

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/20/2018 12:38 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282T180012)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance of the proposed project</b>		
1. Significance	35	32
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	28
<b>Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	94
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Empowering Families/Individuals</b>		
1. Families/Individuals	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	94

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282T-AP 2 - 1: 84.282T

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

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282T180012)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance of the proposed project

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 35 points):

(1) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project;

(2) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;

(3) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement; and

(4) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

#### Strengths:

The applicant provided a robust discussion of the obstacles charter schools face specific to access to facilities, such as the scarcity of available space in a target neighborhood, lack of access to per-pupil facility allocations, and lack of access to right of first refusal, in addition to providing information on some of the strategies they have used to successfully overcome these obstacles (pgs. e22, e28, e43). The applicant searched the internet to see what type of facility assistance is available for new charter schools and found limited information specific to "how to" accomplish the facility and facility financing task (pgs. e43-e44). Through case studies, the applicant plans to create materials that will generalize findings of their past facility success for use by charter school operators specific to place-specific constraints and awareness and experience with best practices (pg. e31).

A major goal Breakthrough Charter Schools is to create Breakthrough Facilities Taskforce to disseminate information related to charter school facilities (pgs. e18, e22). The Taskforce will disseminate information through the company's website, videos, booklets, how-to-guides, case studies, social media, op-eds, conference presentations, etc. (pgs. e26, e35-e38). It will notify charter school leaders of these items using its network and the networks of multiple organizations that work with charter schools on facility or facility financing related projects (pg. e37). Approximately 30 charter schools will receive one-on-one assistance (pgs. e26, e34, e91).

Acting as a peer mentor and sharing lessons learned is a proven way of helping others change or make improvements to plans and actions (pgs. e45). In addition, the applicant plans to continue sharing expertise and the materials generated from this grant beyond the end of the grant period (pg. e41).

#### Weaknesses:

It is unclear how the applicant will select the 30 charter schools for one-on-one assistance or the 30 attendees at its local conference (pgs. e22, e26, e34, e64, e91). It is also unclear how students in communities served by rural local educational agencies will benefit from a mostly urban framework.

Reader's Score: 32

## 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 (up to 30 points):

(1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c));

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

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition; and

(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

### Strengths:

The applicant indicated the role of charter school relationship building does not figure prominently in existing materials on charter school best practices (pg. e52). As such, its rationale for the Breakthrough Facilities Resource and Dissemination (BFRND) project is to share lessons learned about the human side of the facilities process (pgs. e52, e54). In addition, the applicant can share structures enabling work on facilities (i.e., "Friends of" structure) (pg. e52).

Goals and objectives of the proposed BFRND project are clearly specified and measurable (pgs. e54-e55).

The proposed BFRND project includes many approaches to sharing the knowledge and expertise of Breakthrough Charter Schools. Specifically, the approaches include dedicated pages on its website, videos, booklets, how-to-guides, case studies, social media, op-eds, conference presentations, one-on-one assistance, and a local conference at company headquarters, which should reach a broad audience (pgs. e22, e26, e34-e38, e64, e91). However, none of these represents an exceptional approach to the priorities established for the competition.

### Weaknesses:

The BFRND project proposes three outcomes: (1) enhance collaboration among charter to charter, and charter to traditional public schools; (2) increase knowledge and awareness around public funding and school facility laws for charter schools; and (3) issue of inadequate charter facility resources is resolved (pgs. e55-e56). The measurability of the outcomes of the proposed BFRND project is not readily apparent in the narrative (pgs. e55-e56) or in the logic model (pg. e91). However, this is discussed in further detail under criteria e.

Reader's Score: 28

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 15 points):

(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;

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and

(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

### Strengths:

The management plan includes one year of planning and material development, with the first major milestone being met in year 2 of the grant and additional milestones being met in years 2 and 3 of the grant (pg. e64). It appears the costs are

reasonable in relation to the proposed project (pgs. e64-e66, e113-e114). As such, the management plan is adequate to achieve these objectives on time and within budget.

