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

Applicant: Snow Pond Arts Academy (U282B180044)
Reader #2: ********

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<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
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Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1

Access to High Quality Educational Choice

1. Increasing Access

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Competitive Preference Priority 2

Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs

1. Enrollment Programs

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<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
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**Total** | 108             | 88            |
Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *******
Applicant: Snow Pond Arts Academy (U282B180044)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Contribution in 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 open will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

Strengths:

Abstract, E16: The application notes that SPA is open through lottery to any student in rural state of Maine. SPA will offer distance learning technology.
E21/Page 1 and E26/Page 6: Feeder schools have FRL average of 52.3% and 73% of feeder schools are classified as rural.
Attachment E156 (Page 2 & 3): Feeder school districts’ combined FRL average is 52.3%, which increases to 58.5% for the school districts located in central Maine. The FRL range is from 10.1% to 99%.
E23/Page 3 The application includes research related to the benefits of music and the arts, which stimulate the brain's prefrontal cortex, improves executive functioning, etc. Since rural communities have limited exposure to music and the arts both in and outside of school, the applicant posits the contribution to the community will have significant impact and improve opportunities for SPA students.
E25/Page 6: Maine is the most rural state in the nation. 61.3% of the population live in rural areas (vs. 13.7% nationally).
E27/Page 7: ME district school graduation rates are high; however reading and math proficiency is low (10th grade NWEA: 37.7-51% reading/36.5-48.5% math). Only 50% of ME high school graduates obtain postsecondary degree, and only 20% in low it mid income households.
E29/Page 9: In year 1, 12.4% of SPA students were classified as special education students: and currently (year 2) 16.6% of those enrolled are students with disabilities. These percentages compare to 16.7% statewide (between 11-23%). SPA is partnering with other charter schools to share services and reduce costs, and the staff is also actively learning from other local charter schools serving high %s of students with disabilities.
E59/Page 39: Staff team implements RTI and special education services to anyone in need, counseling are available to any student in need.

Weaknesses:

E29/Page 9: The applicant reports that only 40% (72/145) of students' families have returned their FRL forms, so "impossible to determine exact FRPL rate" of enrollment students.
E28/Page 8: Only 1.5%, of students are classified as English language learners, vs. between 0 and 4% statewide. The applicant notes that SPA is equipped to meet the needs of ELL students, but did not provide details.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design
1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score:  26

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:
Abstract E16: The applicant describes seven activities that would be supported by CSP funds:
1. Providing exceptional opportunities in academics and the arts.
2. Refining the capstone project program
3. Supporting student health and wellness
4. Purchases that directly support curriculum and planning
5. Supporting staff growth and development
6. Implementing an academic achievement tracking system
7. Expanding college and career connections and preparedness

E41-43/Page 21-23: School wide objectives and performance measures are described.
a. % at proficiency after year 1 baseline is established (already established?), growth on NWEA reading and math, 80% meet student portfolio PLP goals
b. Compare gaps between subgroups on multiple measures
c. Student attendance 95%
d. Enrollment 95% during school year, 98% reenrollment
e. Financial performance/sustainability - variation between budget & actuals, quarterly balance sheet review, audit findings
f. Governance
g. Transportation and food service - costs of trans, number/frequency in food program, FRPL data
h. School and academic climate - annual survey, number of bullying, etc., student climate surveys
i. Parent/community engagement - parent conferences 90% participation, communication, volunteer participation

E45-54/Page 25-34: The applicant provides expanded descriptions of each activity, and lists goals, objectives, timelines and outcomes. Outcomes are specified and potentially measurable.
1. Providing exceptional opportunities in academics and the arts - distance learning equipment/software (both exposure and "if cannot get to school, participate in class from home". Leveraging funding from USDA Distance Learning grant for 50% of cost, community theater material, radio station programs (Outcome: increase academy proficiency in 21st century skills, increase access to opportunities, increase student engagement Retention
2. Refining the capstone project program
3. Supporting student health and wellness
4. Purchases that directly support curriculum and planning
5. Supporting staff growth and development - design performance evaluation and professional growth system, assessment of learning PD - modules are targeted and planned
6. Implementing an academic achievement tracking system - Empower
7. Expanding college and career connections and preparedness

Weaknesses:
E45-54/Page 25-34: Outcome measures/tools are not consistently described in detail.

