

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/12/2018 04:13 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (U282A180011)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	14
Objectives		
1. Objectives	20	20
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	20	18
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	9
Parent and Community Involvement		
1. Involvement	10	8
Flexibility		
1. Flexibility	5	3
Sub Total	100	84
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Equitable Financing		
1. Equitable Financing	6	6
Sub Total	6	6
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Charter School Facilities		
1. Charter School Facilities	6	5
Sub Total	6	5
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Best Practices to Improve Struggling School/LEAs		
1. Struggling Schools	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Serving At-Risk Students		

1. At-Risk Students	3	2
Sub Total	3	2
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing		
1. Best Practices	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Total	123	104

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel 9 - Delaware - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (U282A180011)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale

Strengths:

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has defined the rationale for this project in terms of need. As a small state that has supported school choice in the form of charters (currently 24), traditional, magnet, and/or vocational-technical schools, expanding and supporting new charters is being dictated by need (e46). The DDOE averages 15 on-line charter applications a year, and has over 5,000 students on charter wait lists every year (e47).

Additionally, strong state support has resulted in all 24 charters in the state being in operation 3 or more years (11 for 10 or more years), and 3 out of the top 5 performing schools in the state being charters. This track record of high quality and sustainability are indicative of the state's support and desire for high quality schools (e46-e47).

The logic model provides a clear framework which aligns to the identified needs of each of the 5 targets, outputs and outcomes (e60-e72). As one example, Objective 1: Target 1 increases by 12% the expansion and replication of charter schools (e60).

The CSP funds would facilitate growth of new schools and the replication and expansion of existing schools in this small state with demonstrated strong support for charter schools.

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 were noted.

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

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

Of positive note is the DDOE's review of charter growth in the state and a "root cause analysis" to determine the grant goals and objectives. More specifically the DDOE conducted an analysis of data that included a trend analysis of expansions and replications, conversations with charter leaders, and application and approval trend data (e47-e49).

From the data and current DDOE capacity, the DDOE determined the need for a 7% increase in new charter schools and a 12.5% increase in replication and expansion schools, totaling 3,200 additional seats in Delaware (e49). The CSO has "systems in place for new, replicating and expanding charter schools", including processes for communication, the application process, technical assistance, external stakeholder review, interviews and community input (e49). The DDOE is poised to immediately initiate the subgrant process.

Per the well laid out logic model, (e60-e72) the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, targeted and have performance calculations and targets. The objectives are appropriate for the size and "context" of the state. As well, the "target explanations", which provide more information about the target, baseline or rationale for the target, bring clarity to both the targets and the objectives.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear why some targets had no key activities and actions noted in the logic model (e60-e72).

While the logic model targets did align to and address each of the 3 objectives noted in the Abstract (e18), the applicant did not include the language of objectives 2 and 3 in the logic model (e60-e72).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Objectives

1. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under this program.

Note: In response to this criterion, an applicant may address (or cross reference) some or all of the components of application requirements (I)(A)-(G) in this notice, which require the applicant to provide a description of the State entity's objectives in running a quality charter school program and how the objectives of the program will be carried out.

Strengths:

The DDOE's ambitious objectives for a quality charter school program are demonstrated by DDOE consistently addressing the use of data to support the development of the CSP grant goals, and each grant objective being grounded in an identified need to improve charter or authorizer practices and/or student outcomes. The applicant's consistent use of the charter sector trend data and the CSP program data is an exemplary practice (e49-e54).

DDOE provides compliance monitoring inclusive of annual performance reviews based on a strong academic, operational and financial performance framework, ongoing oversight and performance monitoring, clear revocation and renewal criteria based on NACSA's Index of Essential practices and Principals and Standards for Quality Authorizing (e35-e36). Given the strong collaborative development of the frameworks and its foundation in NACSA's Principles and Standards, the DDOE demonstrates its ability to provide oversight in support of high-quality charter schools.

The DDOE has a detailed application timeline, application process, criteria and review process inclusive of two interviews,

and expert panel review (e36-e37). Additionally, the DDOE requires all applicants to include their recruitment and enrollment practices to promote the inclusion of all students in the new school application. The logic model includes the measure for assessing progress towards this.

In an effort to mitigate redundancy, the DDOE will leverage use of the “states new charter school systems for the application and annual reporting as a part of... the subgrant process” (e56). CSP subgrantees will utilize an “annual report template” inclusive of their charter school application to report on “goals and benchmarks to reduce redundancy of reporting and streamline processes (e77). Additionally, the DDOE’s intent is to reduce redundancy by using the new charter school system for CSP applications (e58).

All charter schools have access to and receive equitable federal funding directly from the DDOE in the same form and fashion as other districts (e55).

The DDOE demonstrates that it meets the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL), as evidenced by requiring CSP subgrant applicants to have a plan for serving ELL students in their application, mandating attendance at the Special Education Boot Camp for new schools, quarterly technical assistance session, annual monitoring of the provision of services to these students via the organizational framework, and DDOE on site monitoring every three years (e56).

In Delaware all charter schools are required to include plans for school closure in their new school or replication application (e56). Additionally, the CSO Charter School Protocol (Attachment 12) provides an extensive list of steps for school closure inclusive of parent/district/staff notification, assets transfers, student and record transfer, fiscal duties, etc. The Closure Protocol Guide is comprehensive and ensures that the DDOE, in collaboration with districts, have clear plans and procedures to assist students enrolled in a charter school that closes or loses its charter, to attend other high-quality schools.

The DDOE Charter School Office (CSO) has been specifically tasked to work collaboratively with The Office of Innovation and Improvement and the Office of School Supports (both part of the DDOE) to “promote best practices” through an annual conference and online distribution of best practices (e53). More specifically, the DDOE will provide subgrant opportunities for charters to share best practices with other charters and districts (e52).