Breakthrough Charter Schools has one partner, Friends of Breakthrough Schools, which provided a letter of support demonstrating its commitment to the proposed project (pgs. e66, e109). The relevance and qualifications of Friends of Breakthrough Schools is significant, as it has several years of experience executing facility and facility financing projects.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 10 points):**
  - (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;**
  - (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and**
  - (3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**Strengths:**

The application indicates Breakthrough Charter Schools commits to seeking qualified individuals of diverse backgrounds (pgs. e66-e67) and they have shown their commitment to this endeavor by sponsoring the first diversity fair in their area (pg. e67). The applicant is also seeking to partner with universities preparing educators for working in urban settings (pg. e67).

The qualifications of Breakthrough Charter School's staff are extensive (pgs. e67-e72). The project director, Mr. Zitzner, has relevant and substantial experience with facility and facility financing projects (pgs. e67-e68). The key project personnel, Mr. Roskamm, Ms. Thornton, Mr. Lenart, Mr. Pace, and Ms. Johnson are also qualified and experienced with activities directly related to the proposed BFRND project (pgs. e69-e70).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 10 points).**

**Strengths:**

The proposed project evaluation will be completed by WestEd, a preeminent not-for-profit organization that is a leader in educational research and evaluation (pg. e72). The evaluation plan includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative

data to measure the project objectives, performance measures, planned activities, and overall outcomes of the dissemination project (pg. e73).

Specific details regarding the evaluation methods and sources was provided in appendix A (pgs. e74-e79).

**Weaknesses:**

As mentioned earlier, it is unclear how the stated outcomes of the proposed project (i.e., (1) enhance collaboration among charter to charter, and charter to traditional public schools; (2) increase knowledge and awareness around public funding and school facility laws for charter schools; and (3) issue of inadequate charter facility resources is resolved) will be evaluated (pgs. e55-e56, e74-e79, e91).

**Reader's Score:** 9

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Empowering Families/Individuals**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority--Empowering Families and Individuals To Choose a High-Quality Education That Meets Their Unique Needs (Up to 5 points)**

**Projects that are designed to address increasing access to educational choice for one or more of the following groups of children or students:**

- (i) Children or students with disabilities.**
- (ii) English learners.**
- (iii) Students who are Indians, as defined in section 6151 of the ESEA.**
- (iv) Children or students in communities served by rural local educational agencies.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant did not address this section.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address this section.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/20/2018 12:38 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/14/2018 07:16 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282T180012)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance of the proposed project</b>		
1. Significance	35	33
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	27
<b>Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	15
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	94
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Empowering Families/Individuals</b>		
1. Families/Individuals	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	94

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282T-AP 2 - 1: 84.282T

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

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282T180012)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance of the proposed project

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 35 points):

(1) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project;

(2) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;

(3) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement; and

(4) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

### Strengths:

The applicant discusses the intricacies of the place-based nature of facilities planning and funding. Through their lessons learned, they have many suggestions to offer, that are generalizable to charter school operators, most specifically opening anew, or looking to expand. They bring a unique perspective, that of practitioners rather than researchers, etc. Although the facilities challenges for charter schools are universal and nationwide, the solutions are not. The applicant has experience with and are further developing their use of data to inform site selection and building features, a truly unique contribution to the charter school research. This approach is generalizable-locating facilities and building facilities based on the population you intend to serve, the needs of the community and the families you will serve. A list of possible publications on page e34 indicates the importance of the documents and information being compiled and considered for publication.

Dissemination will be accomplished through the efforts of their Marketing Department using their existing website, social media accounts as well as Task Force members. The breadth of dissemination is key, and the applicant seems to present a realistic plan for reaching Ohio charter school advocates as well as the broader national charter school community.

Task Force Members implementing the project will attend 6 national conferences per year, to present and disseminate their best practices. Page E37 lists the potential conferences that are already being attended by the applicant. Presentation materials will be differentiated for the audience. The applicant estimates a population of 9000 could be reached just with conference presentations each year. E35

The applicant proposes disseminating to some key national entities: and requesting they assist with dissemination, such as KIPP, the Gates Foundation, The National Charter School Alliance, e62 Thomas B. Fordham Institute, etc.