Reader's Score:  13
Sub Question

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

Strengths:
The design of the project is appropriate and will address the needs identified, in the Abstract E16: Seven activities and in more detail in E45-54/Page 25-34

Weaknesses:
E45-54/Page 25-34: All include goals, objectives, timelines and outcomes. Outcomes are specified and measurable, but measures/tools are not consistently described in detail.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Note: 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: 11

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:
E37/Page 16: SPA distributes information about open faculty positions through Serving Schools, on-line community where educators can connect throughout the country. Because of the lack of diversity in Maine, SPA noted the importance of reaching individuals who may otherwise be significantly underrepresented (school board, faculty/staff, students).
E37/Page 17: SPA increases access to large number of educators, diverse in background and experience, from all over world, both through their association with NEMC and access to Distance Learning Technology (more global exposure, broader range of culture opportunities).

Weaknesses:
E37/Page 17: The applicant did not describe its current staff. It is not clear how posting jobs on the Serving Schools website would specifically encourage applications from underrepresented groups. Other than broader exposure to "culture" beyond the limited rural experiences of SPA students. It is possible that Distance Learning Technology would serve to increase the number of staff members from underrepresented groups - the application did not specify this would be the case.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:
E23/Page 13: The applicant notes that four key individuals - the head of school, principal, finance committee chair, director of music education will be managing the CSP grant.
E81: The head of school, will serve as the project manager for CSP grant. She has experience as a principal,
Sub Question
NCLB coordinator and teacher
E35/Page 15: The finance chair has 40-year experience in public school setting (VP administration and finance, business manager Augusta PS, director of business and administrative services for Maranacook Area Schools. His resume is included (E79).

Weaknesses:
E86 principal resume: The principal has really only taught online, at the higher education level.

Reader’s Score: 10

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:
E23/Page 13: The head of school is identified as project manager for CSP grant;
E35/Page 15: The board finance committee will be responsible for financial management, oversight and monitoring compliance for all grant activities.
E54/Page 34: The applicant also included SPA’s music director, theater director, English teacher as contributors to the grant-funded activities.
E45-54/Page 24-34: Timeframes for each of the 7 objectives are included.

Weaknesses:
E45-54/Page 24-34: Timeline details are varied in level of detail (year 1 vs. September 2019) across the seven objectives.

Reader's Score: 18

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:
E60-64/Page 44: The applicant describes SPA’s state funding, fundraising accomplishments and efforts, NEMC Association benefits, established college partnerships, and regional initiatives. The applicant also notes that SPA’s quality leadership & talented educators, fiscal monitoring, personnel and operations will also ensure consistency of charter school operations and ongoing activities beyond the CSP funding period.

Weaknesses:
No weaknesses are evident.

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:

Abstract, E16: The application notes that SPA is open through lottery to any student in rural state of Maine. SPA will offer distance learning technology.
E21/Page 1 and E26/Page 6: Feeder schools have FRL average of 52.3% and 73% of feeder schools are classified as rural.
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E29/Page 9: In year 1, 12.4% of SPA students were classified as special education students and currently (year 2) 16.6% of those enrolled are students with disabilities. These percentages compare to 16.7% statewide (between 11-23%). SPA is partnering with other charter schools to share services and reduce costs, and the staff is also actively learning from other local charter schools serving high %s of students with disabilities.
E59/Page 39: Staff/team implements RTI and special education services to anyone in need, counseling are available to any student in need.
E65/Page 45: Enrollment recruitment efforts include posters throughout central Maine, internet, newspapers, radio stations, magazines, monthly open houses, SPA offers Monday shadow days;
E66/Page 46: ELL identification process/plans established
E67/Page 47: 3 educators with certification in exceptional student education are on staff at SPA.
E68/Page 48: RTI/504 tiers are described.