For the last two years the DDOE has revised many of its authorizing and oversight processes and protocols. Evidence of these efforts are seen in the new school application, comprehensive academic, organizational and financial frameworks, closure procedures, alternate frameworks, and renewal reports, as located in the appendices. These efforts are evidence of the DDOE’s support to increase charter school quality initiatives. Additionally, the DDOE’s consistent practice of analyzing data, trend or otherwise, is instrumental in its own high-quality practices and meeting the quality authorizing elements (e35-e39).

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.

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.

Reader's Score: 20

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students.

Strengths:

The DDOE has worked over the last two years to revise and enhance the “tools, systems, and performance frameworks used to authorize charter schools” and strengthen authorizer practices (e53) that will ultimately assist subgrantees.

The application criteria are robust, meet CSP guidelines, and align to NACSA’s National Principles of High-Quality Authorizers. Additionally, subgrant applicants are provided with technical assistance and training “tailored” to their individual need (Technical Assistance and Training, Attachment 15).

Overall, given the state’s focus on serving “educationally disadvantaged students equitably and meaningfully”, the Act’s preference for “students who are at risk of academic failure” (e31), the new school and CSP application criteria and high-quality authorization and oversight standards, there is a strong likelihood that subgrantees under the program will meet their objectives and improve educational results for 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:

While the applicant addressed training on the new systems, tailored technical assistance and applicant support, it did not provide an overall listing or description of the specific trainings it offers new school applicants, CSP subgrants and replication applicants. The applicant did not identify specific trainings (i.e. use of federal program funds, DDOE fiscal system and access and reporting requirements.) nor a timeline indicating approval, funding or status of the sub-applicant.

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.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity’s plan to--

1) Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity’s program;

2) Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies; and

3) Provide technical assistance and support for--

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity’s program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State.**

Strengths:

In Delaware the DDOE is the statewide and primary authorizer. As such they collaborate with the Delaware Charter School Network, districts and charter schools, other departments within the DDOE, and the one district authorizer (Red Clay) to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and the DDOE. As one example, the CSO has aligned the subgrant application to the new school application criteria (only approved schools may apply for the subgrant), the ESSA requirements for the grant (e76) and to existing reporting systems in the state.

The DDOE has indicated that it currently has the staff (CSO) and systems in place to provide training, authorization,

technical assistance, oversight and support for its new, replication and expansion schools (e49-e50). This is in part evidenced by the DDOE not requesting any staff for this project (Budget e645-e659). It is also evidenced by the strong performance and school sustainability track record in the state per the chart on page e46.

Delaware is a small state with the DDOE as the statewide authorizer; 22 of the 24 charters in the state are in the DDOE portfolio of schools. The DDOE has completed NACSA's authorizer evaluation and self-analysis in 2011. Since that time the DDOE has developed their performance frameworks and continues to work collaboratively with all partners to ensure that it operates with the highest quality authorizing standards as evidenced by the implementation of NACSA's Index of Essential practices(e35-e39).

Evidence of strong oversight/monitoring is exemplified in the development and implementation (2012) of the Academic (Attachment 9), Organizational (Attachment 10) and Financial (Attachment 11) Performance Frameworks (e15), and the Charter School Closure Protocol (Attachment 12). Of noteworthy mention is that that the "metrics and measures of the charter school were...utilized as a starting point to formulate the Delaware School Success Framework, that is now used to measure all schools across the state" (e28). This is an exemplary example of charter school best practices being shared and implemented with traditional public schools statewide.

Further evidence of quality monitoring is seen in the case of a school not meeting overall performance for two consecutive years, at which point it will receive a corrective action plan and monthly site visits tied to the outcomes of the action plan (e41).

An offshoot was the development of the Ed Insight Dashboard to track student progress (e28). Overall, the DDOE adequately monitors the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the state's CSP program.

The DDOE uses data to determine school specific technical assistance needs. This is exemplified by its use of school Performance Reports to identify need and tailor technical assistance to the identified need. The DDOE also provides "differentiated technical assistance for struggling schools" (e54). Other evidence of technical assistance is noted in the Technical Assistance New Charter School Application Session (Attachment 15). Lastly, the CSO has provided and will continue to provide technical assistance and training on the utilization of the new systems (i.e. Performance Frameworks, tools, systems) to new and renewing schools (two technical assistance sessions on the application process and support in completing the application) (e53).

The only other authorizer is the Red Clay Consolidated School District (e34) which has two schools in operation and has not added new schools since 2008.

Weaknesses:

The extent to which the DDOE works with and provides support and technical assistance to the Red Clay Consolidated School District, in any capacity, remains unclear. The applicant addressed this district authorizer and noted one other potential district authorizer, minimally (e34-e35).

Reader's Score: 18

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:**

Sub Question

1. (1) 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 DDOE has a long history managing grants of this size and scope. Per the applicant, they are "in good standing with regard to state and federal programs" (e74). This is evidenced by their receipt of past CSP grants.

While the applicant did not provide a specific "Management Plan", the DDOE provided a comprehensive logic model that clearly describes the key objectives, short and long-term objectives, timelines, milestones (short and long term outcomes) and performance targets for the proposed project which align well to the state's efforts in education. This is in part evidenced by the use of the School Success Framework to measure performance of all schools in the state, inclusive of charters (e 42). Given the detail of the logic model and past CSP experience, it is likely the DDOE will accomplish the proposed project tasks on time and within budget. This is in part evidenced by the specific targets, key activities and actions, performance measure calculations, performance targets, and target explanations (e60-e72).

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:

While the applicant has indicated that the CSP application, oversight and grant reporting will be conducted by the DDOE CSO office, there were no requested funds for staff positions or FTE for the CSP grant. As well, specific staff roles and responsibilities were not provided for the grant, making it difficult to determine if there is enough staff capacity with the existing CSO office staff to manage a grant of this scope and size. (e74 and Budget e645-e659).

