: 9

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 application includes a plan to seek out staff from local sources and events on p. e47, and to "reach out to traditionally underrepresented populations" by posting notices in local and national job boards but also by recruiting from local job fairs and "networks of community-based organizations."

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

Table 9 on p. e47, along with the resumes and experiences provided on pp. e72-e85 show the applicant team has appropriate education and skills in terms of educational leadership, business/project management, and finance. Personnel have experience as school founders, as facilities and business managers, and as special education teachers, for example.

Weaknesses:

Some staff members seem to have multiple roles. For example, one is listed in various ways such as: CCSN-EP staff (p. e48), as a school leader for one school (p. e77), and as a board member for another (p. e77) at the same time. This could lead to confusion in decisionmaking processes.

Reader's Score: 8

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 plans on pp. e50-e55, including Tables 10 and 11 provide sufficient information on timely, continuous reporting and progress monitoring, and itemized activities. The school plans for a variety of needed skill sets, including an external evaluator.

Weaknesses:

The organizational chart on p. e28 appears to put the management entity above the boards of the individual schools. It is not clear from the application how much independence from the management entity the individual schools have in practice.

Reader's Score: 8

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 appear to be having some academic success according to the application. Table 4 (p. e38) shows academic success especially with economically disadvantaged students.
(2) The schools appear to be growing, and have wait lists totaling over one hundred students (p. e68) . Attendance appears high and the school has a goal of improving it.
(3) No charters have been revoked or closed. The schools have had one financial/compliance conditions in the past (described in Table 11, pp. e54-55), though it appears to have been addressed.

Weaknesses:

(1) The application provides some academic data on p. e38 but should provide much more for comparison (by school, as well as local and state data(by all subgroups).
(2) On several measures in Table 4 on p. e38, especially for "All Students," the schools lag state state averages. For example white students and “all students” lag their statewide peers at Vineland in the majority of grade levels. “All students” lag the state levels at Millville as well.
(3) Aside from the compliance issue the school handled, the school appears to have some budget shortfalls and a deteriorating financial position especially since 2015, including a shortfall for the current year of approximately $661,000 as noted in Exhibit J-1.

Reader's Score: 12

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 schools plan to survive after expansion based on expected growth alone (pp. e55-56), and states that after the grant period, the school’s growth will support new staff and programs. The application also lists several letters of support including partnerships with Highmark School Development, LLC, Glassworks, LLC, and CEI-PEA. This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

Especially because of some financial issues (a current-year shortfall), the application would be strengthened by including more on what the schools will do if their assumptions are incorrect, and by providing more context for their continuation plan. The current shortfall (and other recent shortfalls) noted in Exhibit J-1 should be more fully explained.

Reader's Score: 10

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 school already serves a number of ELL minority students (more than the local surrounding districts) and intends to serve more. BPSC, for example, is 32 percent Hispanic, while the City of Bridgeton is 25 percent Hispanic. In addition, BPCS' SWD population in 20 percent. The school's' focus on serving many types of students, including specifically ELL students, is well-described in pp. e19-e26.

   Weaknesses:

   None 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:

   Not addressed.

   Weaknesses:

   Not addressed.

Reader's Score: **0**

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Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cumberland County Charter School Network (U282E180007)
Reader #3: **********

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	15	11
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	27
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	8
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	20	13
Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	78
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Access to High-Quality Educational Choice		
1. Increasing Access	2	1
Sub Total	2	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs		
1. Enrollment Programs	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
Total	104	79

Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: Cumberland County Charter School Network (U282E180007)

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 application indicates a network of three charter schools which enrolls racial minorities at a higher rate than each of the cities in which they operate (e20-e21). This is indicative of a network that is expanding school choice opportunities for traditionally underserved groups of students.

Application claims 2 of 3 schools have achieved Tier I School Status as defined by NJDOE (e33).

A standard and appropriate recruitment plan includes advertising in local newspapers, social media, local radio stations, flyers distributed at YMCA's Wal-Mart's. The plan also includes meetings with local civic organizations in an attempt to promote awareness of the school (e61). This plan has the potential to reach targeted subgroups as part of a general recruitment strategy.

A process for properly servicing students to include IEP identification and accommodation is included. A response to intervention model is described to identify students with disabilities who have not been previously identified. In this respect, the applicant provides evidence of an overview understanding of requirements for working with students with disabilities (e64).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

In comparison to the State, Vineland exceeded state averages in only 2 of the 5 grades tested under the PARCC ELA and Millville exceeded the state averages in only 1 of the 4 grades tested(e38-39). The statement that "School-wide performance exceeded state performance in all assessments" is contradictory to the data table provided. Subgroup data is missing from Table 4 which would provide a more complete picture of the school's performance (e38-e39).
Tier 1 School Status is not found to be well-described to include specific measures that result in this ranking (e33). Absent this, it is unclear what the status really indicates about the school.

Although the application states that "CCCSN collaborates with organizations in the area that represents targeted subgroups to ensure they are aware of the opportunities," it is not made clear what these organizations are or how they ensure that targeted subgroups are made aware of the opportunities (e61).