Weaknesses:

E29/Page 9: The applicant reports that only 40% (72/145) of students' families have returned their FRL forms, so "impossible to determine exact FRPL rate" of enrollment students.
E28/Page 8: Only 1.5%, of students are classified as English language learners, vs. between 0 and 4% statewide. The applicant notes that SPA is equipped to meet the needs of ELL students, but did not provide details.
E65/Page 45: The admissions/lottery preference for children of school founders/board members/staff may challenge the commitment to supporting high-need students, depending on the numbers and needs of these subgroups.
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:

E31-32/Page 11-12: SPA aims to be a bridge to success between high school and post-secondary education and training. It has established dual enrollment arrangements with Colby College, UMaine and Kennebec Valley Community College. Students have to maintain B average. SPA students currently have access to 12 college credits each year at no cost - can earn up to 24 before finishing high schools. 37 (62%) of junior/seniors are now enrolled in 40 early college classes. Builds confidence, saves money.

Three Snow Pond faculty members work at area colleges.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are evident.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/21/2018 11:40 AM
Applicant: Snow Pond Arts Academy (U282B180044)  
Reader #1: ********

### Questions

#### Selection Criteria

**Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged**

1. Disadvantaged Students  
   - Points Possible: 15  
   - Points Scored: 11

**Quality of Project Design**

1. Project Design  
   - Points Possible: 30  
   - Points Scored: 21

**Quality of Project Personnel**

1. Project Personnel  
   - Points Possible: 20  
   - Points Scored: 14

**Quality of the Management Plan**

1. Management Plan  
   - Points Possible: 20  
   - Points Scored: 16

**Continuation Plan**

1. Continuation Plan  
   - Points Possible: 15  
   - Points Scored: 10

**Sub Total**  
- Points Possible: 100  
- Points Scored: 72

#### Priority Questions

**Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**Access to High Quality Educational Choice**

1. Increasing Access  
   - Points Possible: 4  
   - Points Scored: 2

**Sub Total**  
- Points Possible: 4  
- Points Scored: 2

**Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs**

1. Enrollment Programs  
   - Points Possible: 4  
   - Points Scored: 3

**Sub Total**  
- Points Possible: 4  
- Points Scored: 3

**Total**  
- Points Possible: 108  
- Points Scored: 77
Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *******
Applicant: Snow Pond Arts Academy (U282B180044)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged

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 open will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

Strengths:

The applicant makes it clear that the charter school, in a rural area of Maine will give access to high quality academic and performing, visual and creative arts instruction [e16] that is otherwise not available to students who are "underserved and underexposed to the arts" [e21].

The applicant provides research that indicates that there is a link between arts involvement and achievement for "high needs youth" [e24] that is promising and that involvement in the arts for these youth can result in "graduation rates of disadvantaged youth" of 93%, which was achieved in a neighborhood where the dropout rate was typically 50% and the graduation rate was under 30% [e24].

The applicant identifies the area in which it is located as high poverty [e26] and indicates that the feeder schools have a rate of 52.3% of Free and Reduced Price Lunch students [e26]. They also make the case that arts and music education is very limited (less than 30% of students in the area participate in music and art programs) [e28] thus filling a need they believe, based on the research above, will improve outcomes for these students.

The school currently serves a Special Education population of 16.6 % which is comparable to the statewide average of 16.7% [e29].

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide local information on the perceived needs of the community for a high school focused on arts and music education. The research cited is not local and may not have the same results for the intended population.

The applicant acknowledges that Maine is not an ethnically diverse state and they currently do not serve any ELL students [e30].

The applicant is unable to provide accurate FRPL information on their current enrollment as they initially did not participate in the program and are having trouble obtaining the necessary forms from parents [e29].

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: 21

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:

In accordance with their charter contract, the applicant has set school-wide objectives and performance measures using state assessments, NWEA and Student Portfolio [e41]. These are specific and measurable. The have set an objective of a 95% attendance rate, retention of 95% and re-enrollment of 98% [e42] - all measurable and achievable objectives relative to the objectives of the CSP grant.

The applicant has identified objectives for the program [e47-54], and in a “Logic Model” [e75-e78] including such items as “Provide Exceptional Opportunities in Academics & the Arts” [e75] and “Support Student Health & Wellness,” [e76]. The objectives include activities to be carried out to achieve the objectives, including “Use Distance Learning Technology to increase learning opportunities” [e75] and “Establish recreational opportunities on campus, including exercise area”[e76].