A Management Plan complete with staff responsibilities aligned to the targets and activities in the logic model would have assisted with clarity.

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.

Reader's Score: 6

2. (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project

Strengths:

Based on the strong capacity the DDOE brings, per the resumes provided, (Attachment 16) the Project Director and support staff bring the necessary skills and experience to manage a project of this size and scope (e74).

Additionally, the DDOE has existing staff in the Charter School Office that have managed the CSP grant in the past and are poised to continue the work.

Weaknesses:

It remains unclear if the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project as the applicant did not provide FTEs for each of the staff. The DDOE did not ask for funding for additional staff and did not provide FTEs with roles and responsibilities for existing staff – yet have proposed a fair amount of work through this grant. As such, staffing is a concern as it is unclear which staff are responsible for the key objectives and activities.

Sub Question

While CSP grant position titles could be inferred from the resumes (e5987-593), position titles and roles and responsibilities were not provided, making it unclear as to the roles and responsibilities of staff (other than the Administrative Secretary).

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Parent and Community Involvement

1. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State.

Strengths:

The DDOE's approach to the CSP grant requirement is to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State is to use part of the technical assistance funds from this grant to: "increase parent engagement and awareness of school choice opportunities with a focus on educationally disadvantaged student populations by enhancing the current system of community outreach for school choice" (e51).

DDOE proposes to work directly with parents, students, non-profits, and local and state agencies to identify and problem solve barriers to school choice concerns (e51).

Weaknesses:

While the DDOE proposes to work directly with parents, students, non-profits, and local and state agencies to communicate choice options and identify and problem solve barriers to school choice (e51), there was little else noted in the narrative to describe specifically how the DDOE would accomplish this and what it would look like when accomplished (target/outcome).

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Flexibility

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law.

Strengths:

Delaware Code Title 14 Chapter 5, "allows for charter schools to operate with flexibility and freedom from regulations" as permitted by this law. However, charter schools are required "to meet the overall and individual performance measures" of the academic, operational and financial performance frameworks (e40).

Per the ACT, charters "have the power to" determine and manage their own budgets and operating procedures, and hire, manage and/or terminate any employee (Attachment 1, e82).

Charters are also exempt "except as otherwise specified" from all regulations of any board of education of a recognized school district (Attachment 1, e83).

Weaknesses:

Other than noting what the law requires, the applicant did not adequately address how it (the DDOE) would work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under Delaware law.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Equitable Financing

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.**

Strengths:

The applicant has thoroughly demonstrated that the state of Delaware ensures equitable financing, when compared to traditional public schools, in a timely manner. This is evidenced as follows: per Delaware law, direct funding from the local district to the charters schools “guarantees timely local funding payments” with the DDOE having authority to directly transfer funds in the event of a district failing to make timely payments (e23); the DDOE preloads 35% of the funds at “the start of the fiscal year” with the final payment by December 31st (e 23); Charters are eligible to receive “Division I staffing, Division II -All other Costs and Energy, and Division III-Equalization for compensation of revenue” (e23); Charters receive full funding for “minor capital improvement funding” (e26); and Charters receive federal funding allocations “with the same timeline and methodology” as other districts (e24) and directly from the state (e24 and e55).

Overall, the state has demonstrated efforts to ensure equitable financing, when compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 6

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Charter School Facilities

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located provides charter schools one or more of the following:**

- a) Funding for facilities;**
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition;**
- c) Access to public facilities;**
- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies;**
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings; or**
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.**

Strengths:

Delaware supports charter school access to public facilities, provides charter schools with funding for facilities, and per law a mandate that districts bargain in good faith for facility use. Charter school facility support in Delaware is evidenced by the following: charters receive full funding for “minor capital improvement funding” (e23, e25), charters have “access” to

fully or partially used state and district buildings (e25), the State created a Charter School Performance Fund (administered by the DDOE) with an appropriation of \$5 million annually to assist with capital funding (e26), and per statute, the State ensures tax exempt bond financing and allows charters the “same access to conduit bonds” as any other nonprofit organization (e26).

From the annual Facility Use and Disposition Report, the DDOE publishes a listing of vacant and unused state or district facilities. Additionally, per state law, districts “must bargain in good faith” for charter use of the vacant and or unused state or district facilities. (e27). While Delaware does not specifically assist schools with actual facilities acquisition, per the law, the state does provide strong support for access.

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 applicant did not describe charter school recourse if a district did not “bargain in good faith” for facility use (e27).

Delaware does not provide charters the ability to share in district Capital Referendums or the Delaware Bond Fund for Major Capital Projects (e27).

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.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Best Practices to Improve Struggling School/LEAs

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies.**

Strengths:

Regarding how the DDOE uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies, their first and best strategy for sustaining such partnerships is tapping into and reinforcing its strong social capital/relationships within the state (e27). This critical strategy is one that will sustain the following successful examples of district-charter, charter-district, and district to district collaboration in support of struggling schools.

The Union, charters, districts, State Board of Education, and Delaware Charter Schools Network all collaborated to co-develop the charter performance frameworks in 2013. This has led to the academic framework being the foundation for the Delaware School Success Framework, which is used to measure all Delaware school performance (e28). Subsequent to the School Success Framework adoption, the state provided to all schools Ed Insight Dashboard, a portal to track student performance (e28).

The state Charter School Office (CSO) is collaborating with the Office of Innovation and Improvement to examine other charter school performance metrics that could potentially inform its efforts with the “most struggling” (priority) schools (e28). In addition to the state-charter collaborations, the DDOE gave several compelling examples of how charter schools have collaborated (shared best practice, provided training or technical assistance) with other charters and district schools (e28-e30).

Of positive note is the charter school model of providing state Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) mental health services in a charter school. The DDOE is exploring how that might be replicated. (e29).