30 charter schools will be selected to attend a specific technical assistance conference in the third year. The applicant will also utilize pertinent Ohio institutions such as the Cleveland Education Compact. E37

The Task Force will help identify large scale charter school membership associations that can be approached to assist with dissemination and driving traffic to the website. At the end of the grant, a policy brief will be written and disseminated to government entities within the state of Ohio. Page E40

\*Of note is the applicant's interest in collaborating with other awardees to ensure efforts are not duplicated and to collaborate where possible. Page E40

\*The applicant also addresses project sustainability, e41, ensuring the materials and their willingness to consult will be available after the grant period ends.

The applicant is committed to assisting smaller inexperienced charter operators so that they can avoid some of the mistakes and pitfalls the applicant encountered, and ultimately be successful in sustaining their charter schools by having successful, affordable and long-term facilities solutions. They are particularly interested in ensuring their deliverables get into the hands of new charter school operators. The applicant intends to track what and how the deliverables are being utilized as part of the evaluation plan for the project. The intent of the project is to get usable, vetted best practice information into the hands of the charter school operators that most need it to increase the amount of charter schools that are established and ultimately sustainable. They cite the number of charter schools that struggle with facilities issues, inadequate facilities as well as the percentage of those that end up closing due to facilities issues. Their goal is to improve this system so that the percentage of charters' struggling with facility issues drops. They cite google searches as a way to emphasize that what they are proposing is not readily available online nor being disseminated by the larger national charter school entities. The applicant is available to mentor new charters.

A premise of this project is the importance of local solutions based on the specific community and facilities landscape where the charter school is proposing to operate. The applicant has utilized and is further developing a neighborhood-level market research tool for data-driven facilities planning. Neighborhood demographics should drive the facilities design and location. This is a unique contribution this proposal offers and is specific to local capacity building and meeting the needs of target populations. The applicant intends that Ohio charter schools will greatly and most immediately benefit from the deliverables of this grant. The applicant intends to determine who uses the deliverables and how, as part of the evaluation design.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant will make a variety of products available and drive traffic to their website housing these products, it is not clear how this alone will bring about system change.

The products are applicable in the present urban setting where they are being utilized. It is not clear how applicable they would be to charter schools operating in more rural settings. The applicant however did indicate that their primary audience was charter schools within their geographic region which is primarily urban.

The applicant was not clear on how the smaller group of 30 charter operators would be selected to participate in the technical assistance conference they are hosting the third year of the grant. They indicated they would be invited to attend, and that interest would be ascertained to see if there were enough providers ingested in this level of technical assistance.

**Reader's Score: 33**

**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 (up to 30 points):**
  - (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c));**
  - (2) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;**
  - (3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition; and**
  - (4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.**

## **Strengths:**

The applicant presented a compelling rationale. It included the following:

Expand the voice of the on the ground practitioner in the national charter facilities dialogue. Page E51

Provide vetted, best practices to those early charter school operators so that they meet with more success and long-term sustainability as a result of their facilities acquisitions.

As mentioned above, the applicant has experience incorporating market analysis into the building selection process and are beginning to use demographic data to inform school building selection and planned renovations, a truly unique contribution to the charter school research.

The application includes numerous examples of innovative strategies for navigating the complex facilities landscape including examples of obstacles and mistakes that other charters would benefit from understanding and learning from. As practitioners, they can provide real world examples, lessons learned, and best practices.

The goals and objectives are concise. Page e54

The Logic Model and Management Plan in the appendices provide further detail. Page E90 and 91

The proposal represents an unusual and exceptional approach for the reasons cited above under rationale for the project. This proposal represents a practitioner's real-world experiences. It provides vetted tools, strategies and deliverables that are particularly valuable for new and relatively inexperienced charter operators. The proposal cites a number of lessons learned that will enable others to build on their ideas and avoid some of their mistakes. Co-locating, combining different schools on one campus including combining two charter schools together, considering an education foundation to serve as the funding arm of the school, building relationships within the community by carefully selected board members, etc.

Dissemination of information is cited above. The plan builds on already established channels as well as building on relationships established with key national charter school advocates. The Marketing Department will oversee product production and dissemination. Dissemination is referenced in several areas in the grant. Pages e61-63 e33-40, e71-72

As mentioned above, the applicant expressed interest in collaborating with the other grantees selected for this competition to collaborate where possible and to ensure not to duplicate efforts and deliverables. This is a real strength and indication of their commitment to the intent of this competition.