Weaknesses:

The objectives stated, starting on page e45 and included in the “Logic Model” starting on page e75 are not measurable and have no concrete outcomes described. Objective 1 [e45] is to “provide exceptional Opportunities in Academics and the Arts, with a stated outcome of “Increase academic proficiency in 21st century skills (cognitive, inter- and intrapersonal skills); increase access to opportunities, and increase student engagement and retention” [e47]. Other than the already described retention rate of 95%, there are no measurable outcomes identified. Objective 2 is to “Design & Implement Capstone Project Program [e47] but no measurable outcome is described (“Increased student engagement, application of learning, connections to community, and school partnerships” [e48]). The same is true of Objective 3, Support Student Health and Wellness [e48] with the outcome “Increase student wellness: student understanding of connections between physical & mental health, food & diet, environment; student understanding of connections between personal wellness & community wellness” [e49].

Objective 4, Purchases to Support Curriculum/Programming [e50] is not an objective, it is an activity with no measurable outcome. Objectives 5, 6 and 7 are similar in that they have no measurable outcomes [e51-54].

The “Logic Model” on pages e75-e78 restates the objectives and has a column entitled “Outcomes” but the outcomes described, such as “Increase access to opportunities” [e75] and “Students understand connections between personal wellness and community wellness” [e76] are not specific and not measurable.

Reader’s Score: 8

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 has a strong commitment to providing access to arts and music education and to educational opportunities that are more diverse and global than otherwise available in their rural location in Maine [e37] using the New England Music Camp (NMEC) facilities and Distance Learning Technology (in partnership with NMEC) [e37]. This will enable them to accomplish their goal of providing high quality arts education and exposure to more
Sub Question

diverse educational opportunities, a need they have identified [e21].

The applicant has projects available for student participation, such as Environmental and Water Quality science projects, youth symphony, planning and design of a recital/lecture hall and building recreational trails [e46] that will enable students to have practical applications to apply knowledge gained in the classroom [e47].

The applicant will create and pilot a year-long “Capstone Program” for seniors to increase student engagement and apply learning [e47-48].

The applicant has plans to institute the Marzano evaluation system [e51] and to provide professional development such as a graduate program from the University of Maine [e51] to ensure they have highly effective educators to implement their educational programs.

The applicant’s partnership with NEMC provides resources besides those available through the charter school’s finances in terms of facilities, grounds, and the “Distance Learning Hub” [e38] to address the needs of their population for expanded learning opportunities [e37] not available in rural Maine.

Weaknesses:

A focus on student health and wellness is identified in Objective 3 [e48] and there are a lot of expenditures (total of $43,863 [e158]) dedicated to student health and wellness, however, the applicant does not make a strong case, in terms of the needs identified on pages e25-e28 for this part of the program to achieve the goals of the grant and no research is cited tying this objective to the goals of the grant program.

Reader’s Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Note: 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: 14

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:

Despite the lack of diversity in Maine’s population, as identified by the applicant [e36], the school intends to recruit and maintain a staff representing broad ethnic, gender and cultural backgrounds using an online tool called “Serving Schools” [e36] and through their association with NEMC [e37].

Weaknesses:

No weakness was identified.

Reader’s Score: 2

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

Strengths:
The Head of School has experience as a principal and assistant superintendent in a public school and other educational experience that indicate she is well qualified to oversee the charter school.

The principal has experience as an assistant to a principal and other public school experience identifying her as a qualified leader.

Other staff members also have relevant skills and experience.

The members of the Board of Directors have experience as fundraisers, in education, the arts, nonprofits, business, and finance.

The faculty and board demonstrate experience and skills in performing and some visual arts. This supports the school’s mission of providing “…high quality, comprehensive, college preparatory Academic and Arts education…”

Weaknesses:
The faculty, in terms of those identified on pages have arts and ELA experience, however, strength in academics, especially math, science and technology, is not evident in the application, as evidenced by the resumes on pages e79-e98.

Reader’s Score: 12

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 has provided timelines, responsibility and milestones for each of the “objectives” identified in pages e45 – e53. For example, for the objective “Provide Exceptional Opportunities in Academics and the Arts” the applicant has a listing of activities, such as “Distance Learning – Phase 1/Equip. purchase/install/train” [e47], a timeline (“Year 1” [e47]), Responsibility (“Emery w/Vendor” [e47]) and Milestone (“Equipment Functional & Pilot Use” [e47]). These plans will assist the school in accomplishing project tasks on time and within budget.