Also compelling, is the collaborative effort between the CSO, Delaware Charter Schools Network and 10 charter schools to complete a cost and time efficiency school transportation study. The study was cited as a “model for school districts” by the State’s Government Efficiency and Accountability Review Board (e30).

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated strong relational collaborations in sharing best practices to improve struggling schools, and have a strong potential to stand the test of time. This strong collaborative foundation in addition to other project objectives and activities will only serve to improve support for struggling schools.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Serving At-Risk Students

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.**

Strengths:

The Delaware Charter School Act (Act) specifically “allows schools to give priority to at-risk students. Additionally, the ACT requires that the new school application address, “appropriate strategies to be employed to accommodate the needs of at-risk students and those needing special education services” (e31).

DDOE provided several examples of charter schools that provide education and wrap around services in support of charter schools that serve at-risk students. These schools have a high percentages of students with disabilities, low income and black students (e32-e34).

Lastly, the DDOE does provide “funding, curricula and resources for career pathways” and cited an example of a charter-district collaboration in this area (e30).

Weaknesses:

While the DDOE did provide examples of charter schools that serve at-risk students, the DDOE did not provide examples of how it supports schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.**

Strengths:

The DDOE (the state’s primary authorizing entity with 22 out of 24 charters in its portfolio) has comprehensively demonstrated how it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing (e34). This is exemplified by the following.

In 2016 the DDOE was ranked 12th out of 44 states in NACSA’s State Policy Analysis ratings (e36). The DDOE has demonstrated that it “implements all of the 12 essential practices” of NACSA’s high performing authorizers (e36-e-39). This is in part evidenced by policy embedded in the ACT, such as the required annual independent financial audits, citizen budget oversight committees, charter contracts, clear detailed application timelines, application process, criteria and reviews processes, renewal, revocation, and reporting processes.

Of important note, is the DDOE’s ability to self-reflect and examine its practices. This is evidenced by the completion of NACSA’s authorizer evaluation and self-analysis in 2011 (e35). Since then the DDOE has developed the performance frameworks and continues to work collaboratively with all partners to ensure that it operates with the highest quality authorizing standards.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear, as to the extent that the Red Clay Consolidated School District, the only other authorizer in the state, implements NACSA’s Principles of Practice or collaborates with the DDOE (e34).

Reader's Score: **4**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/12/2018 04:13 PM

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (U282A180011)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	9
Objectives		
1. Objectives	20	16
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	10
State Plan		
1. State Plan	20	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	5
Parent and Community Involvement		
1. Involvement	10	6
Flexibility		
1. Flexibility	5	2
Sub Total	100	61
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Equitable Financing		
1. Equitable Financing	6	5
Sub Total	6	5
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Charter School Facilities		
1. Charter School Facilities	6	2
Sub Total	6	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Best Practices to Improve Struggling School/LEAs		
1. Struggling Schools	3	2
Sub Total	3	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Serving At-Risk Students		

1. At-Risk Students	3	2
Sub Total	3	2
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing		
1. Best Practices	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Total	123	76

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel 9 - Delaware - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (U282A180011)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale

Strengths:

The applicant provided a strong rationale for their project including evaluation and research data to support it. Charter school application and waitlist data included in the application demonstrated the demand for high quality charter schools and seats. This supports a rationale for objective one of increasing charter school seats (e49).

Delaware's second objective is to increase the sharing of best practices. This rationale is supported by the research, data collection, and analysis that identified the greatest areas of need regarding the sharing of best practices (e51-52).

In addition, the applicant provided a logic model (p.e60-72) which included targets and performance measures that align with the first and second objectives.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide evaluations or research to support the third proposed objective of evaluating and enhancing the impact of student achievement, family and community, and strengthening authorizing practices.

Although the logic model provided contained various targets, it only contained one objective of increasing high quality charter schools in the state (e60-71) which does not align with the objectives in the narrative. The logic model lists targets (e49-e54).

Sub Question

“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”

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The projected goals, objectives and outcomes are clear and measurable. Delaware proposed to increase the charter school seats by 19.5% or 3200 students in 5 years, this can be measured against baseline data. (e61-65).

Delaware also proposed to share best practices between charter and public schools in a variety of measurable ways such as posting best practices on their website and holding conferences and convenings (e69-70).

The third objective of evaluating and enhancing the impact of charter schools on student achievement, families and communities as well as strengthening the authorizing practices can be measured by analyzing achievement relevant to baseline data as well as measuring if the benchmark activities have been completed as planned. All of the objectives can be measured in various ways provided a baseline is established (e48) (e66-e72).

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Objectives

1. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under this program.

Note: In response to this criterion, an applicant may address (or cross reference) some or all of the components of application requirements (I)(A)-(G) in this notice, which require the applicant to provide a description of the State entity's objectives in running a quality charter school program and how the objectives of the program will be carried out.

Strengths:

The projected goals, objectives and outcomes are ambitious, and clear throughout the application. Delaware proposed to increase the charter school seats by 19.5% or 3200 students in 5 years and to share best practices between charter and public schools in a variety of ways and to evaluate and enhance the impact of charter schools on student achievement, families and communities as well as strengthening the authorizing practices (e47-e48) (e49-54)(e61-e72) This is a very ambitious goal considering the size and population of the state.

The state provides a detailed explanation of each of their objectives as well as achievable plans such as providing outreach and technical assistance for new charter applications and informing parents and the community about charter schools. The application also outlines efforts to share best practices with local districts such as by ensuring at least one charter-district collaboration occurs annually and convening an annual conference on best practices and collaboration (e49-54)(e61-e72).

The applicant provided evidence of their capacity to achieve these objectives by pointing to its experience since 1995 in developing and strengthening charter school systems and a demonstrated commitment to strengthen the program and

improve (e74).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear exactly what activities the state is going to do to carry out some of the specifics of these objectives as many of the activity areas are left blank (logic model e60-e72.)