## **Weaknesses:**

The applicant makes clear that their target audience is charter school operators in their immediate geographical area. It appears that the proposal would be of significant value to a much broader audience. Most likely this will become apparent as the information is disseminated outside of Ohio. Page e6

The outcomes provided were not readily measurable. The applicant indicated that WestEd would provide further detail on the evaluation plan if the grant were funded.

**Reader's Score: 27**

## **Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 15 points):**

**(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;**

**(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and**

**(3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a concise management plan in the appendices with accompanying narrative on page e62-63 indicating they understand the necessary components under girding the proposal. The applicant has received federal grants in the past and have used the model of a Task Force consisting of staff, board members and experts successfully to manage and implement their proposals. The project costs appear to be reasonable. The fact that existing staff are being utilized keeps costs lower and streamlines the infrastructure needed to fulfill the project. The letters of support in the appendices are impressive. They have selected an outside evaluator, WestEd, who is a reputable entity. The Friends of Breakthrough Schools is a novel partner and important example of a successful lesson learned to be shared with charter school operators.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were found.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 10 points):**

**(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;**

**(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and**

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

**Strengths:**

There are no additional personnel being hired to implement this proposal. The applicant has been the sponsoring organization of a diversity career fair in which regional schools-public, private and charter participate. They are interested in aligning with teacher preparation programs that are focused on preparing educators for working in urban school settings specifically.

The qualifications of the key staff and the project director indicate they have a breadth of experience and important contacts for ensuring the successful completing of this proposal and positively impacting the charter school research landscape.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses were identified for this section.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 10 points).**

**Strengths:**

The detailed evaluation plan is included on pages e73-79. The level of detail greatly facilitated the readers' understanding of the proposal.

The key questions included in the evaluation section are important and worthy of research.

Both qualitative and quantitative measures are included in the evaluation plan.

**Weaknesses:**

The performance measures were not well articulated. As a leader in the field of education research, WestEd will be able to suggest additional metrics that the applicant did not consider, thereby strengthening the evaluation plan.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Empowering Families/Individuals**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority--Empowering Families and Individuals To Choose a High-Quality Education That Meets Their Unique Needs (Up to 5 points)**

**Projects that are designed to address increasing access to educational choice for one or more of the following groups of children or students:**

- (i) Children or students with disabilities.**
- (ii) English learners.**
- (iii) Students who are Indians, as defined in section 6151 of the ESEA.**
- (iv) Children or students in communities served by rural local educational agencies.**

**Strengths:**

.No strengths noted in this section.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not address the Competitive Preference Priority.

The applicant does translate all their current materials into Chinese and Spanish based on the population their 11 schools serve within their charter network. That is the only reference to the demographics and it is specific to their present schools, not the larger community of charter schools they hope to shore up with this proposal. Page E14

It is hoped that dissemination of the products and deliverables broadly will ensure that charter schools intending to serve or already serving these identified populations, will be benefiting. This could be a recommendation for the evaluator of the project. When ascertaining who is accessing the products from this grant, if they are education entities, asking for demographic information on the students they serve and the communities within which they are located

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/14/2018 07:16 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2018 06:04 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282T180012)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Significance of the proposed project</b>		
1. Significance	35	32
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	30	26
<b>Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources</b>		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	12
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	89
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Empowering Families/Individuals</b>		
1. Families/Individuals	5	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	5	0
<b>Total</b>	105	89

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - 84.282T-AP 2 - 1: 84.282T

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

Applicant: Breakthrough Charter Schools (U282T180012)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Significance of the proposed project

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 35 points):

(1) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project;

(2) The extent to which the results of the proposed project are to be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies;

(3) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement; and

(4) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

#### Strengths:

The multi-pronged approach to the dissemination of information includes video, email, newsletters, conferences and online methods (e21). They have successfully overcome hurdles such as lack of buildings and resistance from the public school district (e28). They have strong external partnerships, as well as a fundraising arm with 47 members (e31). They already have test and learn scenarios; they have increased their use of data to inform decision making and evaluation of strategies (e33). They also have a track record of securing philanthropic funds and facilities (e25).