The applicant has plans to share best practices for special education students thus ensuring that the children with disabilities will have quality services. The school is partnering with Maine Academy for Natural Sciences in a shared services model with a school with a high rate of special education students (36.5%) [e30]. This will enable the school to leverage resources to serve this population with quality programs.

The applicant provides a clear strategy for supporting students to access dual or concurrent enrollment by having established partnerships with Colby College, the University of Maine and Kennebec Valley Community college.

Roles and responsibilities of the charter school organization are clearly defined. There are four key administrative staff and a seven-member board of directors [e33]. The school has 21 teaching faculty members [e33] and will increase the staff as the number of students expands.

The student population is small (264 students in year 5 [e37]) which enables the staff to work closely with students.
Weaknesses:
The timelines provided for the objectives in pages e45 – e53 are very logistical in nature, for example, purchase of equipment, creation of a theater and creating a radio station program [347]; Coordinate with food services and plan a gardening curriculum [e49] but do not address anything measurable such as identifying the student outcomes to be derived from these activities.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Continuation Plan

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

Strengths:
measuring % variation between budget and actual revenues/expenditures (+/-10%); 2) Quarterly review of Balance Sheet; and 3) Review of the external audit to make corrections [e42].

The applicant identifies the need for development activities to sustain their finances [e61] and has fundraising activities in place, including sources of donations (two Maine foundations, NEMC Assoc.) [e61], special events, private donations and grant solicitations [e61].

The applicant identifies local assets that they believe will increase charitable support for the charter school, including colleges that are supportive, NEMC, timing of the school's opening with an increased interest in arts and culture, and the positive impression school leadership makes in the community [e63].

The applicant has a team of individuals with skills and experience in financial management [e63].

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's belief that the local assets as identified above will provide for financial sustainability is not yet proven. The provide no evidence that a growth in cultural awareness, such as the city of Waterville and Colby College investing in developing the city as a cultural hub [e63], will result in increased donations to the charter school.

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:
Snow Pond has clearly made the case to be considered a rural local educational agency to meet Competitive Preference Priority 1(i) – “Students in communities served by rural local education agencies.” The applicant identifies the district and feeder schools as USDOE recognized rural agencies [e21].

Snow Pond conducts “Child Find” activities to identify students in need of special education services [e67] which ensures that enrolled students in category (ii) are served.

Weaknesses:
The applicant does not identify recruitment strategies specific to Competitive Preference Priority 1(ii) and (iii), children with disabilities and English learners. The recruitment and awareness methods described in the application include posters, social media and open house events [e65] do not specifically state that they were placed in a way that would encourage families with children with disabilities and English learners (e.g., it was not clear if there were recruitment tools created in languages other than English).

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 has a plan and established partnerships to be able to offer their students dual enrollment with nearby colleges such as Colby College, The University of Maine and Kennebec Valley Community College [e32]. Students can earn up to 24 college credits by the time they graduate from high school [e32].

Students are currently enrolled in 40 early college classes [e32] through partner institutions, indicating that strategies and activities are already in place to meet Competitive Preference Priority 2—Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High Schools.

Weaknesses:
Although the applicant has a program in place to meet Competitive Preference Priority 2, there is a fairly challenging standard students have to meet to access the program – students must hold a “B” average at the time of application and in the previous semester [e32]. This means the opportunity is available for students already performing well, however, the applicant does not describe any strategies to support students wanting to take advantage of dual enrollment but who do not yet have the necessary grade average.

Reader's Score: 3
Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Snow Pond Arts Academy (U282B180044)

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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<td>Quality of Project Design</td>
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<td>1. Project Design</td>
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<td>1. Continuation Plan</td>
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**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority 1**

Access to High Quality Educational Choice

1. Increasing Access

**Sub Total**

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**Competitive Preference Priority 2**

Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs

1. Enrollment Programs

**Sub Total**

| **Total**                                  | 108             | 78            |
Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: ******
Applicant: Snow Pond Arts Academy (U282B180044)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged

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 open will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.