The level of ambitiousness of the applicant's goals cannot be determined as the baseline has not been provided for such activities of parent information fairs, dissemination conventions, and technical assistance trainings (e60-e72).

Additionally, some of the targets do not appear to be ambitiousness such as posting reports, populating websites and documenting meeting minutes (e60-e72).

"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"

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant outlined the rigorous process, adopted by NACSA's 12 essential practices, which a charter schools goes through to receive a charter and a CSP sub grant. New school applicants must pass the charter RFP peer review process. Expanding and replicating schools must have a track record of success. This means the applicants must have a proven record of providing a quality education as measured by several criteria including the school's performance on the statewide accountability system including its achievement on educating educationally disadvantaged students. All charter schools must also sign assurances related to meeting performance expectations (e75-76).

The charter schools under the CSP grant are held to the same goals and objectives outlined in their approved charter, expansion, or replication application (e77).

The use of the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) comprehensive accountability system used to measure and report on a myriad of areas of school success such as academic achievement, growth, graduation, and college and career readiness serves as an effective tool to gauge success. If the results reveal that the school is not achieving success relative to the metrics, technical assistance or interventions will be provided by the state (e203-e259) .

Weaknesses:

Although some of the criteria is addressed in other areas of the application, the applicant failed to respond directly to the criteria making it difficult to evaluate the likelihood of the new schools improving educational results for students.

Although, Delaware uses NACSA's 12 essential steps, one of which (e37) includes rigorous applicant criteria, the applicant does not provide enough information or evidence to understand the actual steps of the application process. The

applicant fails to ensure the chartering of high-quality candidates and share the details of what the technical assistance will consist of for the charter school applicants and applicant peer reviewers (e75-76).

"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"

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

- 1) Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;**
- 2) Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies; and**
- 3) Provide technical assistance and support for--**
 - i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
 - ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State.**

Strengths:

The Organizational Performance Framework Guidance Document outlines the details of a robust monitoring plan for charter schools including all CSP subgrantees. This document details how charter schools will be monitored for a variety of criteria including serving students with disabilities and English Language Learners according to the law. The Framework details the appropriate role of the board, how to meet transportation needs, and lists health and safety requirements. (e360)

To ensure adequate monitoring of the state's subgrantees, Delaware has adopted NACSA's 12 essential practices. These include a rigorous renewal criteria, financial audit requirements, and detailed annual reports requirements of all charter schools to ensure the schools are high performing .(e36-e38)

The state outlines various technical assistance provided to new school applicants on the charter school application requirement, and TA provided to charter schools, including CSP subgrantees on topics such as understanding performance frameworks and finance and governance training(e41) (e60-e72).

The Organizational Performance Framework Guidance Document outlines the details of a robust monitoring plan for charter schools including all CSP subgrantees. This document details how charter schools will be monitored for a variety of criteria including serving students with disabilities and English Language Learners according to the law. The Framework details the appropriate role of the board, how to meet transportation needs, and lists health and safety requirements. (e360)

To ensure adequate monitoring of the state's subgrantees, Delaware has adopted NACSA's 12 essential practices. These include a rigorous renewal criteria, financial audit requirements, and detailed annual report requirements of all charter schools to ensure the schools are high performing .(e36-e38)

The state outlines various technical assistance provided to new school applicants on the charter school application requirement, and TA provided to charter schools, including CSP subgrantees on topics such as understanding performance frameworks and finance and governance training(e41) (e60-e72).

Weaknesses:

Although some of the criteria is addressed in other areas of the application, the applicant failed to respond directly to the criteria making it difficult to evaluate the extent of the state’s monitoring, work with other authorizers as well as what technical assistance is provided.

The applicant does not provide any reference throughout the application in providing technical assistance on quality authorizing efforts or working with other authorizers in the state.

It is unclear exactly what the monitoring plan consists of for the variety of schools in the state’s portfolio especially regarding the use of monitoring site visits.

Reader's Score: 13

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:

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

1. (1) 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 state cites their long history of successfully managing charter schools and grants, which demonstrate their capacity to continue to adequately meet the grant objectives illustrating the state can manage the key personnel to achieve their objectives (e74).

The state’s management plan is imbedded in the logic model and is clear, comprehensive and detailed. The model/plan includes the objectives, actions, outputs, short and long term outcomes, how the performance will be measured, and the performance targets (e60-72). An example is the applicants plan to increase the number of high quality charter school seats by 19.5% especially for disadvantaged students. Outreach and technical assistance will be provided to new school applicants with the target of creating 400 seats annually with a minimum of 50% of the seats going to educationally disadvantaged students. The logic model provided an adequate outline of the

Sub Question

management plan to show that the objectives could be achieved (e60-e72).

Weaknesses:

Although some of the criteria is addressed in other areas of the application, the applicant failed to provide a management plan.

The applicant failed to provide clear defined responsibilities and timelines necessary to demonstrate that the proposed project objectives will be achieved.

“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”

Reader's Score: 4

2. (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project

Strengths:

Based on the resumes attached, the personnel allocated to the project are appropriate. (e599-607)

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to respond to this criteria directly and the specific roles, responsibilities and time commitments of the personnel are not clear from the evidence provided including the attached resumes (e599-607).

Additionally, because the applicant did not respond to the criteria, it was not possible to ascertain if there will be adequate staffing to meet the objectives.