Reader's Score: 11

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: 27

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:

Goal #1 is found to be measurable and specific with respect to increased enrollment (e40). Goal #2 is found to be measurable and specific with respect to applications exceeding available seats and 2-3 media campaigns per year (e40).
Goal #3 is found to be measurable and specific with respect to reductions in dropout rate (e41).
Goal #4 is found to be measurable and specific with respect to increased average attendance (e41).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

PARCC assessment goals are either not specific as to the number of students or percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency or set unambitious goals of increasing the percentage of students meeting proficiency by one percent (e41). As a result, it is somewhat unclear what would meet the goal or whether or not the school is setting goals that would increase learning outcomes for educationally disadvantaged groups.

Reader's Score: 13

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 application describes a project that would rely heavily on data and responding to data to drive instructional decisions (e44). This includes external evaluation of the program and transparency of data (e44). This section represents a strong understanding of best practices and statutory requirements for exceptional education.

A strong understanding of Least Restrictive Environments and statutory requirements for working with special populations is included, thus creating a sense of confidence that the school is well-equipped to provide services to 504, IEP, and ELL subgroups (e45-e46).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Although the application references studies indicating higher performance among educationally disadvantaged subgroups in charter schools as opposed to public schools, this does not, by virtue of being a charter, provide compelling evidence that the program design will effectively enhance educational opportunities (e45).

Reader's Score: 14

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: 9

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 application intends to “reach out to traditionally underrepresented populations through job fairs and an existing network of community organizations” (e47). This reflects the applicants’ intention and capacity to seek diversity in their pool of qualified applicants.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

Executive Director has the education (master’s degree and doctorate in Educational Administration) and experience as founder, executive director, and school business administrator of charter schools to effectively oversee operations (e72).

Board Secretary/Business Administrator has the appropriate experience as Business Manager of two of the schools and education (master’s in school business administration) to oversee this aspect of school operations.

Deputy Executive Director possesses the necessary certifications and experience as founder, dean of students, executive director to oversee operations (e77).

Weaknesses:

Key personnel, including Board Secretary and Executive Director, hold multiple positions within the charter school network/Board/ESP, making clearly defined roles & responsibilities, less clear.

Reader's Score: 8

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 management plan includes a breakdown of seven separate categories of Activity including Leadership/Admin/Governance, Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment, Student Recruiting, Financial/Grant Management, Evaluation, Fundraising/Development, and Professional Development (e52-e53). Milestones for each describe in broad yet appropriate terms significant progress on each goal. Responsibilities for these milestones and goals are appropriately delegated among Executive Director, External Evaluator, Board of Trustees, and School Principals with others supporting (e52-e53).

Weaknesses:

A lack of clarity in the organizational chart makes it unclear where ultimate authority resides, whether in the Board or with the Executive Director. In order for the responsibilities to be more clearly defined, the organizational chart should accurately reflect the final authority of the Board for all aspects of the operation.

Reader's Score: 8

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:

Statements on Compliance and Management Issues include two blemishes that were handled with appropriate action. Compliance issues have not resulted in charter revocation (e55).

Data on several subgroups in comparison to state averages indicate higher performance, most consistently with economically disadvantaged students, indicating an ability to better serve this population (e38).

Weaknesses:

Dropout/Attrition rate of 3.5% is higher than host city averages of 1.0% to 1.6% (e68). The sample size is smaller but this is still noteable (e68).

Although data on academic achievement in comparison to state averages indicate increased academic achievement for some subgroups, the data table is largely incomplete and presents an unclear picture of overall school network performance (e38).

Data on attendance disaggregated by subgroups cannot be found. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the charter school is increasing attendance rates among educationally disadvantaged subgroups.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

Anticipated growth based on other schools in the network indicates grant support for 2 Gen. Ed. teachers and 1 Special Ed. teacher would not be needed by the end of the 5 year project (e55). Wait lists at existing schools support this model (e68).

Established financial systems of existing schools will be utilized (e55). Business Manager/Board Secretary has appropriate level of expertise to ensure strong financial oversight (e75-e76).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria.

Weaknesses:

Information on revenues, expenditures, and reserve funds or on audits of the charter school network's financial well-being, which would provide evidence of the ability to continue operations without the assistance of this grant, award cannot be found for the network as a whole.

The information that was provided was specific to one of the three schools (Vineland) and indicated that the school is operating at a sizeable deficit (pages 18,19 of Vineland Financial Report). This calls in to question the extent to which Vineland is prepared to continue charter school operations when the grant funds under this program are no longer available.

Reader's Score: 10

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:

   Enrollment data for the 3 schools reflect populations of 7-20% students with disabilities, indicating increased access to educational choice for this population (e23).

   A broad description of how students with disabilities are provided with services is included (e25).

   Weaknesses:

   Almost the entirety of the section addressing this Preference Priority 1 is in reference to the existing schools' enrollment and services of subgroups that are not included in the Preference Priority. While the schools' demographic makeup reflects disproportionately higher racial minority enrollment than the 3 host districts (e20-e21), this does not reflect a preference priority for this particular grant. Additionally, the school services a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students (e19, e22); however, this is not a preference priority for this particular grant.

   No comparison to district or state students with disability percentages is offered, making it difficult to ascertain the extent to which the schools are servicing this population.

   It is unclear from the broad description of how students with disabilities are provided with services as to the extent to which improved academic outcomes have resulted or will result from the schools' instructional model.

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:

   This competitive preference priority was not addressed.

   Weaknesses:

   This competitive preference priority was not addressed.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
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