#### Weaknesses:

The system change will be limited based on the geographic location of Cleveland, OH. Although they say their practices are generalizable, it is not clear that a rural community, for example, would have the same successes as an urban location such as Cleveland. Their dissemination assumes strategy that creating and sharing open source materials will lead to a system change or improvement; it will lead to more individuals having access to the information. It was also unclear how the 30 attendees for the intensive conference would be selected (e38).

Reader's Score: 32

### 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 (up to 30 points):

(1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c));

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

(3) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition; and

(4) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

**Strengths:**

Breakthrough plans to use practical experience and real world examples, rather than just theory/research (p33). They have strong networks and partnerships and have an expertise in the field of over 10 years (e51). Applicants are interested in collaborating with other grantees to share best practices (e40). Breakthrough has a particular skill set related to relationship building that could be shared and adapted to various settings and locations (e61).

**Weaknesses:**

The Breakthrough project is based on dissemination of information not implementation of particular practices (e37). For example, it is unclear how they will plan to measure dissemination of materials. (e54-e55). More direct mentorship opportunities would have made this section stronger. Also, the content of this section of the application doesn't appear to be exceptional (e57) other than the fact that they are practitioners and not a governmental agency.

**Reader's Score: 26**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 15 points):**

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- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and**
- (3) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.**

**Strengths:**

Other staff members at Breakthrough are expected to work on project for a percentage of time; this could ensure buy-in and consistency of the project design and vision (e65). Breakthrough, Friends of Breakthrough, and West Ed are the only partners in the application and have demonstrated their level of commitment to the project implementation (e66).

**Weaknesses:**

Friends of Breakthrough Schools President is listed as the Project Director (e63). It is unclear what would happen to the President vacancy during this time or if he is expected to fulfill both roles. This does not seem to be an effective part of the management plan. Also, in terms of sustainability, it is noted that the funding for personnel is increasing, rather than decreasing, each year. More clarity needed as to why this cost is not decreasing over the grant period (Appendix D, e90 and e113). Also Appendix D budget lists activities but not the funds that match them.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors (up to 10 points):**

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- (2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and**

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

**Strengths:**

Applicants sponsored a diversity career fair, indicating their commitment to finding highly qualified individuals from underrepresented groups (e67). Also, the Human Capital department has developed partnerships with HBCUs and other colleges with urban education foci (e67). The proposed Project Director has a strong background and long history of working with charters, and in education in general (e67). The Taskforce that will drive the implementation of the project consists of Breakthrough staff (e68).

**Weaknesses:**

NA

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation**

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (up to 10 points).**

**Strengths:**

External evaluator, West Ed, has an expertise in evaluating large scale grants of this size/scope (e72). The key questions included in the application are extremely helpful in terms of clarifying how the goals, objectives, and performance measures align (e76-e79).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicants state that West Ed will examine performance measures but they are not explicitly stated (e72). The objectives and activities are included but not a detailed description of how the qualitative and quantitative data will actually be collected.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Empowering Families/Individuals**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority--Empowering Families and Individuals To Choose a High-Quality Education That Meets Their Unique Needs (Up to 5 points)**

**Projects that are designed to address increasing access to educational choice for one or more of the following groups of children or students:**

- (i) Children or students with disabilities.**
- (ii) English learners.**
- (iii) Students who are Indians, as defined in section 6151 of the ESEA.**
- (iv) Children or students in communities served by rural local educational agencies.**

**Strengths:**

Recruitment and meeting materials will be available in Chinese and Spanish to attract this population; the assumption could be made that parents who do not speak English as their first language may have students who are ELLs or need language/literacy support (e14).

**Weaknesses:**

Although the needs of low income students is mentioned, they are not one of the priority groups. No other priority groups are targeted (students with disabilities, ELLs, students who are Indians, or students in rural communities. The group felt that the applicants did not address the priority to address increasing access to educational choice for any of the aforementioned groups. There is no data related to why Chinese and Spanish are the identified languages for translation of marketing materials. In fact, there is no data related to the demographics of the populations that will be served in this project other than low income students, who are not a target group for this grant.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
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