“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”

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Parent and Community Involvement

1. The State entity’s plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State.

Strengths:

The applicant outlined effective plans for engaging parent and community in their description of objective 3 (e53-54) and in their logic model (e66). The plans includes identifying the barriers to school choice and creating an action plan to ensure proper outreach is performed to involve parents and community in the implementation of charter schools. The applicant’s performance measures will include increasing educationally disadvantaged students charter applications by 5%, processes for communicating school choice options and holding 2 school choice fairs per year for the parents and community.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to directly respond to this criteria and it is unclear how parents and community will be involved in the operation of charter schools or in any other manner beyond what is outlined in the logic model.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Flexibility

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law.**

Strengths:

The applicant attached their law in their application that includes some of the flexibilities allowed for charters including that Delaware charter schools are their own LEAS (e24) and have many powers such as choose their own education program, manage their own budget and incur debt (e82).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not directly address this criteria and it is unclear if other flexibilities exist or how the state will work to maximize the flexibilities in the law.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Equitable Financing

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided evidence of strong school finance laws related to charter school funding as demonstrated by the laws included in the appendix (e87-90). Charter schools receive state and local funding to the same degree that all Delaware public schools receive the per pupil funding, it is the same for both (e87-90 and e103-104).

The state ensures equitable federal funding by treating all LEAs the same when calculating federal allocations. In Delaware, charter schools are considered LEAs and receive federal allocations in the same manner as all LEAs in the state (e24).

Weaknesses:

The response from the applicant is contradictory regarding payments to charter schools. It states charter schools receive

their funding directly from the state in two payments but then also states “should a district fail to make timely payments...DDOE has the authority to direct transfer of such funds”. It is unclear if the state or the local district actually makes the payment. (e23)

By describing the payment process, the state has the authority to directly transfer the funds to the charter school if the payments are late. The process was not clearly outlined and leads to a concern that some charter schools may experience gaps in receiving timely payments.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Charter School Facilities

1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) Funding for facilities;**
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition;**
- c) Access to public facilities;**
- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies;**
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings; or**
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.**

Strengths:

The state provides full funding for minor capital facility improvements for charter schools equal to what traditional school districts receive.(e26)

The state publishes a list of all districts vacant public schools buildings and the law states that the school district must bargain in good faith over the cost of rent, services and maintenance related to these spaces. (e27)

Weaknesses:

The applicant states charter schools can use their operating funds meant to support and educate students for any facility related costs, which demonstrates evidence that the state is not focusing funding or efforts to provide aid in securing charter school facilities(e25).

The state acknowledges there are deficiencies with respect to charter school facilities (e25) and there is little evidence that the state goes to an adequate extent to provide any of the criteria regarding charter school facilities. Although there is a Charter School Performance Fund, it is subject to appropriation. It is unclear how much has been appropriated in the 5 years since its inception as the fund has only been appropriated 2.5M since 2013. (e27).

The application states there is a list of vacant buildings yet the application lacked evidence or data provided of how it has benefited charter schools over the past 20 years or how it currently benefits charter schools.(e27)

While Delaware law allows charter schools to have access to conduit bond financing, there is no evidence that the state provides this assistance, or that charter schools use this type of financing (e26).

“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”

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Best Practices to Improve Struggling School/LEAs

1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies.

Strengths:

Delaware demonstrated that some of their best practices are being utilized directly by the state and other LEAs, for example the metrics and measures used by charter schools for academics are now used to measure academics for all schools across the state. (e28).

The applicant provided several good examples of charter schools helping local districts, such as Kumba Academy sharing its Singapore Math curriculum with other districts. They also collaborated with other districts to develop summer school services. A Spanish Immersion charter school collaborated with their local district to plan and implement an international studies high school and provided support for another charter high school (e28-29).

Weaknesses:

The applicant referred to using a word of mouth strategy and having conversations to ensure the sharing of best practices. This demonstrates limited effort to improve struggling schools and LEAs (e27-e28).

Though there are several examples listed of sharing of best practices, there is little evidence provided of commitment to this endeavor. The applicant itself acknowledges their weaknesses in ensuring the best practices of charter schools are shared and stated that it is "evident that more needs to be done" (e31). For example, when the applicant shares the story of charter schools being an inspiration to other LEAs to develop their own teacher evaluation system, it is not substantiated by evidence and does not clearly demonstrate how charters are helping struggling schools (e29).

The applicant writes about a transportation study but it is unclear how the study would be considered a best practice or how it has helped local districts or struggling schools (e30-31).

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Serving At-Risk Students

1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

Strengths:

The response cites Delaware state law which allows for admission preference for at-risk students. The law also states a charter school application must contain a detailed plan to serve such students (e31).

Delaware demonstrates its commitment to serving at-risk students by having several charter schools that serve almost exclusively at-risk students. The applicant cited many example of the intense work many of the charters do such as

providing wrap around services (e33) and intense tutoring (e33).

Weaknesses:

Although Delaware provided information regarding current charters that serve at-risk students, there was no evidence provided that Delaware supported specific activities including dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services (e31-34).

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.**

Strengths:

DDOE is the primary authorizer who oversees all but two of the state's charter schools. There is one other authorizer that oversees two charter schools in the Red Clay District and one potential authorizer showing interest to oversee Delaware charter schools. DDOE demonstrates its commitment to implement and follow best practices by following NACSA's 12 essential practices. In 2016, it was ranked 16th out of 44 states analyzed by NACSA and continues to evolve to improve its authorizing (e36).

The applicant provided a clear and thorough response outlining and detailing the entire authorizing practice under the law and beyond including contract renewal and corrective action (e36-e46).