Strengths:

The feeder schools have a combined average FRPL of 52.3% (p26, 28) and the applicant outlines the service area and it indicates a need – from 35.6-48.2 in math proficiency and 38.5-51 in reading and for graduation 79- 92.5 and supports the notion of high graduation rates by stating that academic proficiency is low. (p27)

Further the applicant provides data for achievement gap (P26) and lack of choice (p26) and the rate of students attending with special educational needs (at 16.6% of school population. p29)

Weaknesses:

The applicant gives general statistics of the region and state (e25- rural, e26- high poverty, and central Maine statistics-e28) in which the school resides and makes the assumption that those coming to the school will mirror those in need but there is no evidence that this may be the case.

While the applicant outlines the service area, the data to support the students coming from this area are commingled with the region and state statistics so the program offered does not show how these identified students will be served and enabled to meet challenging State academic standards.

The applicant does not offer its plan to recruit underserved children and the school has not been able to collect school lunch forms showing the need to serve disadvantaged students.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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

   **Strengths:**
   Applicant has high aspirations and has included a timetable with relevant staff assigned to deliverables and project start dates (P47 onward). The project also includes professional development for staff. (p51)

   **Weaknesses:**
   There is no evidence of benchmarks related to the students.

Reader's Score: 9

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:**
   Applicant has identified a range of topics and curricula that they propose to provide to all students in grades 9-12 including creating partnerships with institutions of higher education, and others and providing online courses. Also student retention (p58-59) and discipline are examples of how the school will deal with student behavior.

   **Weaknesses:**
   There is no class schedule or sample program listed by the applicant.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. Note: 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: 14

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:**
   Applicant states its intention to recruit staff nationally and internationally (e37) and that it works to recruit and maintain a staff consisting of diverse backgrounds and it invites experts who represent a broad base of ages, gender and cultures to work with them. (pe36)

   The school will also distribute information about open positions through Serving Schools, an online community where educators can connect throughout the country. (e36) It states that because Maine is not very diverse and that they want to reach individuals who may otherwise be underrepresented, it is important to reach individuals a diverse population to populate the school's board, faculty and staff and the student body. (e36)
Sub Question

Weaknesses:
There is not a non discrimination policy statement included in the application

Reader’s Score: 1

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

Strengths:
The director and principal – have experience in the field of education, and all staff appear qualified per resumes in appendix. Also there is a section on staff professional development. (p e51,52)

Weaknesses:
The principal does not have direct school operation experience.

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 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:
Applicant has a robust management plan with supervising staff and board of directors. (p33) The head of school is responsible for daily operations of school while the principal is responsible for oversight of academic components. (p33) There are other staff assigned to critical roles as well. And the location of the school allows it to profit from artists on the campus for the other programs by New England Music Camp Association. (p37)

The applicant has in place a performance-based agreement with the state (p39)

The applicant has included timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks – (starting on p47).

Weaknesses:
The timelines reported or milestones for accomplishing project tasks are not consistent with the level of effort.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Continuation Plan

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

Strengths:
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.
The applicant feels there is an opportunity in its unique location including what it does in the community that is forming in its geographic location. (P62) The applicant is partnering with many artistic and educational organizations including the New England Music Camp Association. (e37 -38)

**Weaknesses:**
The applicant is dependent on the community and others to support the growth and sustainability of the school and it says that there is limited money and few charters in the state. The applicant says that sustainability is a challenge because of the lack of funding in Maine (p62).

**Reader's Score:** 12

**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:**

   Applicant includes statistics (state and federal) showing its eligibility for priority – high poverty, rural LEA, underserved community (p21) and further examples of its needs (p25-28) including the FRPL rate of 52.3% (p29)

   Applicant has a policy of child find in their school for SPED (p67)

   **Weaknesses:**

   There are no demographics for students to be served so there is a question about how the needs of all students will be served. And since there are no ELL students served there is no recruitment strategy.

   **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:**

   Students will have opportunities to take classes at Colby and other colleges (p32) and courses count as both high school and college credit. They also offer regular gatherings to meet college staff etc (p32). Capstones offer a bridge between
school and real world. (p33)

Weaknesses:
The applicant has presented the ideas for dual programming but there is no evident schedule or sample program.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/21/2018 11:20 AM