Delaware shows a strong commitment to high standards and uses the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) which is a comprehensive accountability system used to gauge and report on a myriad of areas of school success. This framework details many metrics such as academic, growth, graduation, college and career preparation (e203-e259).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the state ensures the other charter school authorizer in the state, the Red Clay Consolidated School District, implements best authorizing practices.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/12/2018 04:13 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/12/2018 04:13 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (U282A180011)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	10
Objectives		
1. Objectives	20	15
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	10
State Plan		
1. State Plan	20	13
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	9
Parent and Community Involvement		
1. Involvement	10	2
Flexibility		
1. Flexibility	5	5
Sub Total	100	64
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Equitable Financing		
1. Equitable Financing	6	6
Sub Total	6	6
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Charter School Facilities		
1. Charter School Facilities	6	4
Sub Total	6	4
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Best Practices to Improve Struggling School/LEAs		
1. Struggling Schools	3	2
Sub Total	3	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Serving At-Risk Students		

1. At-Risk Students	3	1
Sub Total	3	1
Competitive Preference Priority 6		
Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing		
1. Best Practices	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Total	123	81

Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - Panel 9 - Delaware - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Delaware Department of Education (U282A180011)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale

Strengths:

Delaware provides data which clearly demonstrates the support of charter schools within the state. For example, they initially opened their first charter schools in 1996, since then 24 schools have opened, with eleven being in operation for more than ten years. Three of the top five schools are charter schools with the State having an average of 15 charter school applications, plus over 5,000 students on charter school waiting list annually. This clearly illustrates the demand for high-quality charter schools. (p. e46-e47)

"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 logic model provided on pages e60-e72 provides the information on objective 1, but fails to include objectives 2 and 3 as stated in the narrative pages e47-e48. The applicant identifies the logic model as the document which provides all of the required elements to achieving their designated goal. It is difficult to assess the key components of the project without the objectives, which are vital components of the application. Failure to include this information impacts the strength of the rationale for the program.

In addition, although the applicant has a history of starting and opening charter schools, they don't provide the outcomes from this data set of schools. The applicant does not address key components or relevant outcomes.

Reader's Score: 5

2. (2) 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 provides specific and measurable objectives and goals. For example, one objective is to increase charter school seats available by 19.5% through the expanding, and replication of charter schools. Another objective is strengthening the charter school authorizing process. This strengthening will take on the task of increasing transparency, defining metrics for clarity of expectations, and streamlining reporting. (p. e49-e54)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Objectives

- 1. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under this program.**

Note: In response to this criterion, an applicant may address (or cross reference) some or all of the components of application requirements (I)(A)-(G) in this notice, which require the applicant to provide a description of the State entity's objectives in running a quality charter school program and how the objectives of the program will be carried out.

Strengths:

The applicant identifies objectives for carrying out the authorization of charter schools within their narrative (p.e23-e79). The identified goal is clearly stated within the narrative to enhance education for all students to ensure they meet challenging State academic standards (p.e23-e79). Three objectives were included which are: Increasing the number of high-quality charter school seats available to students across Delaware by 19.5%, sharing best practices between charter schools and other public schools and "evaluating and enhancing" the impact of charter schools on student achievement, families, and communities, and supporting efforts to strengthen the charter school authorizing process.

"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 logic model does not include ambitious measures for the objectives. For example, the state already conducts 2 school choice fairs in 2 of the 3 counties. The logical model has one indicator as providing 2 school choice fairs. It is unclear if this is in addition to the existing fairs or additional fairs which could be seen as ambitious. The applicant also did not describe what the attendance rates are at these fairs. The applicant has operated charter schools for 20 years but did not provide accumulated data on the charter school initiatives and existing practices. This information would have provided a clear baseline in order to determine how ambitious the overall objectives are in this proposed plan. (e23-e79, logic model)

"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"

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet those objectives and improve educational results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant provided general evidence regarding the likelihood of the subgrant applicants meeting their objectives and improving educational results for students. The applicant requires measurable objectives and benchmarks for specific school targets (e75). The applicant will provide oversight of the grant (e74). Subgrantees would be required to sign assurances relating to meeting performance expectations (e75).

“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 applicant did not describe how they provide technical assistance to applicants regarding opening a new school or expanding. For example, applicants are required to attend special education boot camp, but it is not clear what activities follow the boot camp (e 55).

“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”

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

- 1) Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;**
- 2) Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies; and**
- 3) Provide technical assistance and support for--**
 - i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
 - ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State.**

Strengths:

Due to previous experience, the applicant provides evidence that demonstrates there is a likelihood they will provide oversight and monitoring of subgrants ensuring the subgrants meet their objectives and improve educational results for students. For example, the state is using technology i.e. the reporting portal for the collection of goals and performance measures to ease redundancy in reporting. Some of the top schools in the state are charter schools. The rigorous application and selection process makes it more optimal to creating success charter schools. (p. e27-e79) The state has outlined their monitoring processes to ensure that subgrantees are meeting the benchmarks established within their approved evaluation plans. The system for monitoring has been streamlined in order to avoid duplication of work. (e56-e57) The state has opportunities for technical assistance through the implementation of technical assistance sessions which will focus on stat system reporting, curriculum, instruction, interventions, evaluations, special education and enhancement.

Weaknesses:

The state fails to provide data and specificity on past experiences providing monitoring and oversight and technical assistance. Based on the applicant's vast experience, the narrative has limited information on the rationale regarding the decisions they make or a rationale of activities. The applicant does not clearly articulate how it will provide technical

assistance to the other authorizers to ensure consistency in authorizing practices. It is not clear if the reporting portal participation is required or voluntary. (e74)

Reader's Score: 13

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:**

Reader's Score: 9

Sub Question

- 1. (1) 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 logic model provides the timelines for the tasks. The logic model also provides short term and long term goals. The goals and timelines listed seem realistic p. e41-e52. The budget aligns with the overall goals and is adequate p. e645.

“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:

Some of the budget narrative did not provide enough detail and was generalized, a clear management plan was not provided pp. e649 –e 659.

“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”

Reader's Score: 8

- 2. (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project**

Strengths:

The applicant provides clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all designated staff as illustrated in the resumes provided. (e600-e607)

“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:

The applicant only provided the resumes of key personnel. The application did provide the percentage FTEs for the individuals involved in the project. The application also did not provide a specific list of duties for each person on the team.

“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”

Reader's Score: 1

Selection Criteria - Parent and Community Involvement

1. The State entity’s plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State.

Strengths:

The applicant provides modest measures to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community. For example, the applicant requires that all subgrant applicants have a plan which demonstrates the input from these stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

The application does not demonstrate or share a plan to solicit and consider input. The application does not clearly define who the stakeholders are, therefore it is difficult to ascertain if parents are involved in all tiers of the implementation and operation of the school. Beyond the plans provided, the applicant did not describe how the received input is considered once they are received by parents and community members.

Reader's Score: 2

Selection Criteria - Flexibility

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State’s charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law.

Strengths:

Delaware demonstrates the flexibility of charter schools as prescribed in the statute C § 504.A which allows for the implementation of their own educational curriculum, autonomy for staffing, calendar, budget, reasonable disciplinary policies, purchasing of facilities and other services not provided to traditional school. (e82-e83

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address how they will maximize the flexibility of charter schools.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Equitable Financing

1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and

students in a prompt manner.

Strengths:

The applicant documents convincing evidence that the State's Charter schools provide equitable operating funding to charter schools. Among the examples provided are the following: Delaware Education Statute 14 Del. C § 509(b)(1) outlines the funding procedures which are calculated using the same funding methodology as traditional public schools. (e23-e25) Charter schools are eligible for funding for Division I staffing, Division II-A All other costs and Energy, and Division III-Equalization for comparison revenue. (e23) Charter Schools are allowed to receive minor capital improvement funding, which is calculated in the same matter as Vocational Technical School Districts. (e23) All funds follow the students from the local school to the charter school. (e23) All funds are disbursed in a timely matter with a 35% preload at the start of the fiscal year, and final payment no later than December 31 of the year. (e23) The state has authority to make timely payments to a charter school when a school district fails to make timely payments to the charter school. (e23) Charter schools are considered Local Education Agencies and receive federal funding allocation in accordance with the same timeline and methodology as all Local Education Agencies. (e23)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 6

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Charter School Facilities

1. **To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located provides charter schools one or more of the following:**
 - a) **Funding for facilities;**
 - b) **Assistance with facilities acquisition;**
 - c) **Access to public facilities;**
 - d) **The ability to share in bonds or mill levies;**
 - e) **The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings; or**
 - f) **Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.**

Strengths:

The applicant documents convincing evidence that the State's charter school affords flexibility to charter schools. Among the examples provided are the following: Delaware Education Statute 14 Del. C § 509(b)(1) allows for charter schools to have access to conduit bonding financing, similar to any other nonprofit organization without any restrictions imposed on the school on the basis that they are a charter schools. (e25) The state provides full funding for minor capital facility improvement. (e25) Delaware Education Status 14 Del. C § 509(h) allow charter schools access to a list of all vacant and unused buildings or portions of buildings owned by the state or school district. These facilities must be bargained in good faith. (e27)

"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:

Delaware provides Charter School Performance funding through the statue 14 Del. C § 509(m). It is unclear how much of the funding has actually been appropriated since the creation of this fund. While the appropriations shall not exceed \$5 million annually, it is not clear how much the state has appropriated annually. The funds have allocated \$2.5 million dollars since the beginning of this program, but it is unclear if this low number is due to small requests or a limited actual allocation of funds. (e26)

The state does not clearly describe if charter schools have used this recourse and if local buildings are being used. The applicant did not share the details of bargaining in good faith. This is an unknown in the application. (e27)

"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"

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Best Practices to Improve Struggling School/LEAs

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which it is located uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and local educational agencies.**

Strengths:

Delaware demonstrates some initiatives to ensuring best practices to improve struggling schools and LEA's. These activities include the following:

Delaware's Charter School Office in conjunction with the Delaware Charter Schools Network, charter school leaders, and an array of stakeholders developed a framework which includes academic, financial, and organizational performances to measure the annual performance of charter schools. This Ed Insight dashboard is free and offered to all schools. This dashboard allows teachers to track student's performances, allowing the identification of at-risk students in real time. (e28) The state provides examples of charter schools collaborating to share and implement best practices. For example, three charter schools develop and receive state approval for an alternate teacher evaluation appraisal, Teaching Excellence Framework which is now accessible by all schools through the dashboard.(e29)

Weaknesses:

The creation of this dashboard has been in place since 2012 yet it is unclear how the applicant has tracked the access of this dashboard. The applicant did not provide quantifiable data to illustrate how many stakeholders are using the dashboard on an annual basis. (e29)

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Serving At-Risk Students

- 1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.**

Strengths:

The Delaware Charter School Act ensures that charter schools attract, admit, enroll, serve, and retain educationally disadvantaged students by requiring a detailed plan for how the school will serve the needs of educationally disadvantaged students (or at-risk students) within the charter school application. (e31)

Weaknesses:

The narrative gives examples of schools serving the needs of at-risk students through innovative programs, but it does not address how the applicant has supported these schools. The applicant does not address activities such as dropout prevention and dropout recovery. (e31-e34)

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

1. To receive points under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the extent to which it has taken steps to ensure that all authorized public chartering agencies implement best practices for charter school authorizing.

Strengths:

The state has moderately demonstrated that they are exercising best practices for charter school authorizing. The following activities demonstrate some of those practices:

The state developed a new system after completing an evaluation by the National Association of Charter School Authorizer's (NACSA). This new system aligns with NACSA's Index of essential practices. Their new system contains 11 essential practices aligned to best practices in areas such as: contracts, application criteria, staffing, application timeline, external expert panels, 5 year term lengths, financial audits, renewal criteria, revocation criteria, and annual reports. (e34-e39)

Weaknesses:

Delaware has stated that there is another authorizer, Red Clay and it is not clear how they will ensure that this authorizer is implementing best practices to the fullest. The applicant also does not share how they are providing technical assistance to other authorizers. (e34-e39)

Reader's Score: 